

DIGITAL CAPITALISM AND SURVEILLANCE CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF
THE SELF-FORMATION IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA VIA YOUTUBE



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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZET

Günümüzde postmodern tüketici toplumuyla savunma ve korunma için yapılan geleneksel gözetimin yanı sıra yerini bireysel merak ve ilgiler almıştır. Bu merak ve ilgi, her konuda olabileceği gibi sosyal medya ile başkalarının hayatlarını izlemeye dönüşmüştür. Sosyal medya aracılığı ile gözetim motivasyonun değişmesi “dikizleme kültürü” kavramını beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, dikizleme kültürü, kapitalizm ve denetim pratikleriyle ilişkisi bağlamında analiz edilmiştir.

Kapitalizmin dijitalleşmesi, sosyal medyada maddi olmayan kullanıcı emeğini beraberinde getirmiştir. Kapitalist emek sürecinde ortaya çıkan yabancılaşma YouTube gibi sosyal medya platformlarında dijital kapitalizmin bir vechesi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu tezde de izleyici ve kullanıcı emeğinin maddi bir karşılığının olmadığı ve bireylerin içerik üreticileri (YouTuberlar) ile bağ kurmalarının yanında bir benlik inşa edip bu benliği perforce edebildikleri bir platform olan YouTube’a odaklanılmıştır.

YouTube kullanımı bağlamında yabancılaşma, benlik inşası ve benlik sunumu süreçlerini, derinlemesine analiz etmek için nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan derinlemesine görüşme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada kullanıcıların YouTube kullanım motivasyonları, tüketim toplumuna ne kadar ve nasıl dahil oldukları, gözetim ve dikizleme kültürü süreci içinde kendilerini nasıl konumlandıkları ile benlik inşalarında ve sunumlarında bir yabancılaşma yaşıyor yaşamadıkları analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gözetim Toplumu, Dikizleme Kültürü, Dijital Kapitalizm, Benlik İnşası, Dijital Yabancılaşma, Sosyal Medya, YouTube

ABSTRACT

Today, with the postmodern consumer society, the traditional surveillance for defense and protection has been replaced by individual curiosity and interests. This curiosity and interest have turned into watching the lives of others through social media, as it can be in any subject. The change in surveillance motivation via social media has brought the concept of "peep culture" with it. In this context, peep culture has been analyzed with a focus on its relation to capitalism and controlling practices.

The digitalization of capitalism has brought along immaterial user labor in social media. Alienation emerging in the capitalist labor process appears as an aspect of digital capitalism in social media platforms such as YouTube. In this thesis, the focus is on YouTube, which is a platform where the audience and user labor does not have a material correspondence and individuals can build a self and perform this self in addition to connecting with content producers (YouTubers).

In-depth interview method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used to analyze in detail the processes of alienation, self-building and self-presentation in the context of YouTube use. In the study, the motivations of users to use YouTube, how and how they are included in the consumer society, how they position themselves in the process of surveillance and peep culture, and whether they experience an alienation in their self-constructions and presentations were analyzed.

Keywords: Surveillance Culture, Peep Culture, Digital Capitalism, Self-Formation, Digital Alienation, Social Media, YouTube

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1 INTRODUCTION

Surveillance, naturally associated with our sense of sight, has existed throughout the history of humanity. Surveillance actually never ends; it just changes shape. Early surveillance practices had the purposes of protecting one's self and close environment, yet in time they increasingly became enacted for controlling purposes in society, and nowadays their main aim seems to be monitoring. In the evolution of surveillance, the transition to the post-industrial society and the development of digital communication technologies have played a big role. During this period, under the influence of certain technological developments, the individual has systematically adopted his/her self to the continuous need of acquiring and sharing information (Bell, 1976).

Among the developing and changing technologies which greatly affect individuals' lives in every detail, social media probably takes the highest rank today. Social media is actually a set of platforms based on the creation, regulation, sharing, and consumption of information (Zafarmand, 2010). With his famous phrase "medium is the message," McLuhan has once stated that the medium is as important as content in the transmission of information. Following his insight, we could say that not only the content of social media but also platforms within it are important.

Social media platforms have ceased to be mere information tools and become instruments of surveillance today. The dissolution of the conventional notions of place and time within social media has turned it into a timeless and spaceless environment. This has offered individuals the possibility of endless surveillance practices. The individual has started to use social media not only to access information but also to satisfy his/her curiosity, wishes, and desires. No matter how individualistic a person

becomes within the capitalist consumer society, s/he still wants to be accepted and present her/his self to certain social groups. Being able to get involved in a community that pour into the digital environment is one of the purposes of using social media. At the same time, the individual tries to express himself/herself by consuming more. Consumption covers both commodities and desires. The use of social media for the consumption of desires has brought with it the concept of “peep culture” (Niedzviecki, 2010). The transformation of surveillance into peeping with technological developments in communication has occurred together within the context of postindustrial society or late capitalism as it is named (Niedzviecki, 2010).

However, today, social media has become a medium where individuals spend most of their time, create a personal space, build a self and perform this self. In the light of all these, social media has turned into a social life space in itself. Practices of daily life are also reflected in these platforms. The individual also carries out self-formation and display through activities such as joining a group, liking, commenting on posts and so on. In addition, all sociological, psychological, cultural and economic phenomena that develop in daily life also affect social media platforms. In the thesis, self formation and presentation in social media is examined from a sociological and psychological perspective, bringing together mainly the insights provided by Erving Goffman, Sigmund Freud and Pierre Bourdieu.

One of the social media platforms that provide ample opportunities for practicing the peep culture is YouTube. YouTube allows its users to watch as many videos as they want. This feature plays an important role in its being the most second used social media in the world, including Turkey (Kemp, 2020). YouTube also serves as a platform where users get rid of their loneliness brought by the individualistic

culture and where they can identify with others. The individual's use of YouTube to fill certain emotional gaps, consciously or unconsciously, and being able to make a comparison between the ego and the other while watching YouTube videos also affects the individual's self-formation. On the other hand, s/he engages in a self-presentation process on YouTube even if s/he just watches videos there. Whether s/he feels a sense of alienation from his/her actual self in this decentralized environment, which is part of the virtual reality is also worth questioning.

The study aims to examine individuals' involvement in the peep culture via YouTube, the motivations they have for using YouTube, and the influence their active presence in YouTube has on their experiences of self-formation, self-presentation, and alienation. Most particularly, the aim is to understand how YouTube users perform and make sense of monitoring and surveillance practices within this social media platform.

Drawing on an eclectic approach, we will bring together Foucault and Nieszwiecki's ideas about surveillance with what Christian Fuchs, following Marx, says about digital capitalism. Also, in order to understand the processes of self-formation and presentation, we will benefit from Goffman and Bourdieu's theories.

In the study, in order to examine the topic with detailed attention to people's sense-making practices, a qualitative methodology has been adopted, and in-depth interviews were conducted with six participants, who are selected according to certain demographic criteria. In order for the study to reach a comprehensive result, attention was paid to the participants' different genders, different ages, different occupational and educational fields and having different monitoring practices.

In the first part of the study, the notion of surveillance and its transformation to the peep culture are discussed. In the second part, the social media platform of YouTube is examined in depth and analyzed how capitalist production and consumption relations have influenced social media in general, and YouTube, in particular. In the following part, the notion of surveillance is discussed within the context of capitalism, and social media and relation to the self-presentation and alienation of the individual are examined. While the third chapter contains information about the methodology of the research, the fifth chapter demonstrates the findings and inferences made from the interviews.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study, firstly, the history and structure of surveillance society and important factors in the transition from surveillance culture to peep culture are examined. While drawing up the theoretical framework of this part of the thesis, Bentham's example of panopticon, Foucault's thoughts on the issue, insights offered by Nieszwiecki, who developed the concept of peep culture, and Baudrillard's sociological perspective are mainly used.

Then, the reflections of capitalism, which is a determining social structure in the evolution of surveillance into peeping practice, onto the digital space are discussed. Although peeping practices are mostly associated with digital culture today, they have actually been shaped in a historical process and reached its contemporary shape. Therefore, this part examines the notions of culture industry and popular culture as well as postmodernism, all of which are effective in shaping peeping practices. Following this discussion, the history and characteristics of social media and its relation to peep culture are examined in the context of capitalism and surveillance culture. At this point, YouTube, one of the social media platforms that allow surveillance practice most, has been examined in depth.

Surveillance, peeping and other similar practices are processes in which individual actors are directly involved. Especially social media emerges as a space where the individual both constructs and exhibits his/her self. In this context, in the next part of the literature review, the concept of self and its formation and presentation are first examined within the scope of Ervin Goffman's sociological perspective and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. After that, the formation and presentation of the self in social media was analyzed by considering both individual and social factors that affect them. In order to understand the social factors

that are effective in the construction and presentation of the self in social media, the insights of the praxis theory developed by Pierre Bourdieu with the concepts of habitus, field, and capital are drawn on.

2.1 Surveillance Society

Surveillance is a practice that has existed throughout human history. Today, however, surveillance has also become an individual practice rather than being merely enacted by the central political authority. Surveillance, especially through social media, has ceased to be a control mechanism only used by a political power and become a part of daily life instead. Actually, surveillance, while being used for individual purposes on social media, has transformed into a peeping practice. In this part, the structure and historical development of surveillance society and its transformation into peep culture are examined.

2.1.1 Historical Development and Characteristics of Surveillance Society

The word surveillance is defined by multiple institutions, organizations, and persons in various ways in the literature. *Türk Dil Kurumu (Turkish Language Association)* (2006) defines the concept as “acts of supervising and supervision.” In the *Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.)*, the concept is defined as “the activity of watching someone carefully, especially by the police or army, because they are expected to do something wrong.” English philosopher and sociologist Jeremy Bentham describes surveillance as “a new method of achieving mental power over the mind, unprecedented until today” in his book *Panopticon*, published in 1791 (as cited in Mattelart et. al., 2010, p. 15). British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1981) describes

surveillance as “the supervision of the activities of subordinates by their superiors within any collectivity” (p. 169). David Lyon (2006), known for his research on the phenomenon, defines surveillance as "the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details to purpose of influence, management, protection or direction" (p. 14). The common points of these definitions are control and supervision. In surveillance, supervision is enacted under control and for controlling purposes.

We can say that surveillance with the aim of controlling people first emerged when humanity found writing and passed to settled life. A hierarchical order emerged among individuals with the transition to settled life. At that time, writing was used to record data the political authority deemed necessary. Mainly, there were records for following up taxes and provisions and keeping the population together (Önal & Bendaş, 2017, p. 110).

German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, in his work "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," discusses community as *gemeinschaft* and society as a *gesellschaft*. He defines the concept of community as a type of society in which individuals in traditional populations are in a bond with each other either by blood or marriage and moral rules form the norms of social groups. The concept of society, on the other hand, is a type of social group in which the relations of individuals become superficial with the emergence of modern nation states and the development of industrialization and science, group norms are determined by political forces, and relations are not organic (Tönnies, 2001). In this context, modernity shows its existence in society-type social groups, in which Tönnies says everything is artificial and individual. However, surveillance practices within society-type groups have not remained constant but have undergone a historical transformation.

The central political authority, which wants to maintain its dominance in society-type groups, feels the need to monitor individuals. As a result of this, prisons, mental hospitals, schools and workplaces are established in order to keep individuals together and under control. The purpose of these structures is to move from societal surveillance to a supervisory and authoritarian form of surveillance. As an allegory of this, the "panopticon" model, developed by British philosopher and society reformer Jeremy Bentham and examined by French sociologist and thinker Michel Foucault, can be considered.

When examined semantically, "panopticon, which consists of the words "pan" (whole) and "opticon" (see), is an 18th century surveillance tool model; the architect of the model was Samuel Bentham, brother of Jeremy Bentham. In 1791, the popular classes started to revolt due to the excessive taxes imposed by the state. For this reason, Samuel Bentham was asked to design a structure which would serve the function of controlling a large number of individuals in one place in order to reinforce the authority of the state over workers against their struggle for justice (Çoban & Ataman, 2016). Jeremy Bentham describes this architectural design as an "inspection house". Foucault used the panopticon metaphor to describe surveillance in modern societies and explained the panopticon as follows:

At the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the periphery building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a

condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theaters, in (which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. (Foucault, 1977, p. 200)

Panopticon is a circular detention house where prisoners stay in separate cells so that they cannot communicate with each other and a single person from a tower can watch all prisoners (Bentham, 2008 pp. 14-15). Through the backlight hitting the cells, the prisoners cannot see the overseer, but the guardian can clearly see each prisoner. With this system, power passes from the spy to watcher, and this situation renders the physical presence of the eye unnecessary.

Foucault (2003) defines the panopticon model as a power technology suitable for solving surveillance problems in modern society. Foucault points out that the panopticon is not just a prison model; it is a control mechanism seen everywhere in our lives even if it is not physically implemented, and this is not only for prisoners but also for students, workers, and public employees. In short, all individuals in public life are monitored through an invisible eye in public institutions.

In societies where modernity did not sufficiently develop, surveillance was practiced by imprisoning individuals under supervision. With the progression of technology in modern societies, the monopoly of one eye in physical space has been replaced with ubiquitous electronic surveillance devices.

The word modern is defined as “suitable to age, contemporary” in its simplest form in the literature. This is exactly what is meant by modern societies. Individuals live as required by the time period they live in. As mentioned above, modern societies have their own surveillance and supervision institutions: the army, police, schools,

prisons, and other control apparatuses of the state. However, these analog systems did not have enough information gathering capabilities in the past. Closed Circuit Camera Systems (CCCS), which are the fastest and most visible form of accessing information today, turn this authoritative control into an electronic form today. With these systems, the government now supervises individuals through electronic surveillance mechanisms instead of imprisoning them. CCCS are generally defined as systems that allow only the related authorities to access visual and audio information in a confined area (Ministry of Education, 2001). CCCS monitor individuals many times during the day. "Surveillance cameras," which are the key points of this system, are used to detect possible crimes and behaviors against social ethics (Haggerty, 2012, p. 241). The individual is watched and supervised everywhere in traffic, walking on the road, at workplace, school and public space without him/her being aware of this. Now, surveillance is no longer a monopoly of one eye, but ensures a one-sided control through multiple eyes. This is an electronic panopticon in which the power holder's eye is invisible.

Private property is a constituting element of capitalism that could give an ordinary person an advantage as a buyer in the commercial and social field (Mises, 2018). The more property an individual owns, the more s/he tries to protect his property (Niedzviecki, 2010). Individuals set up a CCCS in their homes, garages, gardens, and cars to protect their private property. According to this, surveillance is no longer just a monopoly of the central power; it becomes personal and gets privatized.

In sum, surveillance has been an ongoing practice in power relations almost since the emergence of earliest human societies. Although surveillance practices historically change, they continue to be a control mechanism in themselves. In

societies that have modernized with the Industrial Revolution, surveillance was ensured by means of imprisonment and custody methods such as the panopticon model of the Bentham brothers. On the other hand, in postmodern societies, the panopticon, which Foucault uses as an allegory for modern society, is replaced by digital surveillance (Bozkurt, 2000). Although technology that develops with each passing day offers freedom to individuals, it brings with it the extension and individualization / privatization of surveillance.

2.1.2 Transition from Surveillance to Peep Culture

In traditional surveillance systems, surveillance is enacted for supervision purposes and based on information (Giddens, 2012). In today's societies, norms created by interactions in the digital environment create a mechanism of action on individuals. The structure of surveillance changes as the use of the internet, which is integrated with television, computers, and especially other electronic devices, increases (Yücedağ, 2017). This integration, which has reached a global dimension, has caused surveillance to be continuous, non-local, and most importantly individual (Güven, 2014). With the individualization of surveillance, surveillance ceased to be just a mechanism for maintaining central power; it makes the observer not only invisible but also decentralized and transforms the observed person into an object of spectacle that can be watched at any time. The viewer's invisible and unknown nature is one of the main reasons that turn the phenomenon of surveillance into an act of peeping. Traditional and centralized surveillance has now been replaced by an individualized peeping practice provided by digital tools. As will be discussed in more detail below, surveillance has turned into peeping as the spaces that individuals interact face to face have become limited in the contemporary period, which is called

postmodern by some thinkers (Niedzviecki, 2010). One of the biggest impulses of this change is technological progress. Digital platforms where individuals can be peeped make the ideology of surveillance an integral part of daily life. At the same time, this situation makes the peeping practice a process involving both the watcher and the watched.

Georges Bataille (2001) considered the eye as the subject that creates the external reality of the individual. Among the sense organs, it is the eye that creates the awareness of reality (Rigel, 2004). Looking, watching, and peeping are implicated in seeing. When the individual looks directly at the object, s/he first sees it in its actual form; the truth of the object is shaped with a personal perspective in line with the needs, desires, and values of the looking subject (Zizek, 1991). That is, the eye creates the truth by passing the perceived reality through its own consciousness mechanism. This is why the truth and reality are not always the same things.

In the age of modernity, which was shaped around the idea that the mind is the only means to reach the truth behind the visible, the distinction between the actual reality and truth could be made more clearly, but in the postmodern era, which was thought to start in the 1970s in the West, as reality began to become virtual, the boundaries of this distinction began to blur, according to some thinkers. In this period, instead of the truth of the “old-fashioned” reality, so to speak, the truth of the reality presented by the newly emerging media has gained importance. While modernity pointed to a single truth, social media, as the product of the postmodern age, shows the unlimited and subjective variations of reality (Çabuklu, 2010). Moreover, in postmodernism, all realities are temporary; this impermanence has devalued truth and made the entire reality a mere reflection (Latour, 2008).

French thinker and sociologist Jean Baudrillard has discussed the notions of reality and truth through his simulation theory. "For Baudrillard, the simulacrum is "essentially the copy of a copy, that is to say, the copy of something that is not itself an original, and is hence an utterly degraded form" (as cited in, Buchanan, 2010, p. 434); simulation means the reproduction of reality and suggests "that truth, reference and objective cause have ceased to exist" (Baudrillard, 1988, p.169). Accordingly, simulation is a cycle that has all the contents of reality, looks more real but is not real (Baudrillard, 1991). According to Baudrillard, in this cycle, "reality" is reshaped, and the "real" loses its essence and turns into a "hyperreality" that is far from natural. In sum, Baudrillard states that the truth is about to disappear. According to him, reality has been replaced by "signs," in other words, "simulations."

Baudrillard states these theses with references to television formats. However, with the introduction of internet and then social media into our lives, the simulation universe mentioned by Baudrillard has gotten beyond the boundaries of the television screen and started to be reproduced on other platforms. The truth of the reality offered by these technological tools is questioned, as well.

In Batı's (2007) words:

Advertisements, movies, social media content spread by media and communication technologies such as television and internet that make up the simulation universe result in a meta-reality environment that occurs when signifiers (images) lose their quality of signifying the signified (objective reality). (p.130).

Baudrillard puts more emphasis on television in his theory than on other media because, unlike photography, cinema and painting, he states that the individual builds more connections with videos that contain visual and auditory elements and which are

watched through a screen (Baudrillard, 2004). As Baudrillard states, the individual interacts with the image on the screen and watches the image s/he sees without questioning the truth behind it. S/he thinks that the image s/he sees is real. This process creates an "immersive virtual reality". Today, Facebook with its virtual profile creation opportunities, YouTube with video-blogs displayed as a form of fictionalized reality, and Instagram, where photos changed with various filters are shared for virtual appreciation, are examples of these immersive virtual reality platforms.

Acts such as “following, liking, friend request, subscription, and communication” that exist in social media have a correspondence in real life (Timur, 2018). They are actually modeled from real life. However, in the process of transition to the virtual space, they have been replaced by clicks and emojis. This shows that hyperreality consists of imitation and a reflection of reality. Moreover, according to Scott Lash, the semioticization of everyday life and the increase in visual sensitivity suggest that reality is under attack (as cited in Smith, 2001).

Baudrillard's analysis of The Center Pompidou in France can be given as an example. The Center Pompidou is a contemporary art and culture center located in Paris and it owns the one of the world's largest collections. Baudrillard sees this center as a postmodernist tool of hyperrealism which operates through a mechanism of cultural deterrence and a mass simulation effect. According to him, it does not matter whether the content in this museum is art, culture or something else; he states that the only content the center has is visitors. In addition, The Center Pompidou unites all the elements of the modern age (business, entertainment, media, culture) and creates a time-space simulation of social life, described with the metaphor of "culture hypermarket."

YouTube can serve as an example for The Center Pompidou 's reflection in the digital space. YouTube is no longer a platform where only amateur video sharers post their content containing information and comedy elements but has turned into a platform that serves popular culture and reproduces reality. Just like The Center Pompidou, YouTube hosts self-referential videos that do not seem to serve any field in terms of its content, in addition to contents about business, entertainment, media and culture. Moreover, YouTube cannot exist unless there is a participant watching these posts, so the only content it has is participants themselves. In short, YouTube generates hyperreality with videos that remodel reality.

