

“CYBER FASHION” in GLOBAL VILLAGE: FASHION BLOGS

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INTRODUCTION

The global spread of products in conventional media are provided over identities as a result of the relationship between the global and the local media through fashion magazines prepared for female readers. In capitalist economy, individuals in order to be approved by the society, they obliged to become consumers. In fact, this process turns into the individual cases by various indicators to surveillance society and therefore construction of new identities in the "Global Village" takes place in this way.

With the development of new communication technologies, the orbit of the capitalist economy have been translated into information technology field. New communication technologies, particularly the Internet, and has an important place in the capitalist economic system. The concept of "Network Capitalism", in order to serve the whole of the capitalist economic system, capital generates new communication technologies to fulfill global circulation. Thus, the conventional media leaves its place to new forms of productions such as social media. Fashion blogs are substituted in “Cyber” space in place of fashion magazines.

In this study, the phenomenon of surveillance “network capitalism” through social media and one of its product, fashion blogs. In this way, surveillance is transformed to "exposing" through fashion blogs. In parallel with this transformation, hyper reality identity proposed by Baudrillard, Bloggers are transformed as the representation of a simulacra. Individuals are encouraged to be self-esteem and self-liking. As a model of satisfaction within the social and cultural patterns, men and women identities are being reproduced.

Social media tools (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and the production of each tool in "network capitalism" are serving to “capital”.

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RE-INSERTING MEDIA IN THE AXIS OF CAPITALISM

McLuhan, Ong, Innis, Havelock, and many thinkers and researchers worked in the field of communication are united in the opinion that ways of thinking of people are affected the society in which they live directly or indirectly (Baldini, 2000:20).

Means of communication in the historical flow are shaped through the main current approaches and critical approaches have shed light on different views to conventional media studies.

Within the historical flow, Gutenberg's invention was the real revolution in the field of communication. This revolution is caused motion ¹ and even beyond. According to Elizabeth Eisenstein, printing is one of the most important factors that make up the changes in contemporary society (Baldini, 2000:42). With respect to the economic sectors of industry and commerce, the place of the printing has been undeniable important. To Eisenstein's the rise of capitalism in 1500's and 1600s were associated with (Baldini, 2000:45).

The commercial publishers paved the way for production of the first batch of mass production and spread beyond the cities of the late Middle Ages (Oncu, 1997:67).

Towards the middle of the 1800s, the world of communication got through first by typographic culture then by electric, electronic media and by independent publishers that run newspapers, manifestos and brochures. Thus, there had been started a massive remodeling in communication (Bozkurt, 2000:34). This corresponds to the French Revolution and it also threw the cores of reproduction of the social.

The beginning of the industrial revolution in 18th century and the progression in 19th century, brought the new international and intercontinental industrialization economic and commercial relations. In 19 th century, Britain was completely industrialized and strengthened its economic ties with other countries. Other countries in Europe has followed the footsteps of Britain.

Push factor in the second half of the 1800s in Europe to colonialism is completely for economical reasons. Additionally, the major factor of the development of the industry beginning from 1870s was also an economic factor. As the industry evolved, production increased, as production increased, the industrial countries did not consume the excess products and they begun to seek new places to distribute the surplus. In this context, mobilization of production based on economic reasons into the stream of history, capitalism was placed on the basis of the phenomenon beginning since 1800s.

In the beginning of the 20th century, scientists following Marxist politic tradition, such as Rudolf Hilferding, Rosa Luksemburg, N.Buharin and Lenin worked for the globalization of capital. Globalization is a phenomenon dating back to the 1800s. After neo-liberal politics Keynesian capitalism became imperative in the timeline of the history. However, capitalism topple into crises or not, it is processing on the basis of the imperialist power of the state and regulations. Globalization is the global

¹ Motion, "the main feature of the events in a society, social processes that determine the whole being" (Turkish Language Association).

accumulation of capital. With globalization, multinational corporations, many different parts of the world have begun to produce goods and lock parts. Thus, the production system was globalised.

The rapid progression in the 1800s and 1900s was not only in the economic field but also in the fields of technology.

Britain's world leadership of the period between the two world wars (1914-1945) left its place to Keynesian welfare state of western capitalist countries at the end of World War II. Understanding of welfare state in Western countries between the years 1945-1970 continued until the 1970s economic crisis. Neo-liberal practices were the solution to the economic crisis of capitalism.

