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INDIVIDUAL USE OF NEW MEDIA: AN EVALUATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN FUCHS AND HENRY JENKINS' OPINIONS

ABSTRACT

The developments in communication technologies and the internet reveal new communication areas. The use of internet has increased exponentially since the 1990s due to the increasing number of websites and number of users. In parallel with the developments in web technologies, new media and social media concepts come to the fore in the 2000s. Unlike traditional media, new media provides its users with the opportunity to create and intervene with its content. With the new media, the audience, listener and reader move from their passive position to an active position and are now classified as users. These users can create their own profiles over these networks and share content there. These developments in media technologies bring along many discussions. While some of the researchers involved in this discussion focus on the positive aspects of these new technologies, others mention the problems they cause or could cause. In this study, the positive and negative aspects of individual use of new media technologies are explained in the light of the views of Henry Jenkins and Christian Fuchs.

Keywords: New Media, Social Media, Digital Labour, Participatory Culture, Christian Fuchs, Henry Jenkins, Convergence

YENİ MEDYANIN BİREYSEL KULLANIMI: CHRISTIAN FUCHS VE HENRY JENKINS'İN GÖRÜŞLERİ ÜZERİNDEN BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

ÖZET

İletişim teknolojilerinde meydana gelen gelişmeler ve internet beraberinde yeni iletişim alanlarını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. 1990'lı yıllardan itibaren katlanarak artan internet kullanımı, web sitelerinin yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte kullanıcı sayılarını artırmaktadır. Web teknolojilerinde yaşanan gelişmelere paralel olarak 2000'li yıllarla birlikte yeni medya ve sosyal medya kavramları gündeme gelmektedir. Yeni medya, geleneksel medyadan farklı olarak kullanıcıya, içerik oluşturma, içeriğe müdahale etme olanağı tanımaktadır.

Yeni medya ile izleyici, dinleyici, okuyucu pasif konumundan kurtularak aktif bir konuma gelmekte ve artık kullanıcı olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Bu kullanıcılar, bu ağlar üzerinden kendi profillerini oluşturabilmekte, buralarda içerik paylaşabilmektedirler.

Medya teknolojilerinde yaşanan bu gelişmeler beraberinde pek çok tartışmayı getirmektedir. Bu tartışma içinde yer alan araştırmacılardan bazıları bu yeni teknolojilerin olumlu yanları üzerinde dururken bazıları da neden olduğu, olabileceği problemlerden bahsetmektedirler.

Bu çalışmada, yeni medya teknolojilerinin bireysel kullanımının olumlu ve olumsuz yanları Henry Jenkins ve Christian Fuchs'un görüşleri üzerinden açıklanmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Medya, Sosyal Medya, Dijital Emek, Katılımcı Kültür, Christian Fuchs, Henry Jenkins, Yakınsama, Yöndeşme.

Introduction

The concepts of new media, including social media, are used in a narrow sense to refer to virtual environments where people with the same interests come together and share information and create new groups and communities.

The "web 2.0" technology, which forms the basis of new media and social media, enables the sharing of media content produced by users. Thus, users become producers of online media contents that are created jointly in a mutual dialogue.

This feature of "Web 2" technology and its accompanying social media, which enables individual use and content creation, subsequently initiates discussions on new media. One of these discussions is about the individual use of the media. While some thinkers who conduct communication research highlight the affirmative features of new media, others consider and evaluate the developments in the new media critically.

In this study, individual use of media is analysed by comparing the perspectives of Henry Jenkins and Christian Fuchs over the concepts of "participatory culture" and "digital labour".

Content Generation in New Media And Digital Labor

While researching the concept of new media, it is striking that there are many different definitions. It is seen that these debates on new media focus on the points of what is meant by new media and what its characteristics are. Researchers working on the subject make various definitions according to the prominent features of the new media (Güzel, 2021: 30).

New media is a concept used for communication channels and tools that use digital technology, provide synchronization and interaction between elements that enable communication to take place, and have a multimedia structure (Büker, 2013: 138).