Beyond being a space where hyperreality is produced, YouTube is the stage of a spectacle society. Watching and being watched creates a kind of "spectacle society." Spectacle is an activity that takes place under the hegemony of seeing (Debord, 2018). According to Debord's description of "spectacle society," individuals in modern capitalism live their lives as a performance to be watched and displayed. Today, it would not be wrong to say that the motivation to show and consume, which is constantly triggered by the spectacle society, is one of the reasons for the popularity of social media. Today's individuals become participants of the spectacle society by sharing visual, audio and written content on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Individuals, with the content they share, create a "participatory culture" both as producers and consumers in the digital field (Fuchs, 2014). Social media users feel like they are part of that universe as much as the digitalized content they see and watch are. They regard social media as a theatrical scene and they feel local in there because of immersing themselves in this theatric ambiance (Gürbilek, 2001, p. 28). However, they can emplace themselves in these platforms as their native members as long as they watch and are watched.

It has been stated above that in traditional surveillance, the political authority supervises individuals with open or closed systems such as CCCS, for maintaining its hold over society and protecting public spaces from so-called dangers and threats. What makes the monitoring by the political authority different is that it does not do this anonymously. In individual digital surveillance, it is possible to remain anonymous, though. The individual creates a virtual profile for himself/herself in the digital world. The individual being monitored does not have any information about through which devices, where, and how s/he is being watched. In this context, especially being anonymous serves the act of peeping. Anonymity brings with it a sense of freedom and power (Uyanık, 2013). The person peeped becomes a part of the peep culture in the name of freedom of expression and the person peeping in the name of free access to information.

The freedom brought by anonymization also offers individuals the opportunity to create different and multiple identities. The individual can create a virtual identity that is completely different from his/her real identity. The reality of identities created in the virtual space is temporary and fluid. Individuals can change their age, place of residence, gender and other socio-cultural characteristics at any time according to the social identities and groups they feel or want to belong to.

In summary, the individual creates a second world where reality is virtual in order to locate himself/herself in a social group with a different identity and in a different place from his/her physical life space. However, with the emergence of interactive social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, the concept of anonymity has changed (Toprak et al., 2009).

Foucault (1977, p.214) describes surveillance as "what is continuous, comprehensive, and ubiquitous." As a matter of a fact, with the increase in the

surveillance capacity of digital devices, surveillance has started to operate in a two-way process, and there is no time-space limitation in digital surveillance. Thomas Mathiesen (1997) takes one step further from Foucault to describe the contemporary digital generation of surveillance mechanisms and puts forward the concept of "synopticon". Synopticon is a mechanism by which the majority practices surveillance over the minority, unlike the panopticon. The aspect that transforms surveillance from the panopticon to synopticon model is that in digital surveillance, a large number of people happen to watch a small number of people. This means that, unlike panopticon, the watched individual is also watching others, too.

Although the new synopticon mechanism in social media differs from the traditional panopticon model both practically and theoretically, it is based on the same pedigree in terms of its logic. By the idea of panopticon, Bentham advocated applying a punitive measure that was not severe but effective against individuals who acted illegally or violated social norms (Foucault, 1992a). Likewise, any content or discourse that is contrary to social norms and values on social media might by the platform on which it is shared and may be exposed to such reactions of viewers as dislikes, blocks, condemnation, hate speech, and non-following.

Besides that, in the panopticon-styled prison, skilled prisoners were selected and assigned certain tasks. With these duties, prisoners both benefited the system economically and gained privileges within the prison (Niedzviecki, 2010). Social media platforms also promote and encourage participants with more likes and views than others, and by maintaining participants' popularity and visibility, they attract more participants.

Another aspect of this synopticon universe that apparently differs from the panopticon model is that it offers an "illusion of freedom". The monitored individual

feels free as long as s/he can watch others. In addition, in traditional surveillance, the individual is monitored without their free will for reasons such as safety and urgency. However, volunteering is essential in the visibility of the individual in the digital space (Lyon, 2007). For example, it is completely voluntary for a YouTuber to share videos of his/her house or to record the moment of a birth and upload it to YouTube. This suggests issues of disclosure and exhibitionism. Looking, seeing, and watching ensures an inner sense of satisfaction in the individual and triggers the feeling of pleasure. Freud defined this state of sexual pleasure taken from seeing and watching others as "scopophilia. "According to Butler (2011), Sigmund Freud analyzed the concept of scopophilia as a fundamental drive:

For Freud, all human behaviors derived from the need for gratification – this is the Pleasure Principle, with desires arising from the unconscious mind. The unconscious is part of the mind that determines what we do and feel, although we cannot access it directly – otherwise it wouldn't be unconscious. If we performed every unconscious desire then anarchy would result: no work would get done, no food would be produced, rape would be endemic and, well, we'd all be exhausted. Society therefore frowns upon such sexual excess and so the individual represses desires – this is the Reality Principle. (p. 69)

Just because these unconscious desires are suppressed does not mean that they cannot be revealed. Although individuals suppress or repress their desires, they want to take pleasure from the reality they are in. However, an active act of taking pleasure will have certain legal and social sanctions, so the individual wants to experience this pleasure passively, that is, by peeping.

Jacques Lacan's notion of "mirror stage" can also help us understand this situation. According to Lacan, at this stage, a 6 to 18 month old child comes across

with its own image in the mirror and begins to become aware of its own self (ego). It watches the image it sees in the mirror as if it were a superior being outside itself. The image in the mirror constitutes the imaginary, but it becomes an "other" that can be watched and observed. Here, the eye emerges as the most important organ symbolizing the mind (Başer, 2010).

Christian Metz has analyzed the notion of "mirror stage" in the context of cinema. Metz (1983) states that individuals want to see themselves in place of the image they are watching while quietly and passively watching an image that they consider superior to themselves in terms of physics, behavioral aspects, and status. Individuals are aware that the image they are watching is not them, but they cannot help identifying themselves with it.

Today, the cinema screen now shares this function with digital screens. Also, the logic behind the mirror metaphor can be found in social media, as well. The process which Metz has theorized for cinema is now put into practice with voyeuristic and narcissistic practices in social media. In social media, the individual takes on a voyeuristic and peeping identity and satisfies the instincts of pleasure, control, and curiosity. Peeping is also associated with narcissistic pleasure, another aspect of scopophilia (Mulvey, 1999). Narcissistic pleasure arises with the feeling of identification with the image seen in social media.

According to thinkers who approach the subject from a gender perspective, peeping is a masculine act. Laura Mulvey examines the male gaze in cinematography under three headings: camera, character and audience (Smelik, 2008). This framework can also be used to analyze peeping practices in social media. These three elements are especially available in YouTube, which is a video sharing platform. The individual user watches the character / characters through the eyes of the camera on

YouTube, just like in the cinema. Every video has an actor, and the individual feels a narcissistic pleasure by identifying with these actors. The audience is the individual itself, who is in a peeping position. There are also feminized images that are positioned as spectacular beings in YouTube. The narcissistic pleasure of peeping, on the one hand, and feminizing the peeped, on the other, from the male gaze can be considered as a feature that distinguishes peeping in social media, and in YouTube, in particular, from the surveillance practices attributed to central power.

Marshall McLuhan has examined the effects of electronic and technological tools, especially television, on individuals and society and defined the period that came with television as a “global village” (McLuhan & Powers, 1989). McLuhan introduced the notion of "global village" with the idea that the virtual world will reunite individuals (Altay, 2005). According to McLuhan, television brings individuals together in unnatural virtual villages, while distributing them to separate villages around the world. This is also pertinent for social media today. In contemporary societies, individuals form groups via social media without interacting face to face and feel themselves belonging to certain group identities. These groups, small or large, while acting collectively, become a virtual village, so to speak.

Another development that facilitates peeping in social media is the formation of these virtual villages. The concept of virtual village particularly refers to social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. To give an example from YouTube, YouTube has reached more than 2 million users (YouTube, n.d.). According to the data as of January 17, 2021, one of the world-famous YouTubers, David Dobrik, who has 18.7 million followers, posted a video called "we broke up" about, ending his relationship with his woman partner, which was watched by 69,161,026 people (Dobrik, 2018). The mentioned number of followers and of views

are both higher than populations of some countries. For example, on January 17, 2021, the population of Monaco is 39,056, Iceland 342,653, and Estonia 1,322,003 (Countrymeters, 2019). Considering these numbers, every platform, even every user, is potentially a virtual country beyond being a virtual village. That is, social media makes individuals feel close to every person in the world by shrinking the world. This feeling turns into a narcissistic and voyeuristic pleasure that increases with watching and being watched, and as a result, it allows us to talk about a collective phenomenon of "peep culture".

The transformation of social media into a peeping tool has occurred under the influence of numerous historical and socio-political developments, the most influential of which is the emergence of digital capitalism, as it is called. To understand the digital form of capitalism which contemporarily taken, we should briefly look at the notion of capitalism along with its history first, which is what we are going to do in the following section.

2.2 Digital Capitalism

Social, economic, ideological, industrial and technological developments that emerged as a result of human activities have affected lifestyles, understandings, and cultures of individuals throughout history. Economic systems are a set of structured relations that produce solutions for societal survival, and needs satisfaction. The contemporary economic system is called capitalism in the most general terms. In this section, firstly, capitalism as a mode of production will be briefly defined, and the relation of modern capitalism with surveillance and discipline practices will be

discussed; then the notion of digital capitalism, referring to the new form capitalism has assumed in the digital age, will be explained.

Peep culture that we discussed above is based on individual practices that are nourished by cultural structures and relationships accompanying capitalism. First of all, according to ideological supporters of capitalism, individual freedoms and individualism are at the core of this capitalist organization of society. On the other hand, in capitalism, the individual's body is important for production and consumption. Since the body is seen as a potential means of production, capitalism has a disciplining power over bodies. Discipline in capitalism is provided by three methods: surveillance, control, and normalization (Foucault, 2008a). The enforcement mechanism of discipline is norms and punishments. In this respect, while capitalism is liberating on the one hand, it is also controlling and rule-making, on the other hand.

Historically speaking, in the emergence of capitalism, capital accumulation, the emergence of free labor, surplus-value mechanism, generalized commodity production, and private property played an important role. Capitalism in the classical sense is a form of economic organization whose ideology is liberalism, in which private individuals own means of production and those who lack them are free to sell their labor at a price determined by the private market, not the state (Barry, 2002). In capitalism, with the transformation of labor power into a commodity, working became a necessary means of survival instead of an opportunity (Ollman, 2015).

Karl Marx theoretically bases social developments and changes on economics. In this context, he historically divides the historical progress of humanity into five categories: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, and communist society. He states that every form of social production, except communism, consists of class conflicts and is based on a certain dialectics: For example, the capital-labor conflict in

capitalism has replaced the landlord-serf conflict in feudal society. Marx examines the capitalist system on the basis of two principles:

1. Accumulation and monopolization of capital: Capital owners will incorporate small-scale enterprises into their own structure and expand their own capital; small businesses will disappear in time, competition will only be among the owners of large capital, and capital will be centralized (Marx, 2004).
2. Dispossession: Mechanization, increased technology, and mass production will undermine the skills of the individual, allowing everyone to do any job, and wages will be reduced in turn (Marx, 2004).

As a result of these two developments, the capital-labor conflict in capitalism will grow even more, and the antagonism will increase. The proletariat (the working class) will rise up in the face of its own misery and make a revolution to dominate the means of production. Marx sees the revolt of the working class against the bourgeoisie (the capital class) as the end of capitalism and the beginning of communism, a classless society.

Foucault also criticizes surveillance and disciplining mechanisms, which he extensively deals with in his works, in the context of modern capitalism. However, unlike Marx, Foucault sees power as a means of objectification and neutralization, without linking human behavior only to economics. Foucault points out that power does not have a single center and has a capillary nature instead: power was implemented through violence and brute force in pre-modern societies, but in modernity there has appeared logic of power that tries to control society through disciplining individual bodies. Foucault calls this "biopower" and associates this logic of power with notions brought about by the capitalist mode of production, such as

mass production, flexible working hours, and the transformation of body power into productive power. In summary, according to Foucault, biopower is the power technology of capitalism, but it is not only economic interests that lie at the basis of biopower.

Taylorism, which is one of the ways Western capitalist countries found to get out of the economic crisis experienced towards the end of the 19th century, can be evaluated in this context. The theoretical foundation of Taylorism was laid in the early 1900's by the book *The Principles of Scientific Management* written by Frederick Winslow Taylor in order to maximize the efficiency of the industrial production process. In brief, Taylorism can be defined as the organization of labor force, production process and work administration through scientific techniques. The aim is to save unnecessary workload and time expenditure for capital and, thus, to achieve maximum efficiency. Here the human being is secondary; production and profit take precedence over it. Every employee is supposed to be rewarded according to his/her work; it is assumed that the harder s/he works, the more s/he gets. In this way, the employee's body is disciplined on the basis of the profit-making logic of the capital. Fordism is the form of mass production that followed Taylorism and dominated the post-World War II period of capitalism. Originally it refers to the mass production method used by Henry Ford in its own automobile factories. Fordism, in general, is an accumulation regime in which industrial production takes a mass form and jobs based on less qualified manual skills are organized according to the Taylorist principles. In Fordism, the labor process is under control by Taylorist control mechanisms. Labor is hierarchically organized; standardization and privatization of the workforce are increased. In this context, Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci has brought the criticism that Fordism will start a new era in capitalism and that it is a system that

programs not only production but also “standardized individuals” (Antonio & Bonanno, 2000).

Fordism moved forward with the Keynesian movement that guided the economy in order to maintain the capitalist order after the 1929 Depression. Keynesian financial policies and the understanding of welfare state paved the way for Fordism to spread. Especially, the strengthening of communist ideology during and after the Second World War put the capitalist world, which then faced a strong alternative, into a more severe crisis. The crisis was tried to be overcome with economic solutions and welfare state policies, and the economic, cultural and ideological structure of the period evolved in a strategy that prioritized the survival of capitalism. As a matter of fact, although the foundations of Fordism date back to 1914, it became effective after 1945. That was because in the post-war period, capitalist countries were looking for a solution to get rid of the economic depression brought on by the war. Fordism was seen as a system that would restore the economy to its former power by rearranging the working mechanism and increasing production in parallel with the labor force and mass production.

However, after 1960, Fordism began to be regarded as insufficient to sustain profitability. Although Fordism broke ground in mass production, it was not a flexible system that would satisfy the consumer. It also had strict Taylorist regulations regarding work and workers' rights. Thus, Fordism left its place to post-Fordism, which is a more flexible production regime. Post Fordism is a technology-based labor organization system that supposedly clears production and consumption from standardization and does not have strict rules in the labor process.

In post-Fordism, the Keynesian understanding has been replaced by the Schumpeterian understanding of the state. Schumpeter attributes the continuation of

the capitalist order to the formation of new techniques, new markets, new industrial organizations, and new production and consumption materials. Schumpeter was also in favor of breaking down old systems and replacing them with an innovative system for economic development. This approach brought along the concept of "creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 2012, p.67). Post-Fordism is, in this respect, a regime of capital accumulation that breaks down the old by changing and adding onto it. The most distinctive features of this accumulation regime are that demand is not predetermined but flexible, instead of standardization in Fordism, and it is supposedly based on the wishes and desires of the consumer.

Post-Fordism changed labor, business, and consumer relations and brought capitalism to a new era. This period, dated to 1968 and afterwards by Mandel, can also be called "late capitalism" (Mandel, 1991). In late capitalism, multinational companies dominate the world markets and production, consumption and distribution processes are increasingly global, capital circulation has reached a level of fluidity and flexibility that does not recognize national borders, and knowledge has become a very important capital component instead of manual power. Also, with postmodernism, as the pillar of post-Fordism in the cultural sphere, fixed rules and understandings of modernism have begun to collapse.

Liberalism, the ideology of modern monopoly capitalism, has changed and turned into neoliberalism during the late capitalist period. Neoliberalism claims that the boundaries between classes are made transparent and calls on each individual to be an "entrepreneur" (Chul Han, 2019). On the other hand, neoliberalism, like classical liberalism, is based on the principle of internationalization of the economy and, therefore, of the purification of the economy from politics, so to speak, while

supporting individual freedoms, strong capital, limited state, and private property at all.

To summarize the above discussion and to provide a conceptual framework for further discussions, the elements that evolved, emerged, and transformed in the phases of monopolistic and late capitalism are tabulated below as follows:

Table 1. Changing Notions Between 1914-1968 and After 1968

Notion	1914-1968	After 1968
culture	Modernism	Postmodernism
economy	Fordism	Post-Fordism
ideology	Liberalism	Neoliberalism

According to Foucault (2008b), neoliberalism takes the management of the individual as its main pillar. The individual gets involved in the market with his/her own initiative and subjectivity. From this perspective, neoliberalism paved the way for the emancipation of the individual through self-realization. It is claimed that this liberation has an economic as well as a cultural dimension.

As a matter of fact, the importance of cultural markets has increased within neoliberalism. Investment in cultural industries that "provoke" individual freedoms has increased, and cultural production and consumption have become more important. It is seen that especially culture and cultural products are commodified in an unprecedented amount, scope, and variety with the use of digital technologies.

One of the areas that are claimed to be "liberating" individuals within late capitalism is social media platforms, which are part of the digital space. The wishes and requests of the individual are assumed to be at the forefront in social media. At the same time, one performs a kind of virtual production according to his/her wishes. Moreover, social networks are platforms where communication and content take place

as transcending time-space boundaries. However, thinkers who question this "narrative of freedom," for example Smythe (1977), argue that not only support existing production and consumption relations, digital communication technologies also transform users into commodities and labor power. In short, social media has been criticized for contributing to the capitalist labor processes, while supposedly leading to improvements in terms of democracy and freedoms.

The digitization of capitalism is called digital capitalism in general. Schiller (1999) was the first to describe digital capitalism. Schiller (1999, p. 204) summarized digital capitalism in its most general form as a process of “market development around networks”.

Büyükuslu (2017) defines digital capitalism as follows:

Although it includes all innovative concepts such as digital economy, digital technological transformation, a new capital accumulation model based on innovation and technology, growth and development based on innovation and digital technology, social innovation, social entrepreneurship, digital business and labor, essentially in terms of global labor markets, it represents the transition from a market economy to an innovation-based digital economy and from conventional social policy to social innovation. (n.p.).

A main defining feature of digital capitalism is that most activities take place within and through networks shaped in digital environments. Staab & Nachtwey (2016) explains this as follows:

Currently, there are increasing indications that we are in the midst of new wave of technological innovation fueled especially by three factors: (1) revolutions in data storage, processing, and retrieval (big data); (2) the growing dissemination and interconnectedness of digital devices among

producers and consumers; and (3) the development of intelligent algorithms. (pp. 457-58).

However, the above definitions view digital capitalism from an affirmative perspective. In order to understand digital capitalism more fully, we need a framework that focuses on capitalism on a critical ground, though. In the context of digital capitalism, the concepts of capital, labor and worker have undergone transformation. Through these three elements, the new digital state of capitalism can be explained in general terms. Capital and market are more focused on media and information-based content in the digital field. In digital capitalism, capital is located on a network, mostly encoded with numerical data rather than being available in the form of factories, land, and other means of production. In the digital field, labor force has also turned into creative labor rather than involving mere physical power. Now, the labor force is valued according to the content produced, shared, watched. The concept of worker has also changed in this context. We cannot talk about a classical capital and labor relationship in digital capitalism; the identity of the worker has left its place in social media to identities such as "YouTuber," "influencer," and "phenomenon." These people are positioned as main content producers in the digital field. Another thing that differs from classical capitalism is that content producers are not only workers in the digital field; users who are content consumers also contribute to the financial cycles of social media platforms by spending time and effort, thus becoming a kind of unpaid worker.

Capitalist capital-labor relations are gradually shifting from the physical space to virtual spaces with developing technologies. Production and consumption activities are transferred to the digital environment and labor is transformed into commodified

digital content (Kıyan, 2016). The fact that digital content is not a tangible product has also changed consumption practices. In social media, the individual is not always in a material exchange as in classical commodity consumption. By producing, sharing or watching content, s/he actually gives its own time and effort to the other party. Fuchs (2015) sees every effort made for digital media as “digital labor” because they are all part of the labor that emerges in a holistic way for the existence of the digital world (p.22). Digital capitalism has changed the boundaries of capitalism with this aspect. This change has also affected the cultural field on a large scale. In this context, in the following sections, the notions of culture industry, popular culture, and consumption culture will be examined in relation to social media, which is the main area where digital capitalism manifests itself.

