CHAPTER 1

DIGITAL CULTURE AND POWER

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ABSTRACT

The most significant development regarding the cultural formation of the 21st Century is the digitalization of communication with the invention of the Internet. We have entered a multi-layered cultural transformation through technology, communication and the shaping power of media. M. Castells (2009) who identifies technology with society, argues in The Rise of the Network Society that the networks in new media form the social morphology of the society, and revolutionize cultural processes.

No expression of socializing or symbolic representations can be isolated from the power relations that form it. For this reason, a critical cultural theory naturally leads us to a political theory. Power is not a separate area of investigation; it lies at the center of the whole social life. In this chapter, digital culture will be discussed as a socialized subjectivity as part of digital habitus, and arenas which were entered into with an aim to transform and conserve the power balance will be examined. In the digital world which is comprised of components such as digitality, interactivity, socializing, participation, hyper-reality and hyper-textuality, individuals have the freedom to communicate with whomever they want, be a member of or leave online communities. But, we are trying to discover the place of reality in the digital world where identities are reproduced and consumed.

The process of modernization, which, together with capitalism, transforms everything into material elements, also materialized man, gave him a numerical value, and as a result, individuals have assumed the form of the space where they belong outside their own existence as everything that is material became liquid, or, fluid (Marx, 1848). A brand new behavioral practice is demonstrated in the fluid relations established within digital living rooms representing this new social space. In this study, these behavioral practices and relations with power was subjected to descriptive analysis.

Keywords: Freedom, right to communicate, globalization of communication, democratization of culture, digital culture, power

1. Introduction

The Right to Communicate

> *"Imagine to yourselves a being like Nature, boundlessly extravagant, boundlessly indifferent, without purpose or consideration, ..., at once fruitful and barren and uncertain... To live--is not that just endeavouring to be otherwise than this Nature? Is not living valuing, preferring, ... endeavouring to be different?"*
>
> *Friedrich Nietzsche [Translation by Helen Zimmern]*

The organized emergence of the idea in the West that human beings have certain innate rights and freedoms, and that the state will never touch them coincides with the seventeenth century. This doctrine is called *the doctrine of individual rights*. In the classical sense, individual rights and freedoms mean nothing other than a person's freedoms originating from being a human.

In view of the historical development of public liberties in the West, England has a special place. With the *Magna Carta Libertatum (the Great Edict of Freedom)*, which the British forced John Lackland, their king at the time, to accept at the beginning of the thirteenth century (in 1215), the British took the first big step towards the realization of human rights. With the *Petition of Rights* dated 1628, the *Habeas Corpus Act* of 1679, the *Bill of Rights* of 1689 and the *Act of Settlement* of 1701, the boundaries of freedoms were expanded, and the ruler's power was taken into the legal framework to ensure its respect towards the individual rights and freedoms.

So much that later, these edicts and laws were adopted as a list of general and abstract rights and freedoms that, acting from a number of philosophical principles, could enclose all humanity. Acting directly from philosophical principles, the list of freedoms that can be addressed to all mankind was fully manifested with the American and French Revolution manifestos in the late eighteenth century. The first document of this nature is *the Bill of Rights* in the beginning of the Virginia Constitution of June 12, 1776.

When it comes to declarations of rights, the first and most famous one is the French *Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights* of 1789. In this declaration composed of seventeen articles, people are declared to have "natural, non-transferable, non-statute of limitations, sacred" rights and right of freedom, and standard rights and freedoms such as the right to property, security of person, thought, speech, writing and conscience are listed without distinction.

This is how human rights and freedoms framed the power of the state and set a boundary that this power must always abide by. The area indicated by this boundary is the personal private space of the individual, the circle of free movement. The state is expected not to interfere in this area, or rather not to intervene. In this context, the 1789 model rights and freedoms were found to be inadequate in the context of certain social and economic rights apart from the usual rights and freedoms.

Today in the Western sense of freedom, a human is no longer discussed as an abstract being as in the individualist doctrine, but rather a concrete being surrounded by the social conditions of the society in which s/he lives in and whose needs are ever-increasing. Economic freedoms and social rights can be considered at the top of these needs.

In this context, Habermas emphasizes that the organization theory strategically meets the *"need for justification,"* by instrumentalizing culture, personality and public opinion independently of the political order's formation of public opinion for the general interests. However, there will be other problems that such justifiers will lead to. As a result of these social orders gaining autonomy against their environment, there may be a possibility of developing their own language games. In this case, it is probable to face an important problem such as where and in what language the problems concerning the whole of society are to be discussed. In the simplest terms, since real public opinion is formed in principle by interpersonal communication of a subjective nature, the debate needs to be in a place where individuals can face it.