Mark Poster, who is accepted as one of the first theorists to do research on new media, states that the basis of the old and new media distinction lies in the active nature of the new media compared to the passive nature of the old media (Miller, 2011: 12).

Due to this distinction, although concepts such as audience, listener, and reader are used in the old media, in the new media these concepts are replaced by "user". With this concept, the audience, listener, and reader take an active role by leaving their passive position (Güzel, 2021: 12).

With the active participation opportunity provided by the new media to its users, the audience at the same time is also considered as an individual user. It does this by granting its users the right to intervene in content and applications. At the same time, it enables its users to access these applications interactively at different times and places (Geray, 2003: 20).

This feature of the new media that supports the participatory culture stems from its use of "web 2.0" technology. When internet first emerged, "web 1.0" technology was used and there were content publishers and content readers in this technology. In other words, there was no interaction in this technology yet and the user was in a passive position. However, with the "web 2.0" technology, the user gets out of this passive position and can intervene in the content and create new content (Güçdemir, 2017: 7; Binark: 2014: 28).

The "web 2.0" technology, which enables the sharing of content produced by users, constitutes the social media communication network that is used extensively in new media technologies today (Tosun, 2014: 644).

The concept of social media has started to be used with the social network sites that have gained speed in the 2000s. This concept refers to "web 2.0" based digital environments where individuals around the world can interact with each other. Social media allows individuals to create their own personal pages, upload messages, photos, and videos to these pages, share them with other people, and create online communities there (Güçdemir, 2017: 14-15).

These contents, produced by users and put into circulation over virtual networks, also reveal the concept of "participatory media culture" (Dijk, 2016).

The fact that individuals are no longer passive and become individual content producers also leads to the emergence of the concept of "digital labor".

Social media networks are not the only means of communication but also means of production that generate value and profit. Users who voluntarily produce content within these means of production make efforts for these channels (Terranova, 2000: 33).

Digital labour, as a concept, emphasizes the unpaid user labour required for capital accumulation in the field of communication technologies.

The content that users produce through these communication networks creates value for network owners. The data of users, who become content producers with new communication technologies, are sold to advertisers by network owners (Akar, 2021: 198-199).

At this point, different opinions arise regarding the individual use of media, especially through the concept of digital labour.

Comparison of the Individual Use of New Media on the Opinions of Henry Jenkins And Christian Fuchs

Henry Jenkins and Personal Use of New Media

With the "Web 2.0" technology, the relationship between network technology and individuals has changed and transformed and this initiated new discussions. With this technology, concepts such as "digital convergence", "virtuality", "interactivity", "digital labour", "globalism" become part of our daily life. On the networks based on this technology, users are increasingly producing content and becoming a part of the participatory culture with the content they produce (Karataş; Binark, 2016: 428).

Henry Jenkins et al. evaluate the participatory culture in convergence discussions. They interpret participatory culture as a phenomenon that reinforces social interaction in terms of creative expression and citizen participation. Content constitutes the basis of convergence. Communication technologies that distribute content can also change and

transform over time with technological developments. Convergence, however advanced, does not occur through mass media, but through social interaction in the minds of the users and with other users. At this stage, the concept of participatory culture emerges. Creative expression, citizen participation, sharing and social interaction constitute the nature of participatory culture. The possibilities provided by new communication technologies make it possible for individuals to create creative content in new media environments by supporting participatory culture (Akbaba, 2014: 50).

Increasing interaction with social networks not only enables the user to produce content, but also affects the consumption and production forms of traditional media (Ateşalp, Başlar, 2015: 161).

“Henry Jenkins states that convergence has five dimensions: technological, economic, global, social and cultural. Technological convergence means that all media content can be digitized and circulated on different platforms, and changes can be made on the media content. Economic convergence refers to the horizontal growth of the entertainment industry in different fields such as movies, television, books, and the web, and the restructuring of cultural production to ensure the circulation of products among media. Global convergence refers to the cultural hybridity that results from the international circulation of media content. Social convergence means that media consumers can do many things with the internet and use different media at the same time. Cultural convergence points to the emergence of new ways of creativity and media usage, and new genres as a result of the intersection of different media technologies, industries, and genres” (Jenkins, 2001: 93).