2.2.1 Culture Industry and Popular Culture

Capitalism should not be considered only economically. Economy affects the life style of the individual, and consequently his/her culture. In this case, economy and culture are inseparable. The concept of "culture industry" may mediate our reflections about the effects of capitalism on cultural life. Moreover, social media, which is a component of digital capitalism, is also the most influential part of the culture industry today.

The term "culture industry" was first used in 1947 in the work called *Dialectic of Enlightenment* published by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, members of the Frankfurt school. The term "industry" here describes the standardization of cultural products for sale in the market (Adorno, 2003). In summary, what is meant here is the transformation of culture into an industrial commodity with the emergence of mass communication (Modleski, 1998). With industrialization, culture and its

elements have started to become a part of capitalist production and consumption processes like other commodities. Culture has started to industrialize through the mass media, especially in the advertising and cinema sectors, and today it continues to industrialize through social media. All these sectors get their content from a mix of culture and entertainment.

Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the culture industry is a tool that is driven from the top down rather than from the bottom up, and they see the culture industry as a dead end and an anti-democratic structure (Karatzogianni, 2018). According to them, the culture industry, which keeps enthusiasm of individuals warm, reminds them of the elements they do not have, and makes them taste fun and superficial pleasures, directs the individual to consume ever more, thus serving the maintenance of the capitalist system. Walter Benjamin, another representative of the Frankfurt School, acknowledges this quality of the culture industry but claims that it could have a progressive and democratic function. Benjamin (2001) stated that if the individual reacts to these manipulative effects by using the tools of the culture industry against itself, this process will turn the negative side into positive.

The culture industry operates within a supply-demand mechanism. The commodified culture is presented in a way that the individual can directly identify with. The culture industry sets its criteria according to the characteristics of the general audience. At the same time, the sustainability of the product depends on its consumption by the general audience. The more the general audience identifies themselves with, uses, shares and interprets the product, the more "popular" the commodity becomes. Therefore, the selection and success of a good depends on its popularity. Thus, popularity, which determines the quality and quantity of

commodities produced by the culture industry, forms the basis of the concept of "popular culture".

Popular culture is simply the mass culture of daily life (Batı, 2018, p. 138). Cultural commodities that can meet the psychological, sociological and economic needs of daily life and are widely accepted in society can be considered as popular. However, to talk about popular culture, one should first mention the mass society and mass culture that have created it because popular culture is a mass culture that is consumed frequently and continuously (Berger, 2014). It represents the “right” way to live and the “right” commodities to consume, that is, the "idea of the right life" (Best & Kellner, 2017).

The Frankfurt School was concerned with the position of the individual in industrial and capitalist societies (Bottomore, 1997). They considered the individual as an entity within mass society. Mass society, in general, is a social organization that is composed of individuals who are different in terms of their social functions but have similar characteristics in themselves. It is thought that the mass society, generated by industrial capitalism, reduces individual differences and causes individuals to become uniform. The fascist regimes between World War I and World War II were also effective in the formation of mass society. The effects of this period include the alienation of individuals from themselves and their submission to a higher authority, or their grouping in order to make their voices heard through an authoritarian figure. The use of mass media as a tool of manipulation both in the fascist regimes before World War II and in the post-war period when capitalism was on the rise affected Adorno and Horkheimer's critical approach to mass culture (Mutlu, 2001, p. 22).

It was the Frankfurt School that introduced the term culture industry into literature, emphasizing the role of the media and culture in maintaining the capitalist system. The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies was founded in the 1960s, under the leadership of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, and it drew on the insights of the Frankfurt School. The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies constituted the basis of the British School of Cultural Studies. British Cultural Studies examines media production and consumption processes through ideological criticism. They argue that the media is dominant in the field of culture in modern societies and popular culture deserves critical examining (Güçhan, 2003). British Cultural Studies states that the media and mass media shape the dominant ideology and popular culture.

They analyzed the commodities produced by the mass media by using textual analysis methods borrowed from literature and semiology. This approach has been conceptualized by Stuart Hall as “encoding-decoding.” Here, media professionals are the encoder, and the audience is the decoder. By saying that no text can be independent of culture and society, Hall (2005) considered the relationship between the media, which is the producer of the text, and the audience-individual, which is the consumer of the text, as a hegemonic process. In this process, the media shapes individuals' perceptions, tastes, likes, interests, attitudes, behaviors, and consumption habits by reproducing cultural commodities. However, Hall argued with the "encoding-decoding" theory that the audience is not a passive receiver who adopts the given codes as such. According to this, audiences can encode a media text in three ways: the first is the dominant position, which is the coding of the ideological message as it is, the second is the negotiated position where the messages are not

directly accepted and questioned, and the third is the oppositional position in which the message is not accepted and strictly questioned.

British Cultural Studies, like the Frankfurt School, is influenced by Marxist theory in its description of mass culture, but they see culture as a phenomenon that is created by society and reflects society, not as an element of superstructure that manipulates the masses. Rather than simply downplaying popular culture as "false consciousness," it took a relatively positive approach to popular culture; some representatives of the School even stated that popular culture reinforces creativity and appeals to active rather than passive receivers (Abercrombie, 2006).

According to this positive approach to popular culture, popular culture differs from mass culture. While mass culture is a product produced by the culture industry for mass consumption, popular culture appeals to the public (Turner, 2006). While mass culture is the product of an economic process carried out for the continuity of capitalism, popular culture is a culture that is more spontaneous and that people themselves give meaning to. Upper-class and hegemonic figures cannot create popular culture because popular culture is a culture in which the lower and excluded classes of society produce alternative meanings to the ideologies of the dominant powers.

However, British Cultural Studies acknowledges that while popular culture can have opponent meanings, it also serves capitalism in general. Postmodern thinkers have a much more positive attitude towards popular culture and the ideas that come with it. They argue that modernism must be questioned and that there should be no absolute truth or fixed rules in culture and art. They state that social theories such as Marxism, which share modernism's pursuit of universal truth, look at society from a

bird's eye view and from a totalitarian perspective whereas, in fact, society has different, undeniable realities (Lyotard, 1984).

Postmodernist thinkers do not generally have any problems with the transformation of culture into a consumption commodity. While the importance of individuals with their wishes, desires, and aesthetics has increased in postmodernism, consumption has been accepted and welcomed as a way of showing them. Indeed, cultural production and commodity production have been intertwined in Western countries after the 1960s (Harvey, 2010). In the next section, postmodernism and its relation to consumer society will be examined in more depth.

2.2.2 Postmodernism and Consumer Society

It is possible to read the concept of postmodernism as composed of “post” and “modernism” linguistically. Although the first use of the concept of postmodernism dates back to the end of the 1800s, the concept entered daily life with increasing technological advances after World War II, the widespread use of mass production, and the enrichment and expansion of consumption possibilities.

To put it briefly, the cultural equivalent of the post-Fordist era in economics is postmodernism. Postmodernism as an art and thought movement emerged in the 1960s, began to spread in the United States of America in the 1970s and in Europe in the 1980s (Doltaş, 1991). In Turkey, it became a part of public discussion in the 1990s. After art and literature, it was manifest in areas like architecture, history, sociology, psychology, communication, media etc. Postmodernism, unlike its predecessors, has entered the field of cultural production as a movement that defends differences, uncertainties and understanding the "other" (Çabuklu, 2004).

Daniel Bell attaches importance to the role of cultural changes and individual desires in the emergence of postmodernism. Accordingly, the postmodern individual tries to create a unique life and thinking style, away from imitation and apart from imposed patterns. For this reason, in postmodernism, stereotypes have been thrown aside, and the production and consumption process are driven by individual desires. (Solomon, 2017). Likewise, Lyotard (2000) sees postmodernism as a culture that shows what cannot be shown in modernism, does not have a rule of thumb, and is against modernism. Lyotard (1984) defines postmodernism as "incredulity towards meta-narratives" (p.24). "The two metanarratives that Lyotard sees as having been most important in the past are (1) history as progressing towards social enlightenment and emancipation, and (2) knowledge as progressing towards totalisation" (Woodward, 2002, n.p.). In postmodernism, according to Lyotard, these two major metanarratives have faced a downfall. Foucault (2008a) also sees modernism as a prison because it excludes everything that is not normal and gathers them within a single frame and resembles postmodern thinkers in his critical attitude towards modernism.

Postmodernism embraces differences, according to thinkers who approach it positively, and does not accept a single view as true. Giddens, who is more critical of postmodernism, sees postmodernism as a pillar of modernism, not as opposed to it, and argues that the components of modernism continue to exist in the postmodern period. Giddens studied modernism through four institutions. These are capitalism, military power, industrialism, and surveillance capacities. These institutions are an overwhelming machine which is highly influential over society. Stating that nothing will have an effect on this overwhelming power, Giddens (2001) argues that the innovations brought by postmodernism only serve as a locomotive for modernism.

Fredric Jameson also sees postmodernism as an evolution of modernism. However, he says that postmodernism is not independent from modernism nor is it a continuation of modernism. He sees it as a product of the period of "late capitalism," and, even as "the cultural logic of late capitalism" (Jameson, 1994). Jameson also states that with postmodernism, everything is now included in the culture industry. Another criticism made by Jameson (2005) is the departure from naturalness with digital technologies in the postmodern period. While Jameson interprets the effect of digital technologies from a Marxist perspective, postmodern thinker Baudrillard, as a complement to this view, states that in the postmodern period with the media the boundary between the real and the unreal has become transparent and hyper-reality has gained a new dimension.

Art has become one of the main cultural elements that have been further transformed into an object of consumption with postmodernism. To give an example from cinema, the narrative in modernism that progresses in a chronological plane with a definite beginning and end has been broken in postmodernism, and the plot has been decentralized, and fragmented. Intertextuality entered the cinema as a reflection of the fragmentation of classical narrative structure. Consequently, notions of pastiche, irony, referencing, and hybridization have emerged. Moreover, in postmodernism, every detail of the culture, including those elements that were previously considered to be in opposition to the dominant ideology, has become more and more a part of consumption. People even have become quick to consume not only production commodities but also cultural, artistic and individual elements through a "throw-away" approach, (Harvey, 1997).

Bocock (1997) says that in capitalist societies, in order to ensure the continuity of capital accumulation, goods and services should be sold with a certain profit and

consumption should continue for this (p. 43). Therefore, production and consumption continue in a continuous loop without ending, and a unreal attraction is loaded on commodities without providing individuals with complete satisfaction.

Postmodernism is not only identified with the collapse of meta narratives but with the transition from the production society to the consumer society, too. Especially in the contemporary consumption culture, which has been reshaped with the widespread use of digital communication technologies in the post-Fordist accumulation regime, the individual has rendered capitalism serving not only as a producer but also as a consumer in his daily life (Bocock, 1997).

There is a difference between consumption culture and consumption society. While consumption culture describes the consumption patterns of society, consumption society is one in which the market economy is highly important and consumption is transformed from being a means to an end in itself (Odabaşı, 2006, p. 41). Zygmunt Bauman (2005) defines the consumer society as a phenomenon specific to capitalism, where consumers are those in any other society. Baudrillard (1998) also defines consumer society as "a new and unique style of socialization proportionate to the emergence of new productive powers and the monopolistic restructuring of an economic system which ensures higher productivity" (p. 85).

As such, the consumer society is accepted as a defining feature of the postmodern period. In the postmodern period, consumption and consumer have been shaped differently than in the modern period. Consumers more or less controlled consumption in the modern period. In the postmodern period, the consumer is both a consuming and a consumed object. The consumer sees himself/herself as an object rather than a subject (Batı, 2018). This has caused consumption to become "pretentious" in postmodern spectacle societies.

Thorstein Veblen was one of the first modern thinkers to deal with pretentious consumption. Veblen first described it in his book *The Theory of Leisure Class* in 1899 as consumption made for the purpose of gaining ostentation and social status rather than satisfying a necessity. While Veblen was critical of Marx's views of capitalism, he focused more on how consumption than on production goes under capitalism and approached consumption from a sociological perspective. Thorstein Veblen states that the basis of industrial society is materiality. In the capitalist system, the owner of capital, no longer needs to do anything as s/he employs worker, and this community of capital owners creates a new class called the "leisure class" (Veblen, 2007). For the leisure class, it is to live a flamboyant life without working and producing as a status indicator (Veblen, 2007). In late capitalism, where the individual defines himself/herself through consumption rather than production, we can say that this mood of the leisure class has been generalized. The consumption of certain objects becomes an indicator of wealth, status, reputation, and value. Conspicuous consumption is also linked to hedonic consumption. This is because hedonic consumption, which includes images and fantasies, is more about what an individual feels while possessing a product rather than what the product itself is. Not all hedonic consumption is conspicuous, but every conspicuous consumption contains more or less symbolic pleasure. For example, it is a pleasure to show that you own a certain brand rather than owning a product produced by that brand.

Sociologist Georg Simmel is one of the thinkers who have considered consumption in terms of metropolitan life. Like Veblen, he has a sociological approach to consumption. He saw the metropolis as a cultural phenomenon rather than a place and approached consumption in terms of the dialectic between culture and division of labor. He says that while trying to exist in the metropolitan life, the

individual complies with certain consumption patterns in order to protect both his/her individual differences and status, and a new society emerges with the efforts of individuals to adapt to the metropolis, while people in this society try to gain a false individuality through consumption; in fact, they become increasingly lonely (Simmel, 2003). The lonely individual exhibits a "blase attitude" towards others and the metropolis s/he is in (Simmel, 1964). In this respect, Simmel associates the alienation of the individual with the process of consumption, not production, unlike Marx.

Walter Benjamin, a member of the Frankfurt School, has also criticized capitalism and consumption through a focus on urban culture. The "idle city traveler," whom he calls *flaneur*, represents the individual in the transition to the consumer society. Flaneur, as an intellectual character created by capitalism, wanders in the crowd in the streets, markets, and passages where consumption takes place. Flaneur simply observes and enjoys it, without being involved in consumption. As he does not keep pace with consumption, s/he feels himself a unique and free individual. In this respect, it is actually a rebellion against capitalism and what it brings. However, the concept of "flaneur" changes with the consumption society. In late capitalism, the individual wandering around shopping malls that have become centers of consumption takes her/his place. In this process, social media can be likened to a shopping center which includes all aspects of life. The user may sometimes wander around there for entertainment and leisure purposes only. S/He experiences consumption as a stream flowing from some contents to another. After a while, when this consumption becomes automatic and habitual, then the user has a "blasé attitude" against it.

Another Frankfurt School member, Herbert Marcuse, divides consumption into two as the consumption of "false and real needs." The false ones are those that

are imposed on individuals through the mass media for the continuity of the capitalist order. Real ones on the other hand, are vital needs that are sustained without any concern for benefit (Marcuse, 1997). The perception that individuals can identify with the upper class through consumption has been produced and the satisfaction they lack in their life has been tried to be filled through consumption (Yavuz, 2007). In this context, Marcuse defines consumption as "happiness in unhappiness."

As Baumann (2004) states, the attraction of consumption is provided by certain values and indicators. Indeed, Baudrillard treats consumption as the consumption of symbols and signs rather than objects themselves. Individuals attribute certain meanings to symbols and signs depending on the society and time they live in. Signs are meaningless when they are independent of the individual. Baudrillard argues that in the postmodern period, not the objects themselves but the desire they symbolize became the consumed commodity. For this reason, consumption now aims to meet desires rather than functionality. Traditional and digital media tools constantly stimulate the consumption desire of the individual by attracting the individual with signs and symbols. The fact that products appear as a social and/or symbolic need rather than responding to real needs makes reality indistinguishable (Baudrillard, 1998). The individual is not aware of what is real and what is false.

Moreover, the difference of late capitalism is that social control is realized through the production of needs and desires, not through repression. What turns people into individuals and makes them feel important is consumption. Consumption is also a form of control. This is how the transition from the classical panopticon model of surveillance to a model of society where the individual keeps themselves and other individuals under surveillance is realized. The eye at the panopticon is now

in every moment and every point of the consumer society in late capitalism, and its agent is the individual itself. Moreover, this eye is located on a constantly growing network.

2.2.3 Network Society

From a sociological perspective, the concept of network refers to a structure formed by individuals linked to one or more social connections (Marshall, 2000). The development of internet-based communication and information technologies (ICTs) in postmodern societies brought different groups of people together in common goals and denominators, and these clusters created a "network society" (Castells, 2000). With the opportunities offered by information technologies, within the framework of the transition from industrial mass society to post-industrial network society has started. While the mass society is collective, the network society has an individual-oriented structure (Dijk, 2006).

Changing power structures within late capitalism and postmodernism paved the way for more individual-oriented communities and organizations. It is because it is seen that individuals become relatively independent from the central government with the developing technologies and build their autonomous communities in a less controlled environment (Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006).

Castells (2000) says that the network society emerged from the intersection of three main phases. The first phase is information technologies that emerged in the 1970s; second phase is the evolution of capitalism until the 1980s and its end; the third phase involved the social events that occurred depending on the first two phases. Thus, the network society has emerged with the changing environment of capitalism. In summary, the network society is a net-based system of intermingled social

groupings consisting of individuals who produce and use information within the context of the emergence of late capitalism, and social media is the new digital public space where this society comes together.

The network society is formed and shaped on internet-based platforms instead of face-to-face communication. Intra-network communication does not occur at once. Network communication is a communication that repeats and renews itself and lasts longer (Prey, 2014, p. 267). At the same time, it maintains its dynamic nature because the interaction between individuals is continuous. This persistence and dynamism are one of the reasons why the network society is constantly reshaping itself.

It is seen that the network society is also effective in forming public opinion on social media, thanks to the online gathering of individuals who are otherwise difficult to come together for various reasons in real life. This environment, which is impossible to be completely controlled by the state, shows that individuals can create flexible networks that cross borders in the virtual world. The Arab Spring protests that emerged in 2010 and whose effects are still continuing to date can be cited as an example of how the network society creates public opinion. In this geography where freedom of expression and access is limited, social media has been used as a tool for activists to make their voices heard and to overcome physical boundaries and reach the masses in a short time (Babacan et al., 2014). Today, individuals not only act as viewers but also turn themselves into actors by creating a network through social media.

The gathering of individuals under a network not only created a free environment for individuals but also caused them to be supervised and monitored. Although social media is a unifying and liberal platform, individuals turn into data here. This makes them a visible and spectacle object at any time. In the next section,

social media, a digital space in which individuals are fully involved and the concept of network society is most visible, will be examined in detail.

2.2.4 Social Media: Historical Development, Platforms and Characteristics

In this section, social media, which is one of the channels that mediate the formation of the network society, is discussed in general terms. First of all, the historical development of social media has been examined. In the next section, social media platforms and their features and functions are discussed. Finally, YouTube platform, which is the main research subject of the thesis, and the main features of YouTube are explained in depth.

Although social media has played a more active role in the lives of individuals especially in the period from 2000 to today, the birth of social media dates back to the 1970s. In Web 1.0 technology, communication is monologue based, and content is based on written production. This process started with the first e-mail sent in 1971. This went down in history as the first chatting experience. However, this was a limited socialization.

The first social media platforms are blogs that started to be established in 1994. The first blog was written by an American college student and is based on the author's discussion of university life. Other blogs established after that are built on personal experiences. Classmates.com, which was established in 1995 with the aim of finding old classmates, has been one of the first reflections of socialization and interaction on the digital platform apart from the personal blog style because being in contact with other people forge ahead the individual usage motivation. Later in 2004, with the establishment of the blog infrastructure called WordPress, a social media

user community called “blogger” emerged. It has become a goal to increase the number of readers by producing unique and different content as a blogger.

With the Web 2.0 technology that has been in our lives since 2000, interactive and individual-oriented digital environments have begun to form. Founded in the same year, Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia that allows information to be stored and allows users to edit information. It is considered as a social media platform as it enables its users to communicate with each other (Karayaka, 2018). Today, Wikipedia is one of the main channels that individuals choose to access information.

Founded in 2002, Friendster became one of the first examples of social media. It provided the basis of digital socialization by allowing individuals to create profiles, network with other users, and share photos and videos. Shortly after, MySpace, the closest social media channel to date, was founded in 2003. MySpace provided many possibilities to the user. The user was able to share both textual, visual and audio elements together. Another important feature was that it allowed to communicate and share with other users. Although its audience is less than the users of today's social media channels, it has inspired most social platforms available today.

With Web 2.0 technology, internet usage has started to evolve in a very different direction. Following Friendster's success in the digital environment and under the leadership of MySpace, social networks Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, respectively, have become leaders in the digital space. With these social media networks, the digital environment has started to transform into a network-based ecosystem.

Social media consists of three main notions. These are Web 2.0, content and community. Below, the main features of social media will be examined in the context of these three notions.