This place can be limited to the span of public communication. However, the field of public opinion created by the media is actually an extremely abstract area. What is meant by public opinion here is rather the areas created in real social spaces. Therefore, they are largely separated from the public areas created by the media.

By developing the antithesis of this thesis, Foucault argued that *"normalization"* and *"disciplinization"* are widespread in modernity, rather than *"justification"*. According to Foucault, justification is actually a process of proving that the positions of power and sovereignty are based on justified grounds, while normalization and disciplinization mean infusing individuals with behaviors and needs appropriate to the interests of the order through distorted communication. There is no need to justify it in the modern sense, since the power is hidden and its source and center is not clear. In this case, at least in the consciousness of individuals, the source of authority will remain unclear. Therefore, people will have no choice but to adopt the *"appropriate"* solution to their problems.

Foucault dwells upon the fact that the person who has adapted to authority and disciplined herself will now perceive pressure as a natural phenomenon. According to him, in this case, there will be no need for democratic public opinion. Since disciplinization always requires sacrifice from personal needs, individuals who acquire this ability will be easily guided in accordance with the requirements of the order. It is also possible to see disciplinization positively. From this point of view, since individuals enter into an idea movement in non-governmental organizations and sacrifice their interests, not for the order, but for the right claims of other individuals or group of interests, by doing so, they will also achieve democratic participation as they will provide community/collective action and solidarity in obtaining common interests (Taylor, 1996, pp. 58–113).

According to Naisbitt (1985), the *"direct democracy"* ideal is in the spirit of participatory democracy. And yet, according to him, "representative democracy" has emerged as a result of the impossibility of direct participation of citizens, but today the situation is changing again, so the citizens no longer need to be "represented"*: "First the communication revolution appeared, and then, thanks to that, a highly informed public opinion. We now share information instantly. We learn what is going on as well and as quickly as our representatives"* (Naisbitt, 1985, p. 175). Interpreting new communication technologies in terms of their democratic consequences, Naisbitt (1985) comments that in light of these developments, today in USA, *"political left and right died is dead. Now all the movements come from the radical center"* (p. 175).

The rapid change of the communication environment with the introduction and prevalence of new technologies also changes the cultural environment altogether. Obviously, just as the political organization of countries or empires was once formed in parallel to the transportation conditions of those countries, now political, social and cultural events are formed according to the new communication conditions.

As a result of the popularization of communication technologies alongside these approaches, the concept of *"the right to communication"* was born. Western countries that define the right to communication as a basic human right assume *the rights to provide information, receive information, preservation of cultural identity, cultural change, cultural identity, opinion and expression, correction and the right to respond* within this right.

Some thinkers who comment on the concept of *"right to communication"* state that this concept which is based on Article 19 of *"the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"* has a much wider content than those mentioned in this article. It is argued that the concept has an

equality dimension as well as freedom. With these dimensions, the content of the concept is indicated as follows:

> The right of everyone to receive the information they want; the presence of a balanced information order between people, regions and countries; the balance of information from outside and the information generated inside; to support globalization and cultural pluralism; to support bilateral communication at all levels; to create awareness of basic communication rights; to create a balance between active participation and private life; use of communication resources by everyone (Taylor, 1996, p. 118).

Although the broad interpretation of the concept seems to reduce its availability, the fact that it can enter into bilateral agreements between countries, and essentially its recognition as not being limited to Article 19 can be shown as proof that it bears a universal characteristic. As is known, in addition to discussions on change of order, there is also the discussion of *"change of environment"*, which the world began to debate at the same period of time. So much so that we are experiencing a great change of environment; the *"environment"* we live in and keep us informed of each other is changing rapidly. This is where the reality of today lies. The *unum ac singulum1**, mandatory condition for democratization of culture in this case is the freedom of communication. Expectations from this structural development of culture are also high through today's digital technology. In this study, based on the projection of these expectations, a descriptive analysis was carried out.