According to Jenkins, convergence points to a cultural change that encourages consumers to seek new information and to make connections between dispersed media content (Ateşalp, 2015: 160-161).

With these changes, discussions on issues such as participation, participatory culture, and democratization of the communication environment are increasing because of the inclusion of internet users in content production and distribution and their increasing tendency to be more active.

Jenkins states that media convergence has led to the emergence of a new participatory folk culture and creates tools for ordinary people to produce media content. In addition to enabling people to participate in media production, it also enables companies to use and exploit these individual and non-professional content on topics such as low-cost content acquisition and inter-media storytelling (Jenkins, 2001: 93).

Jenkins emphasizes that media convergence is not just a simple technological change. Convergence transforms the relationships between existing technologies, industries, markets, and audiences. Jenkins states that the concept of convergence

emphasizes an era where media will be ubiquitous and people will use all kinds of media in an interrelated way, through increasing channels and new computing and telecommunications technologies.

Jenkins also states that media convergence affects individuals' media consumption. In the example he gave, a teenager doing his homework could open five windows at the same time to both browse the network, listen to music, and download MP3 files; Meanwhile, he states that he can reply to an e-mail while chatting with his friends and writing his homework and in this way, he can quickly do different things (Jenkins, 2017: 40).

Media companies are learning how to accelerate media streaming through content delivery channels to increase their earnings, expand the market and consolidate audience loyalty. Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to get more under their own control of streaming media and to interact with other consumers. The promises of this new media environment create expectations for a freer flow of ideas and content. Inspired by these ideals, consumers strive for a much greater right to participate in their culture.

When we compare the old consumers with the new ones, we encounter important differences. These differences are, "old consumers are passive while new consumers are active; Old consumers are predictable and consist of people who stand there wherever you say, new consumers are less loyal to nomads and media channels, old consumers are isolated individuals, new consumers are more socially connected, media consumers are previously silent and invisible, new consumers are louder and more public. can be listed (Jenkins, 2016: 37).

Jenkins uses the example of home videos to explain the transitional space that occurs. According to Jenkins, cultural productions such as home videos are moving away from purely personal product visibility and into public products thanks to the Internet. This situation also changes the customary practices of reputation in society for individuals.

Fan publishing, which manifests itself with the production of "Fanzin" (amateur publications that are reproduced by methods such as photocopying and sold for prices that do not include any profit except their costs), settles on a collective basis. The boundary between reader and writer in "fanzines" is rather vague, Jenkins says. Fanzine editors and writers attach more importance to the demands and desires of their readers than commercial producers. These publications, which are originally sold to consumers and are not commercial products, are mainly composed of works shared between friends and potential friends.

Fan productions do not only consist of "fanzines". Songs composed by fans, custom made clothes and works of art in various forms, fan video productions are also among the production forms that are in close relationship with the fan community. According to Jenkins, fan videos belong to the fan community from the moment they leave the hands of the artists and are put into circulation according to their wishes (Sezen, 2016: 22).

With the new media, the wall between existing celebrities and fans that existed in traditional media is also breaking down. With social media accounts, fans can easily reach existing fame (Bilben, 2016: 1).

Jenkins says that with the possibilities of new media, a wide range and variety of media streaming is now provided. It also emphasizes that participation and convergence in new media are intertwined and it is not possible to think separately from each other.

Jenkins criticizes the approaches to the concept of convergence and argues that it is not very correct to talk about the convergent culture observed in the convergent media platforms, instead of talking about the hybrid culture that currently operates on a hybrid media (Çam; Yılmaz, 2015: 514).

At this point, it is correct to say that individuals who are users, creators, and distributors of all kinds of content, rather than being audiences, readers or listeners, have moved from a passive position to an active position and thus a participatory culture is formed. In participatory culture, members think that their contributions are valuable and that they are in some degree of social connection with other people (Savcı, 2015: 36).