Social media is a set of platforms where users produce content for a particular community, thanks to Web 2.0 technology. The event, which turned the use of the Internet into an interactive and user-oriented one, has been the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 technology. One of the most important aspects of the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has been the transition from read-only to read-write system. In the Web 2.0 environment, the user is no longer just a reader but a writer, even a designer. The user can comment, change, share online and personalize the content they have accessed. In addition, Web 2.0 has started the process of switching from local to global by customizing the internet and computer. Since the concepts of time and place have been transcended, individuals or local small communities have access to communities outside of their zones.

Bill Gates emphasized the importance of content on the internet by saying "Content is king" in his article written in 1996 (as cited in Evans, 2017). With the content of traditional media being more accessible in the social media environment and the acceleration of access to these media, even the smallest content created in the digital environment preserves its permanence. In this respect, social media is a sustainable field

Social media platforms are generally based on interpersonal interaction. It includes interactive features such as messaging, commenting, liking, video chat, as well as sharing photos and audiovisual content. The common purposes of these features include communication with users' networks, access to information, blog / video-blog broadcasting, opinion transmission, online broadcasting, and entertainment.

Major social media platforms are as follows in order of establishment; Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006) and Instagram (2010). Facebook,

founded by Harvard University student Mark Zuckerberg, has added a completely different dimension to social media. It provides all kinds of sharing in visual, auditory and written forms and offers the individual the opportunity to freely create their own profile. Facebook, which carries interpersonal communication into a digital context, is an interactive environment where individuals can communicate with each other through online posts or private messages, or likes, and comment on other people's posts (Pempek et al., 2009). It also provides some access to the profiles of other users and allows people with common interests to come together to form specific groups and manage events. With these features, Facebook is the exact equivalent of the "social network" concept.

Instagram is a platform that allows users to share images, audio, and text. These shares are supported by interactive features such as liking, tagging, commenting and direct messaging. It is used today for certain personal or societal motivations. In a study conducted to determine personal Instagram usage motivations, four main motivations were identified: information retrieval, documentation, narcissism and innovativeness (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Marketing, promotion and advertising can be given as examples of societal motivations, on the other hand. One of the aspects that differentiates Instagram from other social media channels is that it is a more mobile-focused platform. This is because snapshots and video sharing are better suited to Instagram's purpose. At the same time, Instagram was acquired by the founders of Facebook in 2012 (Rodriguez, 2019). Thus, with the integration of both platforms, the total number of users has exceeded one hundred million.

The main factor that simulates and differentiates the social media platforms described above is the structure of the content allowed by the format. This content structure also determines the structure of the community. People showing the same or

similar trends come together on platforms that include similar content structures. Even similar users are divided into groups within themselves. Establishing groups specific to any interest on Facebook, following individuals representing an opinion or stance or meeting users who follow a certain agenda item or topic with the hashtag feature on Twitter, supporting each other by following people or institutions similar to themselves on Instagram, being a member of the channels of opinion leaders called “YouTubers” on YouTube and being in contact with other users in video comments show that individuals are grouped in social media and they form communities that overlap from place to place.

In summary, social media is a set of platforms that enter the lives of individuals with web 2.0 technology and offer an alternative ecosystem to individuals through these technologies, bringing individuals together and forming communities around created and shared content (Porter, 2004). Social media platforms aim to keep these communities dynamic with technology, and content that are renewed and updated every day. It allows individuals to have a voice and to feel free to a certain extent and to enjoy participation in social media in line with their individual motivations. With anonymity and/or the possibility of creating a virtual profile, it can enable the individual to create his or her self as s/he wants. However, since all of these are in front of the eyes of the community, the individual is not completely free because of the fear of being disliked, denounced and punished by other individuals.

Another important feature of social media is that the individual is not only a watcher as in traditional media but also a watcher and a participant. Individuals can now interact with other individuals they watch on social media, and they can produce content themselves. While playing not a passive but active role, on these platforms, they actually spend time and effort for the content they produce. In return, they

receive appreciation, approval and criticism; it can even provide a financial gain, too. Fuchs (2014) explains this new position of social media users with the following sentence: “Although there are very different forms of sociality and all media involve some form of sociality, the online platforms that today are referred to as social media have in common that they make intensive use of contributions from (content) producing consumers - 'prosumers'” (p. 98). Social media users, as prosumers, voluntarily turn the permanence, reproduction, consumption of content and community building into a commodity (Hebblewhite, 2011).

In addition, as mentioned above, social media allows the individual to rebuild and present his or her self in a different living space and a different world. In particular, social media is thought to further facilitate the life of the individual with Web 3.0, which is also known as the semantic web, where the artificial intelligence technology is active, and with Web 4.0, which is still developing. In addition, it will increase access, and, thus, it will be possible to transfer many details of real life to the virtual environment. Thus, hyperreality, which is defined as the blurring of the boundary between real and virtual world, will gain more momentum (Baudrillard, 2011). In this process, the material will no longer need to be produced. Real will be reproduced over and over again with digital data and images in a virtual environment (Baudrillard, 2012).

YouTube is one of the main social media platforms where reality is reproduced in a hyper-real context, because it is a video-based platform, the contents seen and watched here are the closest to being perceived as real. In this way, individuals establish an identification with the contents there, and a more favorable environment is created in order to exhibit their self-performances. In this context, YouTube will be examined in the next part.

2.2.4.1 YouTube

YouTube is, at its simplest, a video sharing network. In a deep sense, formed by the culture of participation, it is a video sharing network based on the principles of openness, visibility and originality and the existence of which depends largely on individuals' presentation of their lives (Burgess and Green, 2018). As shown in the table below, YouTube is the second most clicked platform in the world and in Turkey. It is also the most clicked social media platform. As can be understood from this, YouTube is preferred more than other social media platforms.

Figure 1: *World's Most Visited Websites (Kemp, 2020).*



Figure 2: *Turkey's Most Visited Websites (Kemp, 2020).*

JAN 2020 **MOST-VISITED WEBSITES (SIMILARWEB)**
RANKING OF TOP WEBSITES BY AVERAGE MONTHLY TRAFFIC ACCORDING TO SIMILARWEB

 **TURKEY**

#	WEBSITE	CATEGORY	MONTHLY TRAFFIC	TIME PER VISIT	PAGES PER VISIT
01	GOOGLE.COM	SEARCH	2,266,000,000	9M 12S	8.0
02	YOUTUBE.COM	STREAMING VIDEO	723,100,000	25M 01S	10.6
03	FACEBOOK.COM	SOCIAL	423,700,000	8M 52S	8.8
04	GOOGLE.COM.TR	SEARCH	219,100,000	8M 15S	8.1
05	TWITTER.COM	SOCIAL	193,900,000	10M 57S	10.8
06	INSTAGRAM.COM	SOCIAL	169,800,000	8M 46S	13.9
07	HURRIYET.COM.TR	NEWS & MEDIA	120,400,000	5M 05S	5.4
08	SABAH.COM.TR	NEWS & MEDIA	113,500,000	2M 32S	5.6
09	SOZCU.COM.TR	NEWS & MEDIA	111,100,000	7M 36S	5.1
10	SAHIBINDEN.COM	CLASSIFIEDS	102,600,000	11M 31S	19.0

28 **SOURCE:** SIMILARWEB (JANUARY 2020). FIGURES BASED ON MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR Q4 2019. **NOTES:** CATEGORIES AND CATEGORY DEFINITIONS AS PER SIMILARWEB'S DEFINITIONS. **MONTHLY TRAFFIC:** DOES NOT REPRESENT UNIQUE VISITORS. **TIME PER VISIT:** FIGURES REPRESENT THE AVERAGE DURATION OF USER'S VISITS, MEASURED IN MINUTES AND SECONDS. **ADVISORY:** SOME WEBSITES FEATURED IN THIS RANKING MAY CONTAIN ADULT CONTENT. PLEASE USE CAUTION WHEN VISITING UNKNOWN WEBSITES.

we are social  **Hootsuite**

Content on YouTube is created with the participation of individuals. Individuals are divided into two as content producers and consumers. Producers are individuals who open their own channels and share videos, while consumers are individuals who watch videos shared by producers. Content producers are called "YouTubers" on YouTube. YouTubers shares contents on YouTube with various motivations. Viewers consuming YouTubers' content are the key part of this platform. Although YouTubers and viewers are dependent on each other, it is the audience's tendency that drives the content. With this interactive participation, the audience can be both a consumer and a producer on YouTube.

The user, within the framework of certain legal and ethical rules, records any subject on video and presents it to all users in a manner that s/he chooses. Each user can comment on videos, like or dislike posts, and subscribe to channels if they wish. YouTube is sort of an audiovisual version of the blog on Web 1.0 technology; the concept of "blogger" has evolved into the concept of "YouTuber" here.

Today, YouTube is also a post-television (Strangelove, 2010). Content prepared by users on YouTube is a short version of TV series. YouTubers periodically share videos, and the audience can follow them accordingly. With this feature, it complies with the logic of television series. In fact, if the user wants to be notified when a new content is posted on the YouTuber channel s/he follows on YouTube, it is sufficient to subscribe to that channel.

YouTube has not only appropriated television but also its program types and content. Today, YouTube series, broadcasts and reality programs have appeared. Television channels also transfer their assets here, open their own YouTube channels, and share their content. In other words, television still has its influence, but it does this in a more participatory format and in a different space, and it tends to shift towards YouTube. Because YouTube has given individuals freedom in this field with the slogan of "Broadcast Yourself", and has taken individuals into the world they see on television, in return, it has provided an environment where they can express themselves, and even become celebrities.

In this regard, Irak and Yazıcıoğlu (2012) say the following:

With the spread of broadband internet technologies, it was inevitable for the user to share their own videos and their own recorded sounds. YouTube provided the scene for this. In its early years, the site was a virtual talent show, and this is what brought YouTube to the top of the world. The Internet is now belonging to "hidden talents", ordinary people, who are blowing horns with their nose, dancing with their dogs, and whipping peg top with eyes closed. (p.15)

Henri Lefebvre (1991) suggests that space is produced in two ways: the "social" production of space and the "mental" production of space. Since the

connection of only mentally produced spaces with the real world will be weak, social accumulation is also necessary for the creation of space. Social space has the feature of bringing together with its unifying power (Mutman, 1994). In the postmodern period, discussions on the concept of space have begun to focus on digital media. YouTube has brought a new perspective to everyday life and the concept of space. YouTubers and their audience have created a virtual space and made it a part of their daily lives. YouTube is no longer just a virtual space in this respect; it has become a place where the individual engages in production and consumption simultaneously (Kurt, 2013, p. 2).

Independent digital communities formed on YouTube actually consist of viewers gathered under the same roof. On this platform, everyone is also a spectator, and the spectator is the person who peeps. This is exactly what gives YouTube its voyeuristic nature. Everyone watches and everyone has a motivation to watch, consciously or unconsciously. These motivations are determined by internal and external factors. Internal factors are shaped by the individual's own needs, desires and tastes. External factors, on the other hand, are cultural, economic and social structures and relationships that the individual is involved in. These social factors have been discussed in the previous section under the titles of capitalism, culture industry, postmodernism, consumer society and network society. In the next section, the effects of both psychological and sociological factors on self-formation and self-presentation on social media will be discussed.

2.3 Different Approaches to Self

William James, one of the first modern thinkers to study the self-concept, wrote *“The Principles of Psychology Vol 1”* in 1890. In his book, he interpreted the self as everything a person has, not as an abstract concept independent of the person (James, 1950). He divided the self-concept into three as material, social and spiritual. The material self is formed according to the other individuals with whom the individual interacts and the commodities s/he owns. The social self is a mask that the individual forms based on her/his attitude, behavior and way of thinking according to the environment s/he is in. Since the social self can vary according to the environment, an individual has more than one social self (Bruno, 1996). Spiritual self, on the other hand, is related to how the individual perceives, interprets and makes sense of himself/herself. James says that the self as a whole is formed from the combination of these three selves.

This triple framework presented by James can also be used to classify different approaches to self. While the thinkers who emphasize the importance of the spiritual self-dealt with the subject from a psychological perspective, those who emphasize the importance of the social and material self-discuss the issue from a sociological perspective. These different approaches will be summarized below; also, Bourdieu's approach, which makes original contributions to understanding social and material ego formation processes, will be evaluated under a separate heading. However, before this, social media as a scene where the self is shaped and presented will be discussed.

2.3.1 Psychological Approaches

Sigmund Freud examined the self in terms of the conscious and unconscious structures of the mind. He explained the self-phenomenon with two topological models. In the first model, Freud explained consciousness and mental processes using the iceberg metaphor. The visible part of the iceberg is the conscious, and the unseen part is the unconscious. In the second topological model, Freud analyzed the self-formation process of the individual under three main constructs. The id is the primordial self that exists at the unconscious. On the other hand, the superego is a control mechanism created by the individual over the ego along with social norms. The ego, however, is a reconciling mechanism that tries to reach a balanced satisfaction between the unconscious and external world of the individual. In this cycle, the ego tries to control the id, and the superego aims to take the ego under control, and to ensure that the individual finds a proper place in social processes and is in harmony with society. If either the id or superego becomes much more dominant, the individual develops various defense mechanisms to return to the ego level. These can occur through reactions, such as denial, rationalization, and repression. If there is a gap between the id and superego, the individual experiences an uncontrollable tension in the unconscious, and this tension may be reflected outside in the form of some psychotic or neurotic disorders.

Karen Horney, a well-known psychoanalytic thinker, has criticized Freud's thoughts on female sexuality and the self. She rejects Freud's notion that the lack of the phallus in women creates a feeling of penis envy as merely a hypothetical hypothesis. Horney defended the effect of not only instinctive libido but also the socio-cultural environment in which the human being is involved on the formation of self. At the same time, she sees Freud's notion of ego as a utopian structure that the

individual can never reach. Instead, Horney treated the self in two ways: the true self and the idealized self. The true self is the self that is present in everyone, which is universal but becomes specific to each individual within the self-realization process of the person. If a person experiences a negative situation in this process of self-realization, if s/he is suppressed by environmental factors and cannot reach the desired self, s/he starts to create another irrational self that s/he wants to reach in his mind. This self is an idealized self that a person thinks s/he has or s/he should have (Kavut, 2018, p. 519). The greater the gap between the real self and the idealized self, the more estranged the person from himself/herself and the more likely the person to exhibit neurotic attitudes.

Jacques Lacan is another thinker who started off from Freud's thoughts while dealing with the concept of self but conceptualized the subject with a different perspective. Unlike Freud, Lacan takes the individual as a subject. He divides the subject into two, the subject of the ego and the subject of the unconscious. He sees the ego as an illusion not the subject itself. The ego is a defense mechanism developed by the individual in the social adaptation process (Cléro, 2011, p. 101). The real subject is the self that a person produces by alienating her/his ego. The subject of the unconscious is one formed through symbols within language. In other words, the unconscious subject realizes itself through language and its symbols. Indeed, one of the main differences of Lacan from Freud is that he argues that the unconscious is also shaped by culture, and that the self is formed entirely in and around cultural codes.

Lacan examines the ego formation within the transformation process that he calls the "mirror phase." When the subject is an infant, s/he cannot define his/her own body as a whole but perceives it in pieces. After meeting with the mirror, s/he begins to recognize and organize her/his own image and approaches herself/himself from a

holistic perspective (Lacan, 2013, p. 167). The mirror phase is the mechanism that allows the subject to form her/his ego and interact with the outside world. At that moment of break when the subject realizes herself / himself, the subject experiences a separation from the outside world. In this context, the subject seen in the mirror is actually just a reflection; the person begins to form her/his real self after this break. The subject, who is aware of his/her own deficiency, tries to idealize her/his self at the maximum level. For example, Lacan states that the individual tries to perfect her/his own deficiency in fields such as fine arts, literature, and music in order to achieve perfection.

2.3.2 Sociological Approaches

George Herbert Mead, who has approached the self from a sociological perspective, saw the self as more of a social phenomenon. Mead (1934) divides the self into "I" and "me". "I" is the true self, somewhat similar to Freud's id. "Me is the self that is formed by the individual in socialization. "I" is not independent of "me;" it is aware of "me." "I" is a primitive and creative version of the self, and "me" is the repressed and evolved version of society. The individual sees her/his self as an object and enters into a process of empathy, and gives her/his self a form according to how the outside world wants to see him/her in a socio-cultural context. In summary, Mead considers the concept of self as a product of socialization.

Erving Goffman (2016) discusses the self-concept as a formation that occurs in different ways in the socialization process of the individual in daily life and states that the individual observes other individuals in socialization and decides what kind of self-performance s/he will present. Goffman brings a dramaturgical approach to the

self-concept within this framework. He sees the environment as a theater stage, the individual as an actor performing on the stage, and other individuals as the audience-observer. The individual forms his or her self by assuming the role that seems right for her/him by evaluating the social interactions around him. S/He tries to idealize the self s/he has created. The individual offers observers more than one idealized self-model in order to exhibit characteristics suitable for expectations of society (Goffman, 2016). Therefore, the self-presentation of a person is a reflection of the values of the society in which s/he lives, and there is not one single self as such. The individual can sometimes be realistic and sometimes misleading in self-presentation. In this context, Goffman emphasizes that the individual is conscious while presenting his or her self. The individual decides what to display or not to the observers. At the same time, the observers are aware of what they are being made to perceive; they are also conscious, but they do not have full knowledge of the backstage. While the individual performs an idealized self at the stage, s/he can reveal her/his true "I" behind the scenes, that is, in his/her safe zone.

For Goffman, the face and the state of being observed are two important notions in self-presentation. The individual reflects the self through her/his face and becomes visible in that way. Being aware that s/he is being watched while in front of the stage always keeps the individual vigilant. S/He tries not to behave in a way that would harm her/his role.

Goffman explains the self as a sociological concept with references to socialization. He also states that the roles created according to different scenes prevent the individual from reaching the idealized self. With the formation of more than one self, the individual starts to offer faked-virtual selves against society.

Goffman's words about the presentation of the self in daily life also bring to mind the concept of "persona" of Carl Jung, the second most important psychoanalytic thinker of the 20th century after Freud. Jung also studied the self with an emphasis on unconscious processes. Jung put forward the very controversial concept of the "collective unconscious" by stating that there are common universal codes that have existed since the formation of humanity. The collective unconscious is home to "archetypes" that unwittingly affect the individual's decision-making and self-formation mechanisms in daily life. Persona, which also means mask, is one of these archetypes (Jung, 2013). It is the individual's way of presenting herself/himself to the outside world. The individual shapes her/his behavior according to the environment s/he enters into. The "masks" changed by the individual in order to meet the expectations in the social environment emerge in line with social motivations such as adoption, social acceptance, and approval. In this process, the person suppresses her/his real feelings. Jung also states that persona formation is indispensable for sociality because the individual realizes the social adaptation process in line with the personas s/he creates. However, while the persona is a product of unconscious processes according to Jung, Goffman says that the individual consciously and strategically puts on some masks and plays games in social life.

As can be understood from the discussion above, the self in the modern sense has been dealt with either from a psychological and sociological perspective. Some thinkers have studied the subject from an eclectic perspective that brings the two approaches together. Today, the self has become a much more multidisciplinary subject of study. Thinkers, who take into account the influence of unconscious factors in the formation of the self, have started to pay more attention to the role of the interaction of capitalism and consumer culture with the unconscious in self-formation.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004), who criticizes capitalism and self-perception by combining insights from both Freudian and Marxist frameworks and adding onto them, state that capitalism is fed by the concept of ego and that the ego creates power above individuals in the capitalist order. Thinking of psychoanalysis from a poststructuralist perspective, they state that capitalism tries to separate the individual from their bonds without completely breaking them from their values and self by placing them in a nomadic position. This is a kind of psycho-economic nomadism rather than physical nomadism. Thus, we come across the theme of the freedom of the individual in neither a fully heterogeneous nor a fully homogeneous society. Even though the individual seems free, s/he becomes alienated from herself/himself by reproducing his/her self again and again in the capital accumulation process. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism creates schizoid selves.

In short, the self, which determines the individual's thinking, lifestyle, and interaction with the outside world, is a subjective structure related to how the individual perceives herself/himself. However, the self, with its complex nature, has been handled with diverse perspectives by different thinkers in every period. Social sciences such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and economics have theorized this dynamic structure in the light of their own perspectives. Based on the insights offered by all these different perspectives, it is possible to say that the individual is not independent of the environment s/he lives in and of the perception, thought and action frames provided by that environment in the process of making sense of and shaping her/his self. As will be discussed below, social media as a scene where the individual presents himself/herself affect not only how this presentation will take place; it also affects the individual's perception of his or her self.