Neo-liberalism policies within the framework of capital hegemony proposed the boundaries drawn in advancing the global capitalist system. In this context;

1. Removing economic boundaries that exist between nation-states and national markets, thus national markets were to be opened to large companies. International capital would be in circulation.

2. Capital and Technology worked for those who hold them in order to advance their needs and their profitability.

3. Industry, finance, banking, technology, and cultural policies will be determined by the dominant western multinational corporations. (Kazgan, 2005:120-122).

Capital is the agent², of capitalism and globalization is the internationalization of the transformation of capitalism under the hegemony of capital. The essence of the globalization is the name of the hegemony of the world anticipated by the US-led multinational corporations (capital) since USSR's collapse in 1989.

The neo-liberalism policies mentioned above which were developed after the Second World War-such as satellite, computer technologies, and so on. – are acceded these technologies into global circulation. Along with the process of globalization a number of ideas and thoughts were started to come fore. In the words of Fukuyama, neo-liberal policies at the discursive level, emphasis on scientific and technological superiority. "Modern bourgeois" (Capitalism) (Erdogan, 2000:56) reproduce the social within a relation of capital-producer power- production.

Media, in the loop of all, keeps evolving the means of production to meet the needs of classes that keep the technology and production in the hands. Development of new communication and information technologies in the world of communication caused significant changes in the same manner as in nature, such as Neil Postman has emphasized. Each dimension of globalization requires information and communication infrastructure. Computing and communication technologies are needed. Economic, social, political, technological, and cultural developments in the concept of globalization is hidden under the hegemony of capital serves as a justification.

² Representative

Today, the process of globalization, is produced by "Network Capitalism". "Network Capitalism" is a concept that opened the discussion by sociologist Christian Fuchs. Fuchs (2008) "Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age" in his work he emphasized that computer networks reveal the global network capitalism as a technological development. This development is carried out by the economic, political, and cultural capital in order to provide a global organization and communication in cyber space. The functioning of the capitalist economic system is provided over the network. Thus, "Late Capitalism" is now placed in the stream over the network. In other words, media re-placed in the axis of capitalism.

With the development of new communication technologies in the information technology field, the orbit of the capitalist economy is translated to new communication technologies, particularly by the Internet and its tools, which have an important place in the capitalist economic system. The concept of "network capitalism", to serve the whole of the capitalist economic system, generates new communication technologies through global circulation. Such a mode of production and the relations of production is re-produced by Social Media.

IMAGES PRODUCTION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media, with emphasis on the phenomenon of globalization as an ideology emphasizes that there is no longer anything like the same. The most popular brands, products, and the images are adopting a certain way of life style in our lives by creating specific identities via the global dissemination of media products.

Changes and developments in the second half of the 20th century have a strong footprint, on communication, economic, political and cultural globalization. Culture and cultural reproduction is therefore most affected by the changes throughout history. Today, culture, production, distribution, and consumption take place swiftly as compared with the past. By modern mass media culture is breaking national borders and culture is characterized by communization. This fact is called as "global mass culture" by some theorists (Hall, 1998:47-48). The images, used in ads and commercials, in social media is becoming global brands (Lull, 2000:52-53). The flow of the culture that dominated the world of capital was circulated by the conventional media in the past. At the present "images created globally through social media".

Image-imago-is a word of Latin origin. As a concept image, it is expressed as designed in mind that longed for something to happen, imagination, reverie, general appearance, impression, image, consciousness of an object detected by external sensory organs, senses perceived, the form of objects and events without a stimulus that appears in consciousness (Turkish Language Authority, 2012).

According to Robert H.Holt (1964) Image: "Contains memory images and visualize images; may be visual, auditory, or other sensory mode and may be totally in an oral form" (p. 254-264).

At the same time image can be explained as the objects or persons in the image to revitalization in the form visualizing. The most important feature that makes image so

powerful is the authority to bring it into a visualization that have occurred as a result of the action.

Richard Leppert's (2002) in his book *The Social Function of Meaning in Art of Images* mentions that image show people-not the real world, but a world of worlds and images are not shown in the representation of things, but they are 're-presentation'. According to Leppert, "The images are not the things of ore extracted from dug up, they are certain things which was built in a particular socio-cultural environment" (p.14).

Scientific area of image should be approached in two ways: the first, the images are always based on seeing and observing, so based on the inner structure of the brain and cognitive processes of perception, and the second, with a more complex analysis of interpretation (Becer, 2002).