However, Jenkins adds, not all consumers have access to all the skills and resources required to fully participate in the cultural practices he has described.

"Nobody knows everything, everybody knows something, all knowledge resides in humanity," Jenkins says of collective intelligence. Collective intelligence refers to the ability of members of virtual communities to combine and strengthen their combined expertise. With this sentence, it is stated that an individual can collectively do things that he cannot know or do on his own from now on.

With the emergence of this new knowledge culture, ties with the old forms of social society are broken, roots with physical geography are weakened, loyalties to nation-states are redefined, and ties with family are changing. Now, new forms of community are emerging, these communities are unlike the old ones that are voluntary, temporary and purposeful. Group members can move from one group to another as their interests change, and they can take part in more than one community at the same time. What holds these communities together is the joint production and mutual exchange of knowledge (Jenkins, 2017: 39).

Christian Fuchs and Individual Use of New Media

With the widespread use of the internet and social networks, the concept of the commodification of the audience comes to the fore again. The main reason for reviewing the viewer's position is that internet technology provides the audience with the ability to react instantly and easily, and to interact faster.

Recently, according to Christian Fuchs, buyers/receivers have become increasingly active audiences that produce content and technology. However, this situation paves the way for the audience and users to be exploited in a new way instead of causing the democratization of the media (Dağtaş, Yıldız, 2015: 128).

When the concepts of internet and new media are evaluated through political economy, it is seen that commercial media chains dominate the internet economy. These media industries retain a high proportion of knowledge and information thanks to their capital. They determine the real agenda by transferring this information they have to internet users in line with the dominant ideology. In order to answer the questions of what the real agenda is created by these huge media industries and how internet users will find and evaluate the real truth in this artificial reality, it is necessary to understand how the capitalist system ensures its continuity on the masses. "The capitalist internet economy needs change and innovation to ensure the continuity of capitalist accumulation" (Fuchs, 2016: 72). In order to realize this change, the capitalist economy offers the applications it produces free of charge to internet users and makes them adopt. Individuals using these applications (Fuchs, 2016: 51) provide a large amount of information to the capitalist media industries by producing content. At the same time, due to the intense information these media industries provide them, the perception of reality of these users can easily be guided by the dominant ideology. The individual whose perception of reality is destroyed is easily guided and exploited by the ideology of the capitalist system.

Participatory culture opens space for ordinary citizens to benefit from media technologies previously used by for-profit media companies. With the emergence of sites where the user is producing with "Web 2.0" technologies, commercial interest is shifting from consumption actions to production activities. This is because users' content creation adds commercial value to them and empowers them to build more activity on content.

Participatory media production and personalized media consumption are trends that differ from each other but complement each other. Media companies can also use the characteristics of the new media environment such as participation, openness, interaction and the participation, comments and opinions of the audience, consumers, or users in line with their own profits and benefits.

Inclusion of consumers in production in this way increases the income of companies. For this reason, it remains an incomplete evaluation to see the contribution of

the consumer only as an "empowerment" in issues such as the development, widespread and marketing of a product based on effort without charge. Following the critical thinker Dallas Smythe, Christian Fuchs approaches critically to these productions based on the free labour of the consumer (Ateşalp, 2015: 164).

According to Christian Fuchs, although recently buyers have become increasingly active users of content and technology through the internet and social networks, this is misleading. Because internet and social networks force users to produce content for more capital accumulation and they are enriched by marketing the content produced by users to third parties. Therefore, as stated above, it is more correct to interpret this situation as the exploitation of users in a new way, rather than as a democratization of the media (Aytekin; Yandım, 2017: 10).

In social networks resembling a digital Panopticon prison, desire is deciphered, and human socialization activity is kept under surveillance due to commercial concerns. In this way, the boundary between the public and private sphere becomes blurred and disappears gradually. The concentration of surveillance in social networks also paves the way for targeted advertising. Commercial social network owners and customers who advertise on these platforms constantly monitor and record personal data and online activities. Collected data are analysed, combined, and stored. This enables advertisers to target according to detailed user profiles and to know more about users' personal interests and online behaviour. Therefore, surveillance is an inherent characteristic of the capital accumulation model of commercial social networks (Fuchs, 2015, p.153).