2.3.3 Self-Presentation in Social Media

As mentioned in the previous section, Goffman (2016) states that the individual performs his/her self by exhibiting consistent and harmonious behaviors in order to be accepted by other individuals. In this context, the individual presents his/her idealized self to gain approval from other individuals, such as in an actor's desire to be applauded for his performance (Poloma, 1993). Self-presentation can also change according to the scene the individual is in.

The individual shows his/her self in public and social spaces. These can be all social environments where the individual is involved in, such as crowded groups of friends, family gatherings, and business meetings. Today, these social environments have extended beyond physical and temporal boundaries to virtual space. As Castells, (2016) emphasized, the individual can perform all kinds of socialization activities on social media platforms by being included in global networks.

In social media, the individual presents his/her self primarily by creating a profile. In this process, the individual can freely create a profile, sometimes anonymously, and sometimes with his/her real identity. In this context, social media offers an environment where individuals can apparently present their selves as they wish. However, while anonymous profiles were preferred in the early stages of social media, now individuals mostly create profiles with their own faces because social media is now considered as a real place.

Goffman emphasizes that the face is an important element in self-presentation. Because face is the first element that other individuals see about us. Faces, gestures and expressions are displayed in a way that is approved by society. We can use Goffman's ideas about the face to understand profile creation on social media. The individual first spends a great deal of time on his/her profile creation while presenting

himself/herself on social media. Because while nobody knows the individual, the first place they see the individual and make judgments about him/her will be his/her "face." Another reason why the face and profile creation are important is that the individual feels a narcissistic pleasure in both seeing and being seen, as Lacan (2013) has emphasized in the discussion about the mirror phase. Because the sense of vision develops before speaking, the individual begins to make sense of people around him/her in childhood by seeing them first (Berger, 2018). For these reasons, the process of profile creation is an important factor in self-presentation in an environment where there is no physical space.

After the profile creation stage, the individual wants to reflect his/her inner world. Thus, s/he begins to share his/her own feelings, thoughts, tastes and values. Here, s/he performs a script s/he has written and plays himself/herself as like an actor/actress. Dramaturgy is also at the forefront in self-presentation on YouTube. Individuals actually perform the scenarios that they write and produce themselves to users by going in front of the camera. It is questionable whether the true self or the idealized self is presented here because the camera creates a cycle in which individuals can represent self-ideologies and viewers perceive these representations as real (Mulvey, 1999). Accordingly, the true self is the self that emerges when the individual is not watched and feels free. Such a real self cannot exist in front of the camera because the camera is always over the individual as a peeping eye. In this context, social media is likened to a simulacra universe with features of hyperreality and hyper textuality (Kavut, 2018). Baudrillard defines the simulacra universe as a universe where reality is reproduced through signs. In social media, selves are reproduced over and over again by presenting them in different ways.

Social media has become a platform that enables the transfer of daily life practices to the virtual world. While the individual spends time physically with the technological device s/he uses, his/her self, life style, culture and sociability are virtually living in this simulacra universe.

Baumann, on the other hand, points out that in social media, individuals interact more with people who have similar thoughts, feelings and characteristics and that the expectation of being approved by those individuals divides individuals into classes. In fact, the individual who presents himself/herself in social media, on the one hand, highlights his/her individuality; on the other hand, s/he becomes standardized by entering into certain identity patterns. This reminds us of what the Frankfurt School has said about the culture industry.

The culture industry, whose structure and functioning mechanisms have changed with new communication technologies, also plays a role in self-creation. Based on the notion of the culture industry, we can say that the self-presentation in social media is globally standardized according to a collective cultural self (Morley & Robins, 1997). Capitalism uses spaces where it is implicated as a means of competition and capital accumulation. Popular content that stands out social media also determine the behavior and content creation style of the individual. In other words, tastes, desires and values have become globalized and standardized with the formation of the network society. The individual tries to reflect globally accepted behaviors and thoughts in social media. S/he suppresses his/her true self as s/he will otherwise be excluded and not approved.

For thinkers who adopt a more positive approach to the issue, social media is an open, interactive and accessible communication channel and provides many opportunities for a more liberal self-presentation. While the individual performs

different self-presentations that s/he chooses according to the situation, s/he presents his/her self in a way that other individuals think will approve (Zhao et al., 2008).

This situation can also be interpreted in terms of the individual feeling of freedom. The individual can realize her/his ideal self, which he cannot live in real life, in social media. This can be thought of as a kind of psychological and narcissistic satisfaction. In this digital space where the self is reproduced over and over again, individuals can be defined as actors/actresses and social media as a theater scene. The audience is now everyone and even the actor/actress can become part of the audience. On the other hand, it has become a control and surveillance mechanism in itself, with everything being visible anytime and anywhere. This makes the claim that social media brings freedom to the individual in self-creation and presentation problematic.

Moreover, as can be seen in detail in the discussion on Bourdieu in the next chapter, social media is a field which has certain game rules and in which different actors occupy certain positions in a power competition. So, it does not seem possible to think that individuals act freely in this area. The individual shows a self-performance under the influence of both his/her habitus and rules originating from the inner structure of the field.

2.3.3.1 Analysis of Self-Formation in Social Media from Bourdieu's Perspective

According to the psychological approaches that focus on the presentation of the self in social media, the behaviors and uses of the individual on social media are a reflection of the individual's inner self. However, it is also possible to approach the issue from a more sociological perspective. In this respect, the fact that social media is a field that has developed relationally in the historical process allows analyzing self-

presentation in social media from Bourdieu's perspective. While examining the social media usage practices of individuals, Bourdieu's relational sociological perspective can add depth to the analysis.

Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital are important sociological tools that can be used to examine change in social, cultural and digital issues. According to Bourdieu, the field creates the habitus and capital shapes the habitus by determining the norms within the field. These three concepts together form a whole.

Habitus is defined as “the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 36). In other words, habitus involve dispositions internalized in line with personal and social structures, such as social status, gender, tastes, preferences, world view, and marital status (Smith, 2001). In the face of a situation that will force him or her, the individual can create a survival strategy based on these dispositions.

Although habitus is a social-historical structure, it also reflects on the permanent physical and behavioral characteristics of the individual. It is because habitus produces behaviors that develop over time and the individual is conditioned to in bodily and behavioral terms in order to conform to pre-determined class norms (Bourdieu, 1990). The formation of the habitus through somatization and internalization renders the individual to see the habitus as a natural structure. However, habitus can change with the change of capital configuration and fields.

Bourdieu (1990) emphasizes that education, knowledge, and career levels are also important in determining habitus. In this respect, the concept of habitus is a class phenomenon. People in the same habitus often have similar expectations, desires, and preferences due to their class positioning.

Bourdieu (1970) explains this as follows:

The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (principium divisionis) of these practices. It is the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, the spaces of lifestyles, is constituted (p. 170).

Culture is also very important in the formation of habitus because the culture to which the individual belongs shapes his/her preferences, expectations and behaviors. In addition, while culture mediates communication among individuals on the one hand, on the other hand, it ensures the continuity of social hierarchy by establishing authority over individuals and shaping all social systems such as art, religion, language, education (Swartz, 2011).

Bourdieu explains the field as a social space structured by certain rules where individuals show their own dispositions, and reproduce and compete for different capitals (Gaventa, 2003). Field can be associated with any cultural, social, physical or other social issue. Fields are located in the general social space. The largest field is society and it contains all other areas.

Bourdieu used the metaphor of game while trying to explain the concept of field. The game metaphor implies that an individual agent is in competition with other agents within a certain field, with the motivation to win a reward. So, it is the name given to the struggle within the field of play. The agent wants to enter a race, determine the rules of the game and achieve the rewards of the game in order to gain and maintain an advantage in the field. These gains brought by the game are generally capital.

Bourdieu classifies capital into four types: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Individual agents find themselves in different positioning in a field according to the form and volume of the capital configuration they have acquired in the social and historical process. The fields in which an agent competes determine the value of the capital configuration the agent holds.

Economic capital is defined as 'immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). In short, it refers to all the economic resources that an individual agent has. Bourdieu defines economic capital as the root of all other capitals and states that other capitals are shaped according to the economic capital owned.

In addition to culture and upbringing in which the individual is born, cultural capital is formed by the individual's own personal development and the experience gained later (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is examined under three headings: embodied state, objectified state, and institutionalized state. Embodied state is the state of physically and mentally embracing the elements belonging to the dominant culture, with the effect of education, family life, and socialization over time. The objectified state includes materialistic reflections of culture, and consists of intellectual experiences such as going to the ballet, playing an instrument, and listening to classical music that require special interests and skills. The institutionalized state, on the other hand, is the measurable, graded and approvable state of the cultural capital of an individual. The individual's educational degree, academic career, professional status and roles within the family can be given as examples of the institutionalized state. According to Bourdieu, all capitals can transform to and affect each other. Although economic capital is the determinant of

other capitals, the individual can contribute to his/her economic capital by using or developing cultural capital.

As Cole (2020) said:

With economic capital, a person can buy access to prestigious educational institutions that then reward one with valuable social capital. In turn, both the social and cultural capital accumulated at an elite boarding school or college can be exchanged for economic capital via social networks, skills, values, and behaviors that point one to high-paying jobs. For this reason, Bourdieu observed that cultural capital is used to facilitate and enforce social divisions, hierarchies, and ultimately, inequality. (para. 7)

Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 248). The function of social capital is to bring together individuals with similar tendencies in the field to facilitate the actions of individuals (Coleman, 1990). Insufficiency of cultural and economic capital negatively affects an individual agent's social capital (Uphoff et al., 2013). According to this, “what is important in terms of social capital is the value, size, and the ability of the capital to be activated” (Yarçı, 2011, p. 131).

Symbolic capital is related to one's prestige, pride, and dignity in society. It is actually an indicator of the reputation of other capitals owned by the individual. It has no meaning on its own, but it facilitates the transformation of social and cultural capital into economic capital by rendering them valuable and prestigious (Gergs, 2003).

Symbolic capital brings symbolic power, meaning the power to determine the truth in a particular field. In fact, every capital brings some power to the individual agent, but if the individual agent turns the power s/he obtains into symbolic power, s/he can ensure the continuity of his/her power (Palabıyık, 2011, p. 132). Symbolic power allows the individual to see himself/herself as superior to other individuals. Actually, this power is not natural. The prevailing opinions that are accepted as normal in society can be explained with Bourdieu's definition of "doxa." Doxa is a set of rules that make the rules of the game in a field seem natural, legitimate and, thus, maintain the existing power structure and relations. At the end of this normalization process, the individual does not see that the symbolic capital is the approved economic capital and adopts the misrecognition that the symbolic power s/he attributes to himself/herself is natural.

With the development of internet-based information and communication technologies and particularly social media, digital space has also been added to fields where habitus has been shaped in the postmodern period. Agents have started to exhibit their economic, social and cultural capital configurations in the digital field. Social media is a digital space where individual agents participate with certain motivations and express their feelings, thoughts and tastes. It is open to everyone in principle, without any geographical, social and cultural restrictions. However, in order to be a social media user, a certain cultural capital is needed besides the minimum economic capital required by the modern capitalist system because digital media literacy skills are associated with cultural capital. Also, the digital content produced and consumed by individuals reflects their tastes, desires, even their habitus they belong to and the characteristics of their cultural capital.

In social media platforms, individuals interact and compete with each other by forming groups related to music, painting, politics and any other interests, in addition to acts such as creating profiles, sharing content, liking, or disliking. In this respect, social media can be considered as a "field" in Bourdieusian sense. All interactions established and maintained in this digital field are also associated with social capital. While individuals from different classes occupy certain positions on social media, they compete with each other on various issues to gain symbolic power (Güzel, 2016). The most important element that determines this competition is statistical data such as clicks, likes/dislikes, views and shares.

In addition to self-presentation, it is also possible to transform and reinforce capitals in social media. Güzel (2006) states the following on this subject:

Profiles with increasing popularity (according to digital network terminology, highly liked, pinned, tweeted, tagged, etc.), in social networks among participants with different habituses can also increase their symbolic capital in this way. Some profiles can turn this capital they earn into economic capital and switch to areas such as television or fashion. (p. 94)

As mentioned in the above quote, popular digital content producers, called YouTubers, who have social and cultural capital about different topics on the YouTube platform, convert their social and symbolic capital into economic capital according to the number of views, likes, shares etc. they receive in this field. At the same time, they transform their social capital into symbolic capital, owing to the titles such as "YouTuber," "influencer," or "phenomenon" attributed to them.

Capital presentation and transformation are also valid for individuals who are only users or watchers, who participate in this field without producing unique content. In fact, self-presentation in social media can be indirectly thought of as a form of

capital presentation because, as in digital media literacy, in order to present one's self in accordance with the rules of the field, s/he must have a certain configuration of cultural, economic and social capital. In addition, the content that s/he produces and consumes can reinforce his/her cultural and social capital. The individual may find the chance to gain reputation for his/her cultural capital in social media. When the individual interested in popular topics in the context of his own habitus interact with other users about these topics in social media, this might strengthen his/her social capital.

In the digital field, a digital-specific network is created, and these networks created by individuals are an indicator of the characteristics of their social capital (Williams, 2006). The content that the individual prefers to watch, like/dislike, and share emphasizes the individual's capital configuration. In daily life, just as the individual wants to be among the similar capital-owning groups, s/he consumes the content that s/he thinks is suitable for her/his interests and values and s/he wants to exist in communities united under these contents across social media. Individuals with similar interests and thoughts come together and they form groups, thereby feeling attached.

Fuchs (2014) has said the following about the relations between different types of capital, in a Bourdieusian sense, in social media:

Users employ social media because they strive to a certain degree for achieving what Bourdieu (1986a, 1986b) terms social capital (the accumulation of social relations), cultural capital (the accumulation of qualification, education, knowledge) and symbolic capital (the accumulation of reputation) (p. 115). According to him, as user spend time on commercial social media platforms for generating or reinforcing their social, cultural and

symbolic capitals, they turn themselves into commodities as prosumers. That is, labour time spent on these platforms on is the conversion of Bourdieuan social, cultural, and symbolic capital into economic capital in a Marxian sense. (Fuchs, 2014, p. 115-116)

In summary, social media has become a field where individuals show and reconstruct their thinking and behavioral practices in their daily life. However, these practices that the individual performs are not just an extension of his/her ego; the habitus of the individual takes shape under the influence of capital configurations and influences the position s/he occupies in the digital field of social media.

Bourdieu has analyzed the behaviors, habits and meaning making practices of individuals in certain fields, in relation to the ways of creating and competing for different forms of capital. Social media is now a field in itself, affecting individuals' habituses as well as their attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles.

On the other hand, it can be said that the individuals experience a kind of alienation in social media as s/he user looks at the likes s/he gains, for example, after the labor process s/he exhibits on YouTube as a form of capital and externalizes them as a marketable value.

Yarıcı (2011) stated the following on the subject:

In today's modern societies where knowledge and information are intensely produced and rapidly circulated in the social field, the importance of social ties becomes more evident; in addition to this, modern societies become more and more individualized, and, as a result of this, weakened social ties and the phenomenon of alienation that comes with it; it explains why the intensity of social capital debates have coincided with a time when social bonds are being gradually weakened. (p. 126)

Therefore, the concept of “digital alienation” will be discussed in the next section. First of all, how different thinkers approach the notion of alienation will be explained, and then alienation in the digital field will be examined.

2.3.3.2 Digital Alienation

The concept of alienation has been handled and explained in various ways by different disciplines. Alienation, which is said to have emerged as a result of the modernization process, is mainly an individual and psychological state. Rousseau states that the modern individual will alienate from his/her nature and everything that does not belong to him/her. Identities and profiles created in social media are usually a distorted reflection of reality. The individual sometimes presents a completely fake or partially modified image. This will create a conflict between the real and virtual identity of the individual. Going into an identity conflict, the individual will not only experience a conflict between his/her real and virtual self but may objectify his/her real self and become alienated from it. In this context, the process of alienation experienced by the individual through social media needs a deeper analysis.

Hegel is the first thinker to deal with the concept of alienation in a comprehensive way. Hegel interprets alienation as changing from a simple compound to a complex composition. The combination here is the concept of "Geist". Hegel associated alienation with the alienation of Geist by getting complicated as it moves from its own form to another form (Inwood, 1992). "According to Hegel, in order for something that a single individual accepts as truth (that s/he is a self-consciousness, a human being) not to be subjective conviction and to become a true truth instead, it must be known and accepted by other self-consciousnesses." (Günay, 2003, p. 128). As in Lacan's notion of the mirror stage, the individual first defines himself / herself

by looking at the mirror, then compares himself / herself with other individuals to form a dialectic in the form of "I and the other" (Aksu, 2019). The individual wants to be noticed and given meaning by the other. In other words, in order for the individual to see himself/herself with an outside eye, individual first objectifies and then alienates himself/herself, as a result. In this context, YouTube is a platform that enables "I and the other to intersect and the individual to be noticed by the other. Here as in Hegel's framework, the realization of his/her self by other self-consciousnesses enables the individual to realize his/her self. In addition, the individual externalizes and becomes alienated from his or her self by having the opportunity to look at it through the eyes of the other. So, s/he realizes her/his own self. Here, alienation takes place not in traditional ways, but in the digital environment, that is, in the simulacra universe.

Karl Marx, who was influenced by Hegel but approaches modern life from an economy-oriented perspective, also discusses alienation in an economic context. On the one hand, like Hegel, he treated alienation as an existential problem of human beings, on the other hand, he examined it as a concrete phenomenon produced within the dynamics of capitalism. While Marx argues that people realize their selves by transforming natural resources in the production process, he emphasizes that the capitalist order prevents human beings from achieving this. Marx says that there is a natural relation between labor and human nature; however, he states that changes brought along by capitalism are not natural and that capitalism inhibits this natural process (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2013). According to Marx, the concept of "work" itself is alien to human-beings in class societies

Marx, explains this with the following words:

First, the fact that labor is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working, he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it's forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. (Marx, 2016, p.72)

In his words above, Marx states that the capitalist labor process is contrary to human nature. The individual does not voluntarily enter the work cycle, and this process of suppression causes the person to be alienated from her / his own self.

While Marx says that it is "generalized commodity production" that characterizes the capitalist mode of production, he defines the commodity as the object that meets the needs of the individual and develops outside the individual (Marx, 1990). Marx includes in the commodity all labor and historical processes that develop outside the individual.

The commodity has, for Marx, use and exchange values. The benefits taken from it determine the usage value of the commodity, and the exchange value is determined by the labor required to produce the commodity. The relationship between usage value and exchange value reveals the principle of "commodity fetishism". If the exchange value of a commodity is more than its usage value, or, more precisely, if the status of the commodity is more important than its functionality, it can be seen as an extension of alienation in production to the consumption process. Stating that the economy shapes all social relations, Marx says that together with commodity

production, social relations are reduced only to production of concrete objects, and all social interactions turn into a material market relation (Marx, 2004).

Similarly, content producers in digital media enter into a concrete labor process by sharing data and information with users, and these shares turn into commodities that have a usage value for users (Fuchs, 2015, p. 373). Those who create these contents are involved in this labor process by spending their time and brainpower. As a result, a concrete labor process in a virtual field emerges.

Hardt, Negri and Fuchs, recent representatives of the Marxist perspective, have analyzed the concept of digital labor. However, since digital labor has no material value or benefits, Hardt and Negri (2015) regard digital labor as “immaterial labor.” In social media, they state that the labor force of the user does not have a value as well as that the labor that underlies this value has no meaning at all (Hardt & Negri, 2005). But Fuchs does not acknowledge this idea. Instead, he says that digital contents shared by users on social media platforms are turned into a financial gain by relevant companies.

Fuchs explains the concept of digital labor by adapting Marx's labor-value theory to the digital environment. Fuchs attributes the user's externalization and alienation from his/her self and labor to four basic reasons:

1. Social exclusion they will face when they stop being social media users (Fuchs, 2015, p. 376).
2. The desire not to stay away from social relationships (Fuchs, 2015, p. 376).
3. Social media platforms' domination by capital (Fuchs, 2015, p. 376).
4. Constant surveillance by capital owners (Fuchs, 2015, p. 376).

As a result of these four factors, digital labor is exploited by capital owners through social media. One of the reasons for this exploitation is that there is no material equivalent to their labor.

On the other hand, Andrejevic (2009) both sees the users on YouTube as "free labor" and says that the use of YouTube is based on volunteerism and this provides "endowed with a sense of autonomy" (p. 416). Besides, "time spent building social relations in affective labour is both autonomous and subject to exploitation, he writes; so is the kind of immaterial labour involved in social networking sites such as YouTube" (as cited in, Hesmondhalgh, 2010 p. 275).