At this point, the "Network Capitalism", reveals its power via re-generated images by social media. Commodization of images are done on behalf of commercial gain. Commodization of images have become the subject of consumer cycle. We are under the absolute domination of transformation of images and re-production process which also it will continue to amaze us in the future. It traces the transformation via a social media tool, Fashion Blog. While the terms of each image has its own space of time it involves different meanings depending on who carries the property. For some people fashion blogs are represent cyber-images in space, for some people it represents a kind of a status of "social mobility" and for some it means a vehicle to adapt to fashion.

FASHION BLOGS in CYBER SPACE

The concept of globalization is defined by considering various aspects and transformations. According to Giddens (1994), globalization can be defined as the concentration of social relations around the world that shape, and connects the distant events of miles away.

Globalization is an international process which involves economical, social, political and cultural change. Globalization is the movement of culture and the movement of capital in terms of international dimension basis. Globalization involves movement and circulation of capital, goods and services, people, icons, symbols, meanings and myths (Oncu and Weyland, 1997:3).

Capitalism, beginning from the second half of the 20th century has led to significant transformations restructuring on political, economic and cultural fields. In particular, this transformation of economic structure showing the effects on cultural structure. This gave rise to a new concept of consumption. Now this understanding undergone change and transformation by "Network Capitalism".

Barrie Gunter emphasizes the use of different meanings blog. Different meanings of a blog cover; reading a blog, visiting blogs, reading and commenting on a blog, producing a blog, creating and sustaining the process. In this case, it can be said that a "blogger" is an actor of both the producer and consumer. According to Bruns and

Jacobs are also active bloggers, publishers, reviewers and discussants. The process transformed into the- producers and the user –which is called “hybrid transformation” is remarkable (Liebert, 2011:45-146).

Social media as a product of Network capitalism is considered as the tool where identities and cultural products are re-shaped through fashion blogs.

Beginning from the second half of the 20th century, the consumer resolve the products beyond their needs. The imaginations of people which appear, the identities which appear as the product of these imaginations based on consumerism and consume more. The consumers do not buy even each product that are seen in fashion blogs, but they are trying to buy them.

Time periods mentioned as "Late Capitalist Period" or the "new consumer society" lifestyles are forefront as a new consumer under-standing for the society (Featherstone, 1996). According to Mike Davidson (1992) lifestyle is also commodified. Today, network capitalism put commodified identities and lifestyles into the global circulation through fashion blogs.

Chaney (1999) refers the concept of lifestyle as follows:

"Life styles are the patterns of behavior that makes people different from each other. Lifestyle helps to explain what people are doing and do for themselves. In addition, lifestyle although it depends on cultural structures, each lifestyle is a format, a form of usage, an attitude and a style belonging to a group, places and times. "

On the other hand, Mike Featherstone (1996), however, defines the concept of lifestyle as "a person's body, clothing, speech, how to use leisure time, food and beverage preferences, home, car, vacation choices so on and signs of individual style of consumer tastes (p. 153) . Life style, represent the diversity of the individual. However, with the same understanding of consumer groups, are also known as "lifestyle groups" (Leiss, Kline and Shally, 1990).

Today, fashion blogs with the identities they are building plays a leading role of consumption of indicators and symbols, The products selecting by the fashion blogs are brought into a way of life. Therefore, “an elite way of life” is constantly emphasized.

The identity and image of women in the fashion blogs give the message to make attractive by the opposite sex and they build an extremely well-maintained and stylish image which are enviable by the fellow women. Female image is reproduced. It is seen in fashion blogs that female models are alike and variation is not observed. In conventional media fashion magazines produce the demands on meta-level about women's life and fashion. These demands are now responding by fashion blogs. The attention and appreciation of the usage of the demands and as well as a way of life shape through the blogs. Thus, women begin to look over life in terms of having particularly commodities, including their cloths. They make precious making their own life to have these commodities.

The image is increasingly taking an import role in order to build female identity in terms of appearance and consumption. Women consumer behavior is supported by the social media, which affects the culture industry and it shapes through fashion blogs.

In this way of creation of cultural interaction lays the groundwork for cultural identities and their transformation. Thus, as a result of the global spread of media products via social media through fashion blogs re-shape and define the female identity. The woman identity that is created as a result of global cultural flows and global cultural products is the image of an independent and perfect woman. At the present, the life dreamed consists of beauty, wealth, power, indifference and the concepts of technological boastfulness. The world in such a way of life that has been surrounded means by the fact that it surrounds the whole world and exploits it (Baudrillard, 2006).