According to Fuchs, targeted advertising activities in social networks have quite different features from mass media. In the targeted advertising application, advertisers do not show only one advertisement to the audience at a given moment, like mass advertising in traditional media. It can also show different advertisements to different user groups depending on the comparison and surveillance of users' demographic information, interests and online behaviour. In the traditional form of television, all audiences see the same ad at the same time, while in targeted online advertising, advertising companies can offer personalized ads for different users at the same time. Therefore, the productivity of advertising has been increased in new communication environments (Fuchs, 2016, p.144-145).

Unpaid labour is one of the important concepts that have started to be discussed in the field of new media as a result of the increasing tendency of internet users to participate actively and voluntarily in production processes in order to produce content or to help develop software. Users participate in the production process voluntarily and free of charge within the scope of free labour, which includes various actions of users on the internet, such as creating web pages, participating in mailing lists, establishing virtual spaces, writing comments, contributing to the development of software.

Private information about users is marketed by major new media companies for use in advertising, leaving users completely vulnerable. Fuchs emphasizes the importance of controlling this great power in the hands of new media companies and preventing it when necessary. Fuchs' criticisms of participatory culture and free labour are also based on these points.

Fuchs opposes the criticisms developed against Smythe, which constitutes the theoretical basis of the digital labour theory, from a Marxist perspective. These criticisms claim that when it comes to the television medium, the wages of the viewers in return for their labour are television programs and entertainment. Similar approaches to social media are considered as the fee or digital effort of the user for accessing and accessing the site. Fuchs says that people sell their labour for money that will keep them alive and meet their needs; emphasizing that they cannot survive by watching television or using social media; He argues that the television program cannot correspond to the wages they receive for their labour. Although platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide access to communication tools without selling their content or access, they should be evaluated within the meta form. These are actually considered media that commodify user data. If the relationship between users and the platform were arranged as a modern wage relationship, users would have to receive money in exchange for the commodification of their digital labour power. They could use this money to buy various means of survival. In essence, access to social media tools such as "Facebook", "Instagram" and "Twitter" is free of charge for these companies (Fuchs, 2014: 75-89).

If we give an example via "Facebook" to materialize this situation, users in "Facebook" create creative work for "Facebook" and create value for themselves. This is a digital effort. The labour objects of "Facebook" are human experiences. While spending their time on "Facebook", people share their sad moments and loneliness, special moments of their lives with their friends, by uploading pictures, commenting, talking, having fun. "Facebook" captures the emotional aspects of the lives of its users and uses it for profit (Netchitailova, 2017: 8).

"Twitter" is defined as a communication tool that allows its users to write texts of up to 140 characters called "tweets". Although the purpose of "Twitter" is perceived as sharing "tweets" and commenting on the "tweets of others", users generally use "Twitter" as an information medium to get instant and fast information about current events. In other words, in Fuchs' words, "Twitter" is an information medium rather than a communication tool (Fuchs, 2016: 276). In addition to being an information medium, it is a very powerful advertising tool. This platform creates a viewer media that is sold to advertisers through instant information that users share with another name retweet (Fuchs, 2016: 275). It earns most of its revenue by selling the audience information it obtains from users to third parties (advertisers and large companies). This means that its users constantly produce instant content for the income of "Twitter". Instant content is sold to capitalist companies to produce advertisements to manipulate consumer needs. As

a result, consumers who produce these contents are exploited and firms increase their profit rates.

In social networks, users create accounts with their own names or other fictitious names. Users gain a digital identity through these accounts.

Being visible in this virtual environment means determining what will increase and what will not by very visible users, as Fuchs says (Fuchs: 2016). The main issue here is who generates information in these social networks and how it makes it visible, which shows that these networks can be easily manipulated by powerful visible users.