In addition, Andrejevic says that the definition of "unpaid labor," which is used for domestic works traditionally attributed to women, also applies to this labor process on YouTube. It would not be wrong to use the concept of "housewifization" for the labor of YouTube users. In this context, Maria Mies (1986) defines the concept of housewifization as follows: "process by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependent for their sustenance on the income of a husband, irrespective of whether they are *defacto* housewives or not" (p. 180) The labor force that women spend at home in social life has no value in terms of capital, so labor processes at home are called "unpaid labor." "Capital takes no responsibility for the reproduction of this labor power, paying home-based workers less than is necessary for their daily maintenance and rejecting any responsibility during times of unemployment" (Prügl, 1996, p. 115). YouTube users consciously or unconsciously engage in a similar labor process in their spare time. At the same time, this labor can be used on social media anytime and anywhere.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which was founded in 1997, in England, to protect and support artistic, cultural, communication,

and media contents, approaches the labor process in social media from a more positive perspective. With the concept of creative industry conceptualized in their works, it is claimed that a new type of labor and a new type of worker have emerged in the competitive and innovative capitalist system: "creative labor and creative worker". With capitalism, it has become almost impossible to separate mental and physical labor power, as labor processes are integrated with technology, communication, industry and other systems (Huws, 2017). Social media exemplifies exactly this. There is neither a fully mental nor a fully physical labor process on social media. YouTubers and other social media influencers fall into the "creative worker" category as individuals who make financial gains from social media by producing content. A creative worker is simply someone who creates content. Huws has divided the concept of creative worker and creative labor into multiple categories. The category to be examined here is the type of worker and labor "trying to derive new systems and processes or adapt the old ones for new purposes" (Huws, 2017). In fact, this kind of labor is valid for professions such as artists, performers, craftsmen. However, today social media can be considered in this context as a platform that homogenizes all labor and professional processes and even allows new professions such as being an "influencer or YouTuber".

Moreover, from this perspective, not only financial gain is important in creative labor. Commitment and trust are also at the forefront. Creative labor, unlike alienation, offers an opportunity for freedom as well as an it is a kind of labor that gives hope for fame (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). However, it should not be forgotten that the product that emerges in the creative labor process both belongs to its creator and does not belong to him. Creative workers embrace the production process because they are themselves involved in the labor process from its beginning to end,

and since they think that the labor process is under their control, their devotion to the product they produce is more than other workers (Neff, et. al., 2015). The fact that the content shared on YouTube is not accepted by some users, lynched by them, or is blocked by the "employer" on the grounds that it does not comply with certain norms even though it reflects their real feelings in the video, it affects its producers depressively. The reason for this is their commitment to the product. In such a situation, some content producers show reactions in the form of alienation and may not proceed to the self-realization stage as stated by Hegel.

Another source of digital alienation is as follows: Workers in the digital field, which does not require physical labor and actual physical space, are supported by capital owners for creating new and original content. However, digital channels dominated by capitalist production relations have a competitive spirit like other channels. The content producer must always come up with new and original ideas. This pressure exerted by capitalists transforms the content that the individual identifies with from a creative labor to purely material labor product. Thus, the individual becomes alienated from his/her labor and its product, that is, digital content.

On the other hand, Bourdieu's concept of social capital, discussed in the previous section, can also be considered in terms of its relation to digital alienation. All social relationships occurring in social networks can be considered as components of social capital (Burt, 2001). According to Toffler (2008), in the process of transition to the information society, with the shift of production to technological channels, capital, which is dependent on financial and physical power in the industrial society, has been transformed into as a social and collective phenomenon. In social media, users who interact and communicate with each other, pursue common interests, and

gather under a collective content, benefit from each other's social capital (Jourdien & Naulin, 2016). An optimistic approach can be brought to digital alienation with the concept of social capital defined in this way. From this perspective, social media can be considered as an antidote to alienation with its content-oriented, intangible, and collective structure, whereby society is not segregated.

Indeed, Coleman (1990), another thinker who has made research on social capital, sees social capital as a structure where class divisions are not important, and where people from all classes collectively meet on a common ground. However, Bourdieu (1986) argues that social capital has a class-dependent nature and hierarchical structure,

Dimensions of surveillance can be seen in every aspect of an individual's life. If the individual is considered as a social entity living in the society, it cannot be considered independent from the surrounding factors. Capitalism, which is an economic regime that affects the lives of individuals and controls surveillance, also affects sociological and psychological factors. In this respect, it also shapes the individual's lifestyle and self-formation.

Social media has turned into a living space with the emerging late capitalism and developing technologies after 2000. Individuals had the opportunity to present their daily practices. Thus, as this place is an extension of daily life, other economic, psychological and sociological practices started to appear here. Capitalism has taken its place in the digital space with social media. In this context, the transformation of surveillance culture into peep culture with social media has been examined and the postmodernism and consumption culture that individuals are affected by while exhibiting their self-performances are discussed.

Social media has turned into a field with these aspects; In this respect, individuals transfer capital by “transferring offline habitus to online environments” (Güzel, 2016, p.97). With the digitalization of capitalism, it becomes easier and freed for individuals to present their selves; but this is also a pressure on them. The alienation that takes place in capitalism can appear this time on social media. This can also be called digital alienation. All the concepts mentioned above have been discussed in a critical paradigm and evaluated from a sociological, psychological and communicative perspective. Social media is a field today, and the surveillance practices and self-presentation that take place here are worth researching.

3 RESEARCH

3.1 Research Topic

YouTube is an increasingly popular platform today. Individuals create a living space on YouTube, display their selves and create new ones there. There are a number of sociological, psychological, and cultural factors that are effective in forming and presenting one's self on YouTube. These factors in the research have been examined under four main concepts: surveillance culture, digital capitalism, consumer society, and alienation. Accordingly, the subject of this study is the psychological and sociological factors that affect the self-performances of YouTube users on YouTube and the ways these effects occur.

3.2 The Significance of the Research

Social media, which includes economic, psychological and socio-cultural factors, greatly affects today's world with the developments it brings. It shapes the individual's perception, thinking and life style. Users also make active posts on social media; as such, social media is also among the main reasons for the emergence of a predominantly audience-oriented peep culture. For this reason, the research is important in terms of bringing an audience-oriented perspective to YouTube, the digital platform with the highest number of users in the world after Google.

In the research, it was examined how the factors that affect the formation of the individual's self are shaped through YouTube. However, it is one of the important aspects of the research that this issue is addressed not only from a psychological

perspective but from a sociological perspective which sees the individual as a part of the socio-historical conditions in which s/he lives. The research focuses on digital capitalism as the most important structure and network of relationships that shape the conditions of YouTube users today. Self-formation and self-presentations processes in social media, which is one of the areas where digital capitalism is produced and reproduced, have been examined, and these processes have been discussed in terms of their relationship with the peep culture and the notion of alienation.

3.3 Aim of the Research

One of the aims of the study is to evaluate, the self-performances of individual users on YouTube, which we can consider as device of the peep culture. Another aim is to evaluate, under the influence of which internal and social factors individuals position themselves in the field of social media and whether they have experienced an alienation or not, and if so, what kind of an experience it is.

3.4 Research Questions

1. What are the main motivations for people to become YouTube users?
2. How does the consumer society affect YouTube users?
3. Do YouTube users feel they are part of the peep culture while they are using YouTube?
4. Are YouTube users alienated from themselves and their labor while consuming YouTube content? If they are alienated, what are the main components of this experience?

3.5 Methodology

The in-depth interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods frequently used in social science studies, was employed in the study. The in-depth interview is conducted to bring a more detailed perspective to complex issues that do not have a definitive answer and can be solved with a comprehensive analysis (Creswell, 1998). The researcher analyzes the individual's perspective, experiences, feelings, thoughts and observations by making a connection with the inner world of the individual and the social conditions in which s/he lives (Karataş, 2015, p.71). The goal is not to categorize individuals but to gain an insider's insight into how the individual understands and makes sense of the world around him/her. This is also important in terms of reaching feelings and thoughts that cannot be expressed in words. In this context, not only an interpretative but also critical paradigm has been adopted in the research. "Approaches based on the critical paradigm focusing on the role and function of communication in the maintenance of existing social and power relations focus on macro problems; They critically consider the current system and communication." (Sepetçi, 2015, p. 222). Related to this, peeping practices and the phenomenon of alienation as shaped through social media are discussed in the context of their relations with power structures in the thesis.

In YouTube, a symbolic performance is established between a YouTuber and the user, this involves a creative process. The in-depth interview technique is also similar to the interaction between the YouTuber and the user in this respect. In the in-depth interview, social interaction is ensured by self-structured interviews, and at a certain level, the interviewer and the participant touch upon each other's feelings and

thoughts about the subject (Berg, 2001). In this symbolic performance, the researcher can look at the world through the eyes of the interviewee (Kvale, 1998). The idea that this research technique will provide an environment where YouTube users will feel comfortable during the interview has also been important in its selection as the research method.

The accessible universe of the study involves female and male active YouTube viewers who are aged 18 to 30 and living within the borders of Turkey. Three female and three male participants were selected from this accessible universe by purposive sampling in accordance with the methodology of the research. In line with the research questions, active YouTube viewers between the ages of 18-30, who are most suitable for the research problem, were selected for the purpose. Although the research population does not represent the general public, it consists of university students and white-collar graduates. The participants have similar socio-cultural backgrounds except for their age. In this respect, the participants show a homogenous feature, which is one of the purposive sampling types. While creating the universe, people in the close environment of the researchers who comply with the conditions determined for the study were contacted first and invited to participate in the study after being properly informed about the scope and objectives of the research. If they volunteered, they were also asked to refer to other eligible people for participating in the study. As a result, the sample consisted of six people who volunteered to participate in the project.

Considering the worldwide YouTube statistics from its foundation to the present day, the age group with the highest use of YouTube is 18-34. (YouTube, n.d.). If Turkey's 2016 YouTube report is considered, 72% of people in the 16-24 age range

living in Turkey are YouTube users (Ferah, 2016). In the light of these figures, we paid particular attention to pick up the participants from the age range of 18-30.

In this context, the six people, who accepted to participate in the study, were informed about the purpose and scope of the research, and their written consents were obtained. The real names of the participants were not used in the study, and the participants were named with numerical codes instead.

Information on the participants, listed in a chronological order, as given below:

1. Participant 1: 21 years old, female, university student, living in Istanbul with her family and a YouTube user. She mostly watches makeup videos and contents about daily life on YouTube.

2. Participant 2: 26 years old, female, lawyer, living alone in Istanbul and a YouTube user. She mostly watches contents related to travel, daily life, and magazine on YouTube.

3. Participant 3: 29 years old, male, academic, graduate student, living in Istanbul with his family and a YouTube user. He generally watches contents about politics and general culture, and documentaries on YouTube.

4. Participant 4: 27 years old, female, motion graphic designer, living in Istanbul with her friend and a YouTube user. She mostly watches gastronomy videos, videos about her profession, and travel-related content on YouTube.

5. Participant 5: 28 years old, male, bank employee, living alone in Bursa and is a YouTube user. He mainly watches artistic, sports-related and do-it-yourself contents on YouTube.

6. Participant 6: 24 years old, male, university student, living alone in Istanbul and a YouTube user. He mostly watches educational videos, documentaries as well as entertainment and cultural contents on YouTube.

The interviews with the participants were conducted in different ways and on different platforms. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with Participant 1 and Participant 2 in a home environment, in an area where the participants felt comfortable, and upon the participants' permission, the interviews were voice-recorded. Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5 were interviewed via Google Meet, and Participant 6 via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and the interviews were again video-recorded upon their permission.

The interviews were conducted in the settings and times of the participants' own choice, and they lasted around an hour or a little more. The participants showed a relaxed and sincere attitude during the interviews. This is of great importance for the validity and reliability of the results of the study

3.6 Limitations

Part of the research was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic period. For this reason, face-to-face interviews could not be held with some participants. Instead, the interviews were mostly conducted through video-conferencing applications.

The results of the research are limited to the participants, as generalized judgments valid for the whole research universe cannot be reached in the interviews conducted within a qualitative methodology.

4 RESULTS

In this section, the findings of in-depth interviews will be evaluated according to the research questions and insights developed from the literature review.

4.1 Participants' Motivations to Use YouTube

In order to understand the YouTube usage motivation of the participants, they were asked about which YouTubers they followed, which contents they were interested in and why they watched them.

Participant 1 answered these questions as follows:

I mostly watch people like me. People with whom my tastes fit and my style of dressing... Like Danla Bilic, Cansu Akın. Actually, there is no special reason for me to watch. When I get bored, when I don't have a job, I just watch it blankly. It is especially fun if I have worked hard or if I am mentally disturbed. Sometimes, if I am buying something, I watch it to get information about that product. Here I can see the people who use it, whether they are satisfied or not, how it is. Sometimes it can be a place I want to travel to, but I usually open and watch YouTube in my leisure time. (P1, 08.2020)

As can be seen from the statements above, Participant 1 sees using YouTube as a leisure activity. Her motivation is to spend free time. As seen here, technology and social media provide a liberating space for the individual and an escape from other obligations, mainly work. However, as mentioned above, leisure time in capitalism is a temporal space that the individual must fill in order to continue

working (Lafargue, 1996), and this is how YouTube becomes part of the culture industry.

Participant 2 similarly sees YouTube as a medium of escape and entertainment:

I usually watch YouTubers that I like and feel close to. There are mostly channels like vlogs, travel or question & answer or talk shows, I watch them too. When I watch travel vlogs by people whose taste I trust, I want to go to places they go. Because I love traveling and traveling... I am watching the things people use, the places they go, but I generally watch these from YouTubers whom I trust their tastes. But if someone I don't like is doing something I love, going somewhere I love, I still watch it. Sometimes it doesn't matter whether I like it or not, I just watch it out of curiosity about what he's done and what he's done. (P2, 09.2020)

The "enjoyment" motivation mostly determines the viewing preferences of Participant 2. Bourdieu stated that likings and tastes are cultural and also class-specific. The class that one belongs to has a determining effect on the cultural tastes of the individual. Participant 2, by saying "people whose taste I trust," actually refers to people who share the same habitus with her.

At the same time, there is an element of curiosity among Participant 2's motivations for using YouTube. She sees YouTube not only as a medium whereby she will identify with YouTubers she likes but also as a medium that satisfies her curiosity. Still, the motivation to satisfy her curiosity is actually meant to reinforce her cultural ties to her class.

Participant 3 thinks he is an informed and conscious watcher on YouTube. He specially selects and watches the contents that suit his own tastes and desires. He said

the following about this: “I mostly watch videos of politics, history and documentaries. There are historical and documentary channels that I like, but I do not follow a specific person, rather I follow channels.” (P3, 11.2018)

He then answered the question about why he became a YouTube user:

Instagram is a little more reflexive social media, but YouTube is not like that. I enter there deliberately. I watch directly, voluntarily, for 2-3 hours. For example, I open relaxing videos before I go to sleep, or if I am doing a job, I open YouTube, a voice or music plays in the back. I also use YouTube a lot to listen to music. Especially, I watch movies and documentaries on YouTube that I cannot find or are difficult to find on the Internet. I watch things on YouTube that I cannot watch on television, newspapers or other platforms due to temporal or some other reasons since they cannot broadcast freely as in YouTube. It is also easy to watch YouTube, watch it where you lie down, watch it on the road and watch it whenever you want to know. But sometimes I open YouTube on smart television. (P3.11.2020)

From the words above, it was deduced that Participant 3 uses YouTube as an alternative to television. Here, we can see that the uses of conventional media have been more or less transferred to the new media platform, YouTube. While television seems to, limit the experience of watching to a fixed place, Participant 3, stating that he watches YouTube whenever he wants and while doing daily activities, shows his satisfaction with the increasingly individual and flexible watching practice YouTube ensures.

In late capitalism the previously stricter distinction between work and leisure times has disappeared. Adorno (2007) claims, “amusement has become an extension of labor under late capitalism” (p. 68), but nowadays entertainment has

become a companion to work. At the same time, Participant 3, also states that he sometimes turns on television to watch YouTube; in fact, the digital and conventional media converge in this usage practice.

Laswell says that individuals use mass media for four main reasons: surveillance, entertainment, information gathering, and socialization (as cited in, Lull, 2001). For example, Participant 4 uses YouTube not only for entertainment but also for information purposes. In this context, she states that she watches the videos about her work "out of need." Therefore, the practice of watching YouTube in leisure time more directly becomes an extension of work when it is carried out not only for entertainment purposes but also for information gathering but the participant is aware that this is an "obligation."

She said the following about this:

Food channels, channels related to my profession and travel videos are my favorites. I actually watch what is related to my job out of necessity. I watch other videos because I am really interested and curious. I usually watch YouTube because of need, such as how it is done, how it is applied. But even though there is nothing I need or wonder about; I go to YouTube for need or anything else; then suddenly I find myself watching the next videos. That's why I think there are no people who do not watch YouTube, even if they are not specifically watched. Apart from these, I also watch psychological videos that are like therapy and speaking frankly. I watch them because I am interested in seeing lives and experiences different from me, and even videos about my profession and subjects related to myself do not attract me. (P4, 11.2020)

Participant 4 states that she also watches videos about individuals with different lifestyles. Here, it can be said that she has a scopophilic pleasure from watching others as the subject of peeping because she is curious about other individuals and watches them as an outside eye. At the same time, her expression of "different lives" makes one think that she likes watching people who are not similar to her, that is, watching individuals who do not share her habitus. Participant 4, with the motivation to peep different lives that are not similar to hers, wants to see herself in the position of the observer, not an object of scrutiny. We can say that she is trying to achieve some sense of personal satisfaction by objectifying the person she does not see as having a common habitus with her.

One of the reasons why Participant 5 uses YouTube more than Twitter and Instagram is that he sees YouTube as more of a field of continuity and stability. On the other hand, he finds YouTube more fluid than television. The shorter duration of the contents on YouTube compared to television makes them easier to watch for him. He sees YouTube somewhere in the continuum between Twitter-Instagram and television. Participant 5 states that the content on YouTube does not flow as fast as on Twitter and Instagram and not as slowly as on television. The fact that the content on YouTube simultaneously has relative continuity feature and is the object of a fluid and fast consumption practice is one of the main reasons why he chooses YouTube among others.

Participant 5 explains this as follows:

I regularly enter YouTube, especially in the field of sports; I always follow basketball-related content and some channels. Actually, I enter the drawing channels as well, but when I need. I use YouTube very actively, even more than Instagram and Twitter because sharing there is instant. You see a post,

you like it or you look at it, you pass it. I like deeper reviews more, and YouTube is the place for these. I also like that people raise their hobbies and show themselves on YouTube. And the range of content is huge. One time you watch something funny and another time you can watch something sports related, and these are not the things that last two or three hours like on television, but like snacks. Then you see something completely different in the suggestions, you watch it, and it's always short, short things... Instead of watching contents every three hours on television, here you can even watch ten contents in three hours. (P5,11.2020)

Participant 6 likes YouTube's independence from temporal and spatial space and mainly uses it for educational purposes. Ease of access to information is one of the main advantages of YouTube for him. He also states that he uses YouTube as a television, keeping it open in the background while dealing with something else. In this context, it can be thought that YouTube has an effect of alleviating the feeling of loneliness like television. In addition, Participant 6 transforms the diversion function of televisions to YouTube.

In Participant 6's words:

I don't follow any YouTubers. I watch it as based on channels. I mostly watch educational videos, music videos, documentaries and movies-related channels. If we say movie, such as film analysis, criticism and award ceremonies... The reason I watch educational videos is actually to fill gaps in my education, I can learn faster and easier by watching tutorials from there. I can sometimes learn a 14-week lesson with 3-4 hours tutorials because I can rewind there, watch it again whenever I want, and it is more like a one-to-one lesson. For example, instead of the 3-month course I went in order to learn a program, I could learn

it on YouTube in 2-3 hours, I realized this. However, we are human beings, we need a physical space to socialize, network and gain a different perspective. Sometimes I leave YouTube open while I am dealing with something else, I open it occasionally, like television. For example, while watching a video, there are other videos next to it. Frankly, I often watch them, too. (P6, 12.2020)

YouTube's contents are video-based, including both audio and visual elements, and it is one of the advantages of the platform for Participant 6. At the same time, he points out the ease of access by stating that he can use YouTube on more than one device. However, one of the motivations to watch YouTube is to want to improve his social capital. He wants to develop his social capital and indirectly his symbolic capital by accessing the information that he deems necessary within the "field," or "the environment," in his words, in which he is engaged as an agent. In this context, Participant 6's pleasure from knowing and learning can be associated with the concept of power. With the social capital he thinks will develop through YouTube, he seeks to place himself in a relatively stronger position in a competitive "environment."