Women image in the exploitation of world is reproduced by fashion blogs today and it arises as Baudrillard (2006) expressed "neither a dream, nor a reality" rather than "hyperreality". In parallel with the transformation, fashion "bloggers" undertake a task of being a "simulacra of "hyperreality" (Baudrillard, 2006). Simulacra is a view that is perceived as reality. Fashion "bloggers" in their blog pages by taking part in their own photographs showing the styles of hair, clothing, ways of behaving, they represent the identity and converts the identity to an "exhibiting" tool. Exhibiting is lack of knowledge and is mainly enhanced by images and full of simulacra in order to promote a lifestyle full of hyperreality.

On the other hand fashion bloggers express themselves more freely and can be more critical on fashion by the texts they write and with the photographs about fashion and fashion-related issues. It would be different than the conventional fashion magazines which is a product of the media, to act in accordance with the publisher's line, is subject to a more biased opinion of a line carrying.

Group of followers who follow the content of fashion blogs may create a "frame of reference" (Nalcaoglu, 2005). To be covered by the frame of reference is the messages not directly meant but rather than indirectly denoted. For example, certain brands of fashion products which are manufactured are not only want to transfer a message of "beautiful", "fashion", "fashionable" but also the concept of "femininity" as a "frame of reference" as the way bloggers posing in their photos. This frame of reference has nothing to do directly with the clothes offered or advertised. Women should always appear "beautiful", "groomed" and "feminine"(p.59-61).

Then why the "fashion blogger" and their followers want to exhibit an attitude to see themselves in a frame of reference?

According to Lambert attitude; is "an coherent thoughts, feelings and responses about an individual, people, groups, any environmental incidents, social issues and more general issues. According to this definition, attitude is not only a reaction but also it reflects thoughts and feelings. According to Lambert, one of the ways to develop the attitude that people adapt to their environment is socialization (Inceoglu, 2000:67).

Fashion blogs involve individuals into small groups, social class and the culture in which they are belonging as a small group.

The second approach is the identification. The individual is often wants to look like a person or groups of interest (reference) in which to adopt attitudes (Inceoglu, 2000:31).

Network capitalism build new identities via social media through fashion blogs and it determines the individual's place in the social stratification. Thus, individuals who do not come face-to-face interactions formed themselves an "atomized societies" (Inceoglu, 2000), which they have no prior knowledge about each other, by just following the consumption patterns of social strata. To evaluate this framework, the perspective of the mid-1960s American, British and Northern Europe communicators opened a debate on uses and gratifications theory (Erdogan and Alemdar, 2002). According to uses and gratifications theory people try to cover their needs. It is noted that mass communication tools were used for saturation (Erdogan and Alemdar, 2002:188). Today, this saturation is provided by social media and its products (blog, etc).

Fashion blogs allow "surveillance" phenomenon to turn into "exhibited" phenomenon in cyber space. Bloggers' desire to be glorious, fame, to be followed by others, curiosity of other people on bloggers, having a popular fan base, gaining a certain status, jumping to an upper class (social mobility), to reproduce their life can be considered as the reasons of bloggers' why they are following "exhibited" phenomenon in cyber space . On the other hand, fashion blog followers who are observing the following fashion blogs are involved in the daily lives of bloggers. Such conditions as stated before entails the phenomenon of fan base.

As Baudrillard (2008) expressed, consumption is no longer "the prestige of the individual or the community" but rather as a communication and a system of exchange where without stopping re-create the indications given in the code (p. 111).

Individuals are encouraged to like themselves in everywhere. Self-liked individual, dominated by the idea that they are also admired by others. New identities are created with as social and cultural model of satisfaction. However, after a while, similar identities- it looks as if there is almost no difference- begin to consume itself (Baudrillard, 2008: 89). Individuals does not correspond to the truth about themselves, sometimes adopting the opinions of others (Dedeoglu, 2006:77). Consumer society is the most dangerous enemy of truth and reality which brings to belong the stack of solid and stable majority. But it appears not being a part of a community, just being in the crowds alone.

CONCLUSION

Identities put into a circulation on fashion blogs introduces hyper-reality and they are voluntary servitude to network capitalism. Mc-Luhan's "global village" concept today, are transformed to "cyber village" via social media tools (blogs, etc.). The transformation is produced by the hegemony of global movement of capital. The

relationship of capital control and social media are parallel to each other to certain extent. Conventional media by transferring the flag to social media is reshaping the modes of production and the relations of production. The concept of social media should be evaluated on a historical flow. This flow is not just a technology, but also in the axis of political economy approach through a framework of network capitalism.

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