Social networks are the means of production for the creation of value and profit. This is due to the fact that social media users are simultaneously customers of technology services and producers of data, commodities, value and profit. Throughout the entire communication process, users here generate value for these platforms. Thus, Fuchs argues that the consumption time of social media such as "Facebook", "YouTube" and "Twitter" is also the time of commodity production. Fuchs acknowledges that internet users are not passive viewers but active creators of content at a certain level, although consumption of communication tools is a more passive form of action in the case of traditional media. Advertisers are also interested not only in the time users spend online, but also in the content they produce and their online behaviour. User generated data is also sold to advertisers as commodities. The fact that the Internet is an active tool causes the people who produce and consume information to be the same. Therefore, in the examples of corporate social media, it is necessary to talk about the commodification of the consumers (Fuchs, 2014: 89-90).

Fuchs states that what he says about "Facebook" and "Twitter" also applies to the universally used search engine "Google". It states that "Google" exploits all users who produce content for it. In this way, users who use "Google" services fund an unpaid surplus production workforce.

"Google" creates and stores data on the use of such services to provide a targeted advertising service. Google provides economic control of user data and activities, thus exploiting users by commodifying them. It sells users and data to advertisers to generate profit. Fuchs expresses "Google" as "high-level economic surveillance machine and high-level user exploitation machine" and states that he instrumentalizes all users and all their data for creation profit (Fuchs, 2017: 73).

Conclusion

This study focuses on the results of new media and the individual use of social media, including social networks. Opinions on this issue are basically gathered at two viewpoints, while some researchers approach these new communication technologies

positively, others focus on the disadvantages it may cause. To convey this in a more concrete way, new media theorists are selected and compared from both viewpoints.

Henry Jenkins states that new media and old media benefit from each other by supporting each other. In addition, Jenkins states that with the opportunities provided by the new media and especially the internet, the global village theory introduced by McLuhan continues to be valid in the 21st century, the world has shrunk thanks to the internet and the geographical borders have disappeared, and the world has turned into a global information sharing village. Jenkins states that people create virtual communities through virtual networks and these virtual communities create collective intelligence by sharing common knowledge, feelings, and thoughts.

Jenkins notes that new media are now activating audiences, so that new media users become not only consumers but also producers of media texts. Thus, new media consumers meet each other through social networks and share their feelings and thoughts, as well as create media texts and produce common knowledge (Kürkçü, 2016: 56).

In this context, the participatory culture created by the users who become productive consumers brings up the problem of exploitation of their own voluntary and unpaid labour.

Christian Fuchs' criticism of participatory culture and free labour also starts from this point. The criticisms developed by Fuchs in this framework are important in terms of recognizing the problems of free labour that lie behind the developments affirmed by the participatory culture discussions and drawing attention to the increasing dominance of capital on the internet today.

Fuchs criticizes the participatory culture that Jenkins deals within the convergence discussions with the Marxist thought system and draws attention to the political economy of participation. According to Fuchs, Jenkins' use of the concept of participatory culture ignores participatory democracy perspectives. Large companies such as "Facebook", "Google", "Twitter" mediate users' cultural sharing expressions with their commercial platforms, but the level of participation is only for content creation. They exclude users from economic decision-making.

Fuchs, on the other hand, frequently emphasizes that social media is used by governments and companies for surveillance purposes. He emphasizes that social media platforms are companies in search of profit and that they collect user information in this direction and open the door to new commodification processes that arise from the efforts of users.

Regarding social networks such as "Facebook" and "Twitter", which are social media platforms, Fuchs underlines that the fact that their entry is free of charge is due to

the fact that these organizations want to increase their profit shares in line with the participatory culture.

When viewed from the perspective of both thinkers, it is seen that there are different situations regarding the individual use of new media. From this point of view, by participating in these networks more consciously, individuals should determine their purpose to be here, and be aware that any content they share is no longer personal. Before joining these networks, considering that all content to be created will be sold to various companies for profit, this situation should be accepted and the option of joining or not participating should be preferred.

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