The Participant 6 says the following about topic:

The reason I watch YouTube... actually, YouTube has everything. YouTube is now a video search engine. Frankly, I use YouTube for anything visual. Instead of searching on Google Images, I search here because there is something both auditory and textual here. At the same time, it is very good that I can use it on any device, on the phone, tablet, computer... At the same time, the reason why I watch YouTube is actually not to be left behind from the agenda. At least to say "I know it, too" when spoken in the environment...

This can be anything; like a funny video, news, music. I actually enjoy mastering the subjects while watching (P6, 12.2020)

4.2 Participants' Engagement in the Consumer Society

In the interview with the participants, we tried to understand how much the participants were part of the consumption society and how effective this was in their peeping practices on YouTube.

In the interviews, when analyzing the position of the participants in the consumer society, three themes came to the fore. These are identification, distance and direct involvement. When the relationship of the participants with the consumer society was analyzed, it was observed that some of them saw the consumption flow on YouTube as an ordinary phenomenon and they were involved in consumption practices by creating a special space for them on YouTube and being influenced by the YouTubers and contents they identify with. Some of the participants, on the other hand, glorify themselves by being more distant to the consumption here and not being involved in the consumption society. Finally, some of the participants approached the issue of consumption within YouTube with a cynical perspective and it is seen they were directly involved in the consumption society via YouTube although they generally adopt a critical perspective to it.

In this context, the participants were asked questions about how much they follow popular agendas on YouTube as well as what their attitudes towards the more liked and watched videos and their interests are.

Participant 1 said that she was influenced by the YouTubers she self-identifies with on YouTube and engages in related consumption activities or at least has an intention in this direction:

I watch Danla Bilic a lot because I find it similar to myself. She sounds sincere and natural to me although some people don't like her very much. Although I do not resemble her very much... but I think we are similar in sincerity and style. If I like the dress on her, I check the price on the internet and sometimes I buy it. Sometimes this is not a dress but also a make-up item. Sometimes there are videos where she opens gifts from brands, and there are some I bought from those gifts. I also like Cansu Akın. Even her life is similar to me. I have done research about and bought the products she recommended. (P1, 08.2020)

Participant 2 states that she watches content that is more related to her personal interests when choosing videos on YouTube. She argues that popular culture does not play a role in her video-selection but she is influenced by the YouTubers she identifies with:

I'm watching mostly out of curiosity. Famous or infamous does not matter much. I also watch travel videos and vlogs... If it's something I like, I watch any kinds. If I just feel close to a YouTuber, I also trust the YouTuber's tastes in the video because I have been already watching him/her for a while and then I found him/her close to me - and I would like to go where s/he went (P2, 09.2020)

Participant 1 and Participant 2 emphasize the notions of "intimacy" and "sincerity" in their preferences for YouTube contents. This shows that being "intimate" and "sincere" is a great motivation for using YouTube. While watching the

YouTubers whom they liken to themselves, they establish a resemblance, even identification, between those YouTubers and themselves, mainly in terms of cultural tastes

Participant 3, on the other hand, shows a distinct tendency to separate himself from popular tastes and popular culture, unlike the other two participants. He feels more special and superior by not choosing to watch the content that is popular in the consumer society:

Sometimes silly things fall on my YouTube home page. There are suggestions on the side screen. I don't care much for those recommended videos actually. I open and watch whatever I want specifically. Obviously, in YouTube some channels are reaching very high numbers of viewers and they are very popular in Turkey, there are many videos in there like that but I do not want to watch them sometimes purposefully. (P3, 11.2020)

Participation 4 is similar to Participant 3 in this respect. She also thinks that others are more influenced by YouTube and popular culture, putting herself apart from other YouTube users. The individual's thinking that third parties other than herself/himself are more affected by the media is called the “third person effect” (Davison, 1983). It can be said that this effect was observed in Participant 4:

I know people who see it in a make-up video and buy that product even if they don't need it at all. I also know people who belittle makeup channels but watch. I'm not like that. The channels I watch are not based on consuming that much. The most watched and followed channels especially do not interest me at all or very rare. (P4, 11.2020)

As can be seen from the following words, Participant 5 seems to be engaging in the consumer society by being influenced by the videos he watches. We can say,

Participant 5 sees YouTube as a personal field. He thinks that he is directed to engage in his areas of interest by the videos he watches in this personal field, and he seems pleased with that situation.

He explains this with the following words:

Frankly, I think YouTube leads me. Right now, I wear the sweatshirt on me, bought due to having been directed so. I saw the Miami Heat sweatshirt in a video I watched, they advertised it and bought it after seeing it in there. When I see the things, I love on the channels I follow, I make a move to buy them more. I always follow things like brush and pen brands through painting channels. (P5, 11.2020)

Participant 6 says that he uses YouTube as a place for getting information and reviews about the products he needs. However, he thinks that when he is exposed to the marketing and advertising contents on YouTube, he sometimes buys "things he does not need," thus becoming a part of the consumer society almost unconsciously. However, when talking about the effects of advertising contents on YouTube on consumers, he prefers to use a third person instead of the first person. This shows that the participant also wants to separate himself from other users who he thinks are encouraged to consume more under the influence of YouTube contents.

Participant 6, however, associates the notion of receiving service in the traditional definition of consumption with the educational contents he watches on YouTube and he thinks that he "consumes" these contents. He positions himself as a consumer as well as a viewer because he thinks that he receives the service he would will receive from other sources by watching videos on YouTube.

The Participant 6 says the following about the issue:

I don't buy anything I don't need after seeing it in YouTube. However, if I need I myself watch the review videos of that product more than once. Like who said what, what the features of the product are... I also buy it after a deep inquiry. However, sometimes I find myself engaging in consumption even though I don't need it. Firms, brands are marketing directly or indirectly, using influencer marketing and social media marketing. YouTube also provides great visibility to brands, in this respect. I think this inevitably leads people. With marketing strategies implemented, at least a perception of brand value is formed in people's minds. However, if I look at consumption from another perspective, I am also a consumer on YouTube other than the audience because in a way, I consume the contents. I think I am getting a service from the videos I watch for education. (P6, 12.2020)

4.3 Participants' Engagement in the Surveillance and Peep Culture

In the interviews with the participants, it has been seen that some participants did not regard themselves as part of the surveillance and/or peep culture. However, it has also been observed that some users are indirectly aware of this.

The participants were asked questions about how they position themselves as viewers while watching videos on YouTube, whether the feeling of being watched by someone bothers them, and whether they think they are inside a one-way surveillance mechanism as viewers.

I'm just watching, actually. I have no such bad intentions, more like curiosity or, I don't know, watching television. After all, while I watch, they do not

watch or see me. But not like cinema, more like television to spend time and have fun...Television logic, as I said... (P1, 08.2020)

According to the statements of Participant 1 above, it can be said that she sees YouTube as an alternative to television broadcasts and positions herself as a passive watcher just like against television. The participant does not see any particular difference between traditional broadcasting and the functioning of new media, so she seems to be unaware of the surveillance practices underlying new media channels.

In addition, her statement “I have no bad intentions” suggests that surveillance does not naturally involve benign intentions, and she affirms herself by stating that she is watching YouTube for entertainment because she sees peeping as a malicious practice. Participant 1 also states that she watches YouTube more like television than cinema. As Koçak (2001) has pointed out, the entertainment function of television enables the person to have a pleasant time and make use of his/her free time by moving away from the difficulties of daily life. According to the Frankfurt School, which approaches the subject from a much more critical perspective, this kind of entertainment is an extension of the work because it aims to integrate the individual with consumption and capitalist labor processes with inseparable ties. Participant 1 watches YouTube as a tool that provides such entertainment, which suggests that a main function of television as part of the culture industry has now been also assumed by YouTube.

Participant 2 says the following on this topic:

For example, if a product is promoted in the video, then that product appears as an advertisement on other sites or similar videos appear in the suggested videos. If I think like that, they are watching what I watch through their own

system, or when I watch a video, videos similar to it appear next to it. (P2, 09.2020)

Here, Participant 2 is seen to be partially aware that she is a part of the culture of surveillance. She is aware that she is being monitored to the modus operandi of the internet infrastructure, but she does not think that she is a part of the peep culture as a viewer because of watching contents on YouTube.

Participant 3 is aware that he is being watched, unlike the Participant 1, and even acknowledges that he and other viewers are a kind of data. He acknowledges that he is also being monitored digitally as data and states that this monitoring act has certain feedbacks and effects. He regards the audience as a number and a financial gain for other parties in the surveillance process on YouTube. In addition, by seeing himself as data, he actually commodifies himself; in other words, he looks at his role as a viewer with an outside eye. This alienation effect will be discussed in detail in the next part.

Participant 3 expresses these with the following words:

Social media is an industry and we, as viewers, are a part of it. At least we are a statistical figure for a YouTube. The more you click the more you watch, the more you contribute to the video; all these comes back as an advertisement and money to a YouTuber. (P3, 11.2020)

Since Participant 4 works as a freelance motion graphic artist, she follows and watches her own works on the YouTube account of the company she works for. Apart from watching them, she also pays attention to the comments made to the videos. Here, indirectly, Participant 4 is pleased to watch her own labor and also to be evaluated it in a positive way. Even though she does not have a YouTube channel, seeing her work and having it seen by others makes her feel a sense of belonging to

YouTube like a creative worker. In fact, we can say that she considers herself a native YouTube user rather than a digital nomad:

I don't have a video or channel that I shot, but sometimes on YouTube I see a work I have edited or prepared and I like it. For example, someone mentioned that my intro was very nice when commenting under a project I worked for. In this respect, I felt as if I had a place on YouTube, and even though it is not my channel, someone is watching my work; maybe if they like it later, they will look at who have done it. This is, in one way, feeling like a producer other than the audience. (P4, 11.2020)

Participant 4 states that she is aware of being watched, even if she does not see the audience. She defines this as "being abstractly under surveillance." Besides, she acknowledges and makes it clear that she is a kind of digital data on YouTube. Based on the statements of Participant 4 quoted below, it can be said that she is aware that she is being followed but exhibits a cynical rather than a critical attitude towards it:

According to the things I watch, even the suggestions and directions of the videos on the side show that you are not just an audience. Although I am not monitored concretely, I think we are under that surveillance in abstract. The visual is already a very effective thing, so the most memorable and directive things for human beings are always visual. I think this is a reason why YouTube is used a lot. Sometimes I can open and watch the video they want with their visual guidance. That's why I am also being watched. (P4, 11.2020)

Participant 5 thinks that he has created a special space for himself on YouTube. He enjoys the idea that it is a space that reflects his own self. He is aware that he is actually being watched through the channels suggested by the platform and the videos he encounters, but this does not bother him. On the contrary, as he wants to

create a personal space there, he likes that the recommended contents are also suitable for him. Participant 5 said the following on this issue:

I follow channels more than YouTubers. I am proceeding not through a person, but through the content I love. However, when the people I don't like on the channels I like become commentators, I don't watch their videos because YouTube is a completely personal space for me. That's why YouTube is a valuable field for me. Channels I follow, videos suggested according to that like that... I love that layout. Recommended channels are also an indicator that I am being watched. Someone already keeps track of what X person has watched, how many times he has watched it, what he has done with it. Then, advertisements and guiding, recommended videos appear. This is actually a nice thing. You can access different information about the topics you are interested in, but it is not nice when it is exaggerated. (P5, 11.2020)

Participant 6 gave the following answer in this context:

By watching, I am actually engaging in surveillance. The things I watch, especially because of my curiosity, are like surveillance. I also enjoy this. Especially when I am watching things that I will never do, that are far from my life or that do not suit me at all. On the other hand, I am being watched digitally. Firms, brands are marketing directly or indirectly using influencer marketing and social media marketing. Sometimes, these marketing or advertisements can be shaped according to the content I watch. In this respect, my monitoring actually enables me to be watched. (P6, 12.2020)

As can be seen from the above words, Participant 6 is aware that actually watching YouTube videos is also a practice of surveillance. His words suggest that he takes a scopophilic pleasure brought by the act of peeping while watching things that

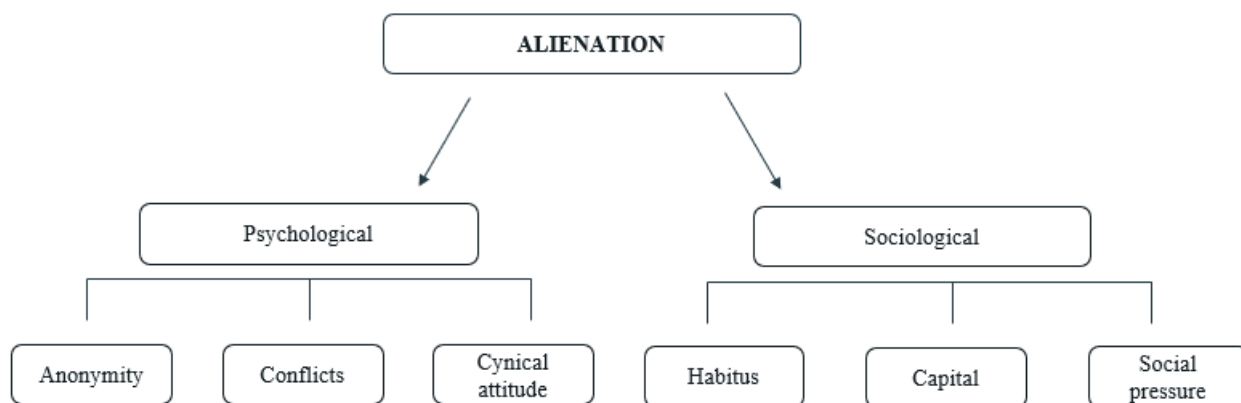
are far from his habitus. By watching the contents other than his own habitus, he actually positions himself as a subject who examines the other, not the object being examined, and thus reaffirms himself. In addition, he thinks that he is also watched digitally, based on the platform's customized advertisements and marketing contents. In other words, Participant 6 acknowledges that the surveillance process in YouTube works in a two-way direction. However, he thinks himself as the initiator of this surveillance process. If he does not watch others, he thinks that he cannot be viewed digitally from the outside, and sees the practice of watching as a negotiation.

4.4 Participant's Self-Performances and Sense of Alienation within YouTube

In order to understand whether the use of YouTube triggers the feeling of alienation in the participants, they were asked how they felt while watching videos on YouTube, how they presented their self on YouTube and whether they wanted to be YouTubers at all.

In the literature review section, the concept of alienation was discussed psychologically and sociologically. In this context, the psychological and sociological themes and notions that the analysis of the participants' sense of alienation within YouTube has drawn on are shown in the table below.

Table 2: Findings about the Participant's Self Performances and Sense of Alienation within YouTube



I love artistic things. But that doesn't happen much on YouTube. I also watch really artistic and cultural content, but I watch mostly silly vlogs and make-up videos. But on Instagram bohemian or marginal accounts attract my attention more. I take the photo, edit it, make it different and upload it. Since people see my account on Instagram, what people say is more important, but there is nothing like that on YouTube. I'm watching, only I myself know what I'm watching, nobody sees it. That's why I'm freer on YouTube, if I only watch it lonely. (P1, 08.2020)

Participant 1 stated that she felt freer on YouTube compared to other social media platforms. Therefore, it can be said that this participant acts more in line with her inner motivations on YouTube. However, Participant 1 also acknowledged that she actually felt a social pressure upon her practices in the digital field by stating that “if I only watch lonely”. The reason why she feels freer on YouTube is that she can watch individually without this pressure and can remain relatively anonymous compared to other social platforms.

Content sharing on Instagram provides more opportunities for self-presentation, even making it almost mandatory. The participant reflects herself on Instagram according to how she wants to see herself or how she wants others to see her. But on YouTube, she states that she feels much freer and acts in accordance with her true self. In this context, Participant 1 staged a performance in Instagram where she is somehow alienated from herself, while she does not feel this alienation on YouTube.

Participant 2, on the other hand, refers to the dialectic between the YouTubers she watches and herself, as can be understood from her words below. Making a comparison between “I” and the “other,” she looks at her own life from an outsider’s eye and alienates herself to a certain extent although she says what she feels is not “envy.”

I mean, I like watching the people I like and the lives of people I love. It's not like envy, but they have a more comfortable and carefree life. I like to watch things that are not in my own life and what I want to do. (P2, 09.2020)

Participant 3 gave the following answer:

Social media is an industry and we, as viewers, are a part of it. At least we are a statistic for a YouTube. The more you click, the more you watch, the more you contribute to the video, which comes back an advertisement in money to YouTuber. You comment, you like it, etc. In this sense, you are a part of this industry. First of all, you are a number in there. You can even subscribe; you can even make financial aid according to your own budget. This is also another thing. You are both a watcher and a customer. Even a donor... (P3,11.2020)

One of the first striking findings from the interview with Participant 3 is that he used the second person singular instead of the first person singular. Participant 3 works in a profession with a relatively high social status in Istanbul, which is called a white-collar employee; he is an academician. With the use of the second person singular, the fact that by acknowledging being a part of digital data on YouTube, he turns his own self to be examined by an outsider's eye. His use of the second person singular is also an indication of his resistance to being an object to be examined and evaluated by the researcher. He wants to examine his own self. This can be thought of as a tactic used by the participant to prevent the researcher from establishing power over him as the looking subject.

Participant 4, who stated that she sometimes worked with YouTubers due to her job, brings an approach to YouTube, which more systematic and more related to the notion of labor, she also states that there is an exchange between a YouTuber and the audience. She thinks that she turns her time and value into profit for YouTubers as she spends time as a viewer and spends labor there. On the other hand, she sees herself sometimes as a customer and sometimes an employer, not as an employee, and actually puts herself in a higher position in the power hierarchy compared to YouTubers:

If we define the profession, if you make money from something, it is a profession. Although I find it difficult to accept, being a YouTuber, I think it is a profession because they earn money from this job and continue their lives. I also work with those in this industry from time to time, it's really sad to see how much money they're making. As a result, this has turned into a line of business. There is an exchange. Here they take our likes, our watching, our time and they're buying ads from companies. While watching, we are both

customers and employers. I get a service while watching a cooking video, I'm like a customer here, but, on the other hand, it won't make money if I don't watch it. So, I am like an employer then. If I really watch it for to do something, I am a customer, but if I watch silly videos in my free time, I am an employer. (P4, 11.2020)

From a different perspective, Participant 4 refers to the scopophilic pleasure taken from peeping and the power it provides while positioning herself in this field. When she watches YouTube in her free time, she sees herself as an employer, and when she watches YouTube when she is in need of it, she sees herself as a customer and establishes a tentative power hierarchy between the "customer" and the "employer." That she sees herself as an "employer" while she watches "silly videos," in her own words can be associated with the scopophilic pleasure and power this act of peeping gives.

On the other hand, Participant 4 is upset to see how much money YouTubers earn. She implicitly assumes that she herself has been working under difficult working conditions for a long time; thus, according to her, it is unfair for YouTubers to make "easy and effortless money.". Her comparison her own labor with that of YouTubers on the basis of their exchange values implies that she is alienated from her labor from a Marxist perspective.

Participant 5 answered the question about how he expresses himself on YouTube by referring to his giving likes and dislikes for videos:

Although I use YouTube a lot, I have not commented on any channel so far. I see, there are hundreds of thousands of comments, I do not comment at all, thinking that what I wrote is unreadable. But I do like or dislike. Because this is an effective thing. For example, you are looking at the video, there are

thousands of dislikes, then occurs a bad prejudice about that video, even if you like it, you do not watch it, sometimes even such videos that they show up on news the next day, depending on the number of dislikes or likes. I also become an influencer when I like it or not as a viewer. Because I have influence somehow... (P5, 11.2020)

As it can be deduced from the above remarks, Participant 5 refrains from commenting on the content he watches on YouTube. However, by likes or dislikes, he expresses his opinions about the video. On the YouTube platform, with the permission of the channel owner, comments are open to all users and commenters make comments with their own accounts. In likes or dislikes, there is anonymity. No user can see who likes or dislikes a video that is not given the permission for visibility. Participant 5 takes advantage of the anonymity offered by social media by simply giving likes and dislikes. He prefers to engage in self-presentation anonymously. Also, while comments take longer to read, it is much easier to look at the number of likes and dislikes. Participant 5 believes that the number of likes and dislikes affects the perceptions of the individuals more, and he takes only this action. In fact, he defines himself as an “influencer” with his likes and dislikes. With these words, it can be said that he places himself in a position of power as a YouTube user, albeit an anonymous one. He is now the anonymous subject of the peeping act.

Participant 6 mentioned in the previous section that he enjoys watching lives different from his on YouTube; we can actually speak of a scopophilic pleasure from his watching people other than his own habitus. He, too, places himself in the position of the watcher, not watched by others. On the other hand, he makes a comparison between himself and the YouTubers he watches. Sometimes he affirms himself and

sometimes the other. He does this by comparing the capital owned himself and the capital owned by YouTubers:

Sometimes I like to watch things on YouTube that never fit me, never belong to my life, or I could never have done, as I said before. For example, I can't go to any YouTuber's house because I don't know anyone. But I watch and wonder how their house is. Then I get into a comparison. I actually relieve myself somehow with things like "They are rich but they don't have intelligence. (P6, 12.2020)

On the other hand, Participant 6 does not see himself close to some YouTubers with whom he has made this comparison, and even though he considers himself superior to them in terms of the "intelligence level," he admits that he feels inadequate against some YouTubers. Even if he is "in the same class" with them, in his own words, Participant 6 thinks that they are not from the same sociocultural background, the same habitus -in Bourdieu's phrase -, but he considers them superior in terms of their symbolic capital. It can be said that he experiences a contradiction between his real and ideal self.

He said these following:

However, the opposite is also happening. For example, I worry about myself when watching someone older than me if he is in the position I want to be in life; I also make comparisons such as "Look how great he is at this age, he has done something, how lucky he is and look at me how old am I, I am still studying.". The people I compare are the types that I normally respect, but people I wouldn't be friends with, maybe even if we were in the same class because most of them are very different from me in sociocultural terms. It also affects me more. (P6, 12.2020)

In summary, Participant 6 sees himself as someone who sometimes has power and some other times, he is lacking relative power, depending on his position in YouTube as a field.

The participants were also asked whether they want to be YouTubers and why they want or do not want to be so.

Participant 1's answer to this question is as follows:

I would like to be a YouTuber, but I wouldn't. We even thought about it a few times with my friends, then we gave up. Not for me... They try very hard, unnecessarily and you can fail or rise. It takes a lot of time. The reason I want to be is to lead a comfortable life without financial difficulties. So, they make a lot of money. Who wouldn't want to just make a video and make that much money? (P1, 08.2020)

Participant 1's main reason for wanting to become a YouTuber is the economic capital she thinks she will earn as a result. She looks at the idea of being a YouTuber with rational-instrumental reasoning, by making a cost-benefit calculation. However, she has been observed that she avoids being a YouTuber because she is afraid of taking risks and leaving her safe zone.

Participant 2 states that being a YouTuber would not be suitable for her because she is a lawyer: "Yes, I want it but I would not. Even if I did, I would only do it for money. So, it could be fun, but I don't think it will suit my professional identity" (P2, 09.2020). As can be understood from her words here, her desire to become a YouTuber conflicts with her professional identity, and the symbolic capital accruing from it.

Participant 2 takes attention to a dichotomy between real and virtual life and associates virtual life on YouTube with entertainment. On the other hand, by

considering her professional identity superior in terms of social reputation, she thinks that the YouTuber identity will devalue her position. In this case, it can be said that she has a kind of internal conflict because her desire to be YouTuber does not fit her ideal self. At the same time, the watching practice of Participant 2 - as seen in the previous parts - is also under the influence of cultural tastes stemming from her class affiliation. The reason why she does not want to be YouTuber is the damaging effect she thinks will create on her symbolic capital in her professional field (lawyer).

Unlike the other participants, Participant 3 had a more positive attitude to the idea of becoming a YouTuber. The motivation of Participant 3 to become YouTuber is to convey information to others. As stated in the previous section, for Participant 3 YouTube replaces television, and YouTube performs a function for him similar to the informing function of the mass media. The reason for Participant 3's desire to become a YouTuber corresponds his motivation for watching YouTube.

Participant 3 said:

It is a good thing for the masses to watch your content and hear your voice. If I had knowledge and technical competence, I would try to produce content similar to foreign history channels. I would like to be a YouTuber with such content and make my voice heard. (P3, 11.2020)

This participant resisted being the object to be observed by the researcher by using the second person singular in his answers to the questions about YouTube viewing practices as mentioned above. However, he acknowledges that he feels inadequate when it came to being YouTuber. He does not think that his cultural capital is sufficient for him to become the knowing subject on YouTube. In other words, Participant 3 provides varying answers to the questions based on his positions in power relations in different fields (that is, social research and YouTube).

Participant 4 seems to value privacy as part of her personality although she finds the opportunity to “make money by having fun” attractive as YouTuber. She criticizes YouTubers for this violating value. Based on the following words, it can be said that the main reason why Participant 4 does not want to be a YouTuber is her concern about the violation of privacy:

Being a YouTuber is very difficult for me. Professionally, I am always behind the camera, showing yourself and your life in front of the camera is a very difficult thing for me. I guess everyone would like to make a lot of money by shooting videos and being a YouTuber, but I can't. This must be inside of a person. You also need to have a certain amount of money at first so that you can look after yourself before you earn a lot of money. But I could think if I had the necessary personal motivation and materiality... I work overtime and stressful as part of my job. I mean, who wouldn't want to open a travel channel and make money, and I would. Or they promote a product and earn thousands of moneys. I would also like to live more comfortably and not to think about how to end the month. But I wouldn't be, I mean, while it seems like a shame to show you what you eat and even the places you visit ... As I said, it is all about a personality issue. (P4, 11.2020)

According to Bourdieu, the individual enters into a power struggle in order to maintain and advance the reputation and status of his/her own capital configuration in a structured habitus and develops a number of game strategies in this process (Baltacı, 2018). In this context, Participant 4's reason for attaching importance to privacy can be attributed to the fact that she is a member of the non-Muslim minority, although she says that this is a "personality issue." As part of a religious minority, she comes from relatively community-type and segregated social group in cultural terms.

Participant 4 looks at the idea of being a YouTuber from an individual/psychological point of view, saying “This must be inside of a person.” But then, in regarding this as an activity that will almost bring “shame,” by she opens the door for a sociological analysis, considering that the religious minority it belongs to has a habitus that cares about privacy.

As a result, Participant 4 may be experiencing a conflict between the desire to "earn money by traveling and having fun" that causes her to want to be like YouTubers and the social pressures stemming from his upbringing style and the values she has acquired. In other words, Participant 4's warily approach to the idea of being a YouTuber in order to protect her privacy can be considered as a reflection of the doxa brought by the cultural-religious structure in which she finds herself on her behavior practices and attitude.

Participant 5 states that, unlike the previous participants, he wants to be a YouTuber and he has done some work for it and could do it in the future, too. Participant 5 aims to create an online community by gathering individuals with the same cultural and social capital on a specific subject of interest. Emphasizing that the subject he is interested in is a niche one, he wants to build a closed network of relations between his own stakeholders and he want to improve his symbolic power in this regard. In other words, he plans to become a YouTuber to transform its cultural and social capital into symbolic capital. Getting the approval of the online community he wants to create is also an important motivation for him to be a YouTuber.

Participant 5 said the following on this issue:

I thought of being a YouTuber, and let me tell you, last year we were very interested in this topic with my very close friend. We almost did it, we were so prepared. We thought of a channel about the United Kingdom league, it even

has a computer game, we said we should shoot something because there are really specific audiences interested in these topics, but such a no content channel in Turkey about this. At that time, something came up, but we can still open a channel on YouTube, anything might happen. Honestly, the reason we want to do something like this is not money oriented. In Turkey you can't find too many people interested in the Premier League because it is a niche thing. Our aim is to meet at a common interest with them and bring together each other, reaching a limited number of people interested in this subject in Turkey. You can only get your voice heard on YouTube, as there are few people who are interested like us. Of course, it is very nice to be praised about it and “Look, there are people who think like us; he has dared to do such a thing,” a very pleasant thing to be said things about like that. (P5, 11.2020)

In this respect, Participant 6 has a similar attitude with Participant 5. Participant 6 emphasizes that there is no culturally qualified content on YouTube. He thinks that he can become a YouTuber by seeing himself as someone who is suitable for closing this gap. He sees his own cultural capital more competent than existing YouTubers. Like Participant 5, he wants to create an online community “in line with his qualifications” that will mediate his cultural capital and transform it into symbolic capital as a YouTuber. He states that he wants to be a YouTuber and even works for this, but mainly his personal concerns prevent this want. In this respect, he is similar to Participant 5.

Participant 6 said the following on this issue:

I would like, and even want to be a YouTuber. We had plans to produce content with my friend. Then it was left. The reason it was left was because we had concerns as well as our personal works. We are concerned about

whether the videos we shoot on YouTube will damage my reputation in the future or will they be used by people to reduce my reputation. Putting these concerns aside, the reason why I want to be a YouTuber is actually to reach people who think like me and to narrate myself. Money is really secondary because that there are people who think like you, that they follow you, to create a community are more important than money for me. I think there is a need for quality content especially in the fields of art, culture and communication. Also, when there is so much garbage content, I believe my own content will have better quality on YouTube. In order to reach quality content, people like me who think in a different dimension or those who support such people are needed. (P6.12.2020)

Participant 6 is an agent who has a relatively reputable combination of economic, cultural and social capital in the fields he is in. As observed in his words above, he thinks that he will enrich his existing capital configuration in the future on YouTube. However, he is concerned that his potential visibility on YouTube may damage his future position and reputation. In particular, he refrains from being a YouTuber in order not to damage the symbolic capital he can earn in his business and social life. This can be considered as a defense mechanism. In order to protect and develop his existing capital configuration and not to damage the symbolic power he has gained through them; he avoids a different field in which he is not fully sure that he can achieve the expected gains and the position of power. However, a possible change in the mutual social reputation of the fields and his gains may cause Participant 6 to take a more active step in this field in the future.

5 CONCLUSION

Social media, which has become widespread and enriched with the developing internet technologies, affects every field in today's world. Social media has become a huge digital space that individuals use interactively and effectively. In this space, individuals also exhibit various self-performances. However, social media has become both a socialization network and an area shaped in the shadow of capitalist production and consumption relations. Social media is an environment that needs to be handled both psychologically and sociologically in terms of its transformation into a living space.

In parallel with the developments in information and communication technologies, the individual, who can be part of cross-border communities on the one hand, and who is gradually getting isolated on the other hand, is in various searches on social media. Surveillance and peeping practices are one of those that respond to these searches. With the development of social media, surveillance has gradually become decentralized and specialized, evolving into peeping practices at the individual level. One of the social media where these peeping practices are most intensely experienced is YouTube, a video sharing and watching platform.

In this study, YouTube is considered as a social media channel where individuals show self-performances and various peeping behaviors. The peeping practices, self-performances and alienation experience of users on and through YouTube were analyzed from a critical paradigm without overlooking the intertwining of these practices with power relations. An eclectic approach has been adopted while constructing the theoretical framework of the thesis; Goffman, Freud

and Lacan were drawn on for psychological insights; for sociological analyzes, the theory of the Frankfurt School and Bourdieu were mainly used.

Six people were interviewed in depth to understand how the use of YouTube creates a culture of peeping and leads to an alienation experience. The reason for choosing the in-depth interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, is as follows: what is important in the study is the thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions of the participant individuals. Examining their self-presentation practices and experiences of alienation in this way has provided an insight into the world of the participants, which is one of the original contributions of the research to the literature.

Since some of the interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic process, some of the participants were interviewed via virtual meeting platforms like Google Meet and Zoom. Participants consist of three males and females between the ages of 18 and 30, selected by the purposive sampling method.

According to the findings from the interviews, the participants are aware that they are in a culture of indirect or direct surveillance. However, it has been observed that this does not bother them, and even in some cases, they are satisfied with it or adopt a cynical attitude towards it. The main reason why they are pleased to be a part of the peep culture built on YouTube is that the content related to them is presented to them on YouTube through these surveillance practices themselves, so they can create their own personal space on YouTube. They are also aware of the manipulation that may be caused by their digital viewing. However, the participants think that this manipulation does not affect them because of their own knowledge and awareness levels and mainly because of their cultural capital, which is based on the education they received.

In the context of the consumption society, the observations made about the participants vary. The consumption motivation for participants 1 and 2 depends on the identification (identification) between their self and the other party (e.g., a YouTuber promoting a certain product). Participants 3 and 4 put a distance between themselves and the popular culture of consumer society. Participant 5 is directly involved in the consumption process by being influenced by YouTube. Participant 6 sees YouTube primarily as a medium of inquiry. However, Participant 6 also looks at the information he reaches as a commodity and he states that he receives service from the educational videos he watched, and therefore he regards himself in a consumer position on YouTube.

One of the interesting observations made about the YouTube usage practices of the participants is that most of them transfer the diversion function of the television to YouTube. Related to this, they made comparisons such as "the television left open while dealing with something." Here, we see that television, the greatest storyteller of society, might be replaced by YouTube as the main storyteller in the digital age (Gerbner et al., 2002). Moreover, individuals are looking for the narcissistic scopophilic and voyeuristic pleasure they feel while watching television on YouTube.

Another topic examined in the study is the participants' motivation to use YouTube. In the interviews, it was observed that almost each participant had a different motivation. However, if we want to a general conclusion, we can divide the participants' motivations to use YouTube into three groups:

1. Entertainment and diversion: Most of the participants stated that they watch YouTube like television. They described the videos they enjoy watching in their spare time with expressions such as "bootless, nonsense, and waste." By stating that they are watching individuals who have

different lives from them, they let us think that they actually escape from their reality for a short time.

2. The urge to know: According to the answers given by the participants, the urge to know has two dimensions: the first is the access to the needed information, and the second is to satisfy the curiosity about what is happening outside.
3. Scopophilic pleasure: Participants enjoy watching videos on YouTube. Some of the participants place themselves in a strong position as subjects who see / peep others, by watching lives different from themselves; others enjoy identifying with the characters they watch.

The three motivations described above are often seen together. While the participants watch contents on YouTube with the urge to know, they also get scopophilic pleasure from watching the video. While they get scopophilic pleasure, they both have fun and sometimes escape from their own reality.

Whether participants live through alien enation while demonstrating peeping practices and self-performances as YouTube users was one of the topics analyzed. In the thesis, the concept of alienation has been approached from both a psychological and a socio-economic perspective.

From a psychological point of view, it has been determined that the participants exhibit some common patterns in this context. The first is anonymity. YouTube allows users to remain anonymous more than other social media platforms. This pattern of staying anonymous sometimes gains a liberating feature according to the answers of the participants, and sometimes it is used to hide one's self.

Participant 1 states that she felt much freer on YouTube compared to other platforms because of remaining anonymous. It has been observed that being able to

watch the content she wants without any social pressure for approval allows her to feel free.

Participant 5 also takes advantage of the anonymity opportunity offered by YouTube to users. He prefers to remain anonymous knowingly and intentionally by only liking and disliking but not commenting on videos. In fact, he hides his own self here. Neither of Participant 1 and 5 think they are alienated from their own selves on YouTube; the biggest reason for this is that YouTube gives them a chance to avoid any self-performances while performing a peeping act.

Participants 2 and 6 make sense of their video watching practices on YouTube on the basis of the dialectics between "I and the other." However, the comparisons they make are different from each other. Participant 2, comparing people with habituses similar to hers, affirms her lifestyle in this way; Participant 6, contrary to Participant 2, affirms himself by comparing himself with people who are not of his own habitus and who do not resemble him in terms of capital accumulations and configurations. The narcissistic pleasure that Participant 2 has with the YouTubers she watches turns into voyeuristic pleasure in Participant 6 from watching a different world secretly.

Participant 3 acknowledges that on YouTube the watcher is a commodity, by seeing himself as a digital data. However, he has a cynical attitude towards the surveillance / peeping phenomenon on YouTube; although he is aware of this, he does not bother with it. Participant 4 also brought a different perspective to YouTube through the notions of labor and commodity. By comparing the market / exchange value of her workforce and that of YouTubers, she alienates himself from his own labor in a Marxist sense.

As a result, in the self-presentation on YouTube, a sense of alienation due to the conflict between the real self and the ideal self was observed in some participants, but not in others. It was even concluded that YouTube might be more liberating for some participants than many other social media in terms of self-performance. However, there were some participants who experienced alienation. It can be said that the alienation here is not caused by a conflict between the ideal self and the real self but from the comparisons made by the individual with what s/he watches. Their awareness of their presence as an audience commodity on YouTube also points to a state of alienation. However, a cynical attitude is adopted in this regard.

When the answers given by the participants were examined, it was concluded that they all wanted to be YouTubers in one way or another. However, some have started attempts in this direction, and then gave up, and some have never tried it, even if they actually wanted it because they were afraid to enter a new field that risks endangering the reputation of their capital configuration. As a result, they all wanted to be a YouTuber, but they did not.

In general, the participants want to be a YouTuber for two main reasons: making money by having fun and building a community with people who are similar to them. However, looking at the responses of the participants, these two did not appear as a motivation at the same time. The participants either want to be YouTubers in order to make money by “traveling, having fun etc.” or to create a community. In fact, we can think that the socio-cultural backgrounds of the participants are effective in the answers given here. Those who want to become YouTubers with the motivation to just make money by having fun either lack sufficient economic capital to have the reputation they desire in their current work area or are composed of those who see being a YouTuber as something “very easy and trivial:” if they are ever going to be

involved in such a thing, they want it only for "making a lot of money from the easy way. The participants who want to be YouTubers to create a community are individuals who truly trust their own cultural capital and want to manifest it and, in return, to be liked and approved. Economic capital seems secondary in importance to them. However, these participants also take a hesitant approach to step into this field as they are not sure whether they will receive the reputation they expect in YouTube, a new field, even though they heavily trust on their cultural capital. As a result of the observations, it was concluded that the configurations and levels of the participants' economic, cultural and social capital affect their reasons for wanting or not wanting to be YouTubers.

If the findings obtained from the research are evaluated, the following general conclusions can be drawn: YouTube and other social media platforms should not be considered as distant from the individual and society. Social media is now a living space. The individual acts in interaction with many notions in this living space. When YouTube is viewed from a holistic perspective both psychologically and sociologically, the impact of this medium on individuals and society can be analyzed better.

The reason for doing both a sociological and psychological analysis in the study is while an individual performs self-presentation,s/he is not affected only by psychological or only sociological differences. Both factors affect the self-formation and presentation of the individual. If the study had been handled only with a psychological perspective without considering sociological factors, the possibility of a detailed and robust analysis would be reduced. The experiences individuals have in society as well as the events they experience within themselves are reflected in their self-making and presenting practices. Although social media appears as an abstract

space, the individual in sociological sense establishes a living space for himself here and exists within certain social groups. The facts and events seen in social life are also manifested here. Social media, which enables both an individual and a mass use, has become a kind of space that allows individuals to express themselves and present their selves. Here, interacting with other users, sharing feelings / thoughts, transferring personal experiences with them are among the reasons that enable social media to be considered both a psychological and a sociological phenomenon. Digital anthropologist Brian Solis (2006) summarized this as follows: “Social media is about sociology and psychology more than technology.” In this context, YouTube is one of the most suitable social media platforms for interactivity and interaction. Individuals can make their voices heard here to other individuals across the world. In this way, they can create multiple communities. In addition, users can show psychological behaviors such as likes / dislikes, likes / dislikes, laughing / getting angry that they exhibit in society with different symbolic values attached. The desire to represent one's self in the community and how the self is presented feed on both psychological and sociological notions. In summary, since social media and YouTube are almost a reflection of daily life for individuals, it is important to examine this in a multidisciplinary way.

In the study, it was tried to understand what individuals who are active YouTube users think about using YouTube and how they make sense of this practice. One of the main reasons that enable the study to reach multifaceted results is that it has examined the subject is not only psychological and individual-oriented, but also from a sociological perspective that positions the individual within society, and the second is that the participants are selected from as many different demographic backgrounds as possible although it cannot be claimed that they represent the universe

of the research fully. Because of these features, the research makes an important contribution to the literature and offers important theoretical and methodological insights for similar studies in the future.



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Appendix A:

In-depth Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your profession?
3. Where and with whom do you live?
4. What content do you usually watch on YouTube?
5. Which YouTubers do you follow?
6. Why are you watching YouTube?
7. Why do you like watching videos on YouTube?
8. When do you watch YouTube?
9. What distinguish YouTube apart from other social media platforms?
10. What differentiate YouTube apart from other social media platforms?
11. Do the videos you watch on YouTube affect you?
12. After watching a video on YouTube do you participate the consumption?
13. How do you position yourself on YouTube as a viewer?
14. How would you describe your YouTube viewing practices?
15. Do you think you are being watched as a viewer?
16. If you think you are being watched, how do you think this happens, can you explain?
17. If you think you are being watched in some way, does it bother you?
18. How do you present yourself on YouTube?
19. Can you create a bond with YouTubers while you are watching their videos?
20. Would you like to be YouTuber? Why would you like it or why would you not?

21.If you want to be a YouTuber, what are the factors that prevent you in this regard?

22.Do you think being YouTuber is a profession?

23.If you see YouTuber as a profession, how would you position yourself as a viewer?

24.If you made a financial profit as a viewer on YouTube, would there be a change in your viewing habits?