2. Freedom of Communication or Democratization of Culture

Cultural democracy is, in plainest terms, *"the freedom of communication"* (Topuz, 1998). It defends everyone's right to access culture. Literally democratic politics are based on culture. In cultural democracy the very first thing that is considered is the development of the creative qualities of man. Democratization of culture means that everyone can access cultural heritage. Cultural democracy and democratization of culture are seen as two essential and complementary phenomena in this sense. As societies find their identity in their cultural assets, which are a source of creative inspiration for them, each public must be reserved the right and duty to defend and protect their own cultural existence. However, it is evident that it is difficult to prevent prejudices arising from ethnic separation from threatening inter-cultural co-existence today. In fact, as Adam Smith clearly stated in his work *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1988), nations themselves derive from ethnic structures that have an identity that emerges through myths and icons, but also bear an identity that can show flexibility.

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According to John Rawls (as cited in Kymlicka, 1998), mutual citizenship only progresses political virtues such as "being reasonable, fairness, the desire for reconciliation and helping others" (p. 279). Therefore, it is not easy to find answers when faced with the question of how much the sense of common citizenship can apply these virtues in the multi-community. Therefore, unless socio-economic policies are structured within *cultural democracy*, they cannot have a contemporary nature.

One of the most important objectives of human development is the development of the individual in social and cultural spheres. Since accessing and participating in cultural life is recognized as the fundamental rights of individuals in all societies, according to Article 27 of *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, governments are tasked with creating the necessary environment for this right to be fully exercised. Individual freedom within the social map of the human world organized by concepts such as class, power, dominance, authority, socialization, ideology, culture and education, is far from being a universal condition of the human species. Individual freedom has recently shifted from the sphere of production and power to the field of consumption and risen to a central position as a bond that holds social order together. Freedom signals a social relationship, asymmetry of social conditions. Fundamentally it specifies a social difference. Therefore, as Michel Crozier emphasized in his work *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon,* today freedom is the ability to rule and have a say in power (Bauman, 1997, pp. 27–45). As long as there are those who are restricted, freedom will remain as a privilege and power.

When we approach the matter in terms of the whole social living space, the individual's freedom and self-awareness that they have command on their conditions is regarded as the greatest achievement of mankind in modern times in this sense (Bauman, 1997, p. 132).

In fact, the idea of freedom, which expresses sensitivity to public problems, a willing tendency to these problems, has remained a utopia, and therefore modern societies in history have already ceased to be the place where public space claims are expressed. Unfortunately, this has made individual autonomy and indifference to public ones mutually dependent and conditional. According to Hannah Arendt, this led to the initial public freedom being replaced by the ideal of individual happiness (Arendt, 2009). Thus, the concept of freedom, which is identified with the individual's right to strive for their own happiness, is removed from the content of maintaining ensemble self-control.

The ability to create new compositions and combinations from different sources is also a power that integrates culture. Therefore, interpreting culture as *a continuous being* will undoubtedly be the best approach.

However, the most difficult thing is to establish the dialogue between common values. Based on the possibility and necessity of moving from a unity of movement to *cultural dialogue* between singular formations, one can reach Lévi-Strauss's determination that there is one single pole of universality. Claude Lévi-Strauss highlights humanity's understanding of plurality, while also pointing out that this concept does not mean that humanity is no longer "one and indivisible".

Lévi-Strauss' understanding of plurality empowers his great idea of structuralism in which only differences are meaningful and form order. According to Lévi-Strauss, "thinking that we can reach universality by rejecting or denying any kind of belonging to urbanism or secularism, everything established in a special tradition or stating that the only possible fundamental foundation is the absence and loss of foundation is a mistake. (...) Every culture, whether it wants to be so or not, is -quoting Paul Ricoeur's phrase- an *"ethic-mythical core"* consisting of a special mixture. This core often gets more active unless it is denied rather than criticized" (Lévi-Strauss, 1997, p. 15). Therefore, if it wants to recreate self, it must succeed at placing *differences* within freedoms into the democratic structure.

2.1. Modern Reflection of Freedom as a Condition of Universal Humanity

Freedom exists only as a social relationship it is the personal possession of the individual rather than a property (Dewey, 1987, pp. 11–26). The existence of free individuals within a society indicates a distinction between social positions. Freedom, which is prevalent enough to be seen as a universal human condition, is a relative innovation connected with the emergence of modernity and capitalism in the history of humankind.

A person's ability to dominate their own destiny which is considered to be the modern reflection of freedom has a close relation with the problems related to the most distinctive feature of modern times: the artificiality of the social order. Freedom within society is, at the same time, an indispensable condition for both social integration and reproduction which affects the whole of order and this condition is constantly recreated through the "operating" style of the order and social integration.

Individual life of individual freedom, in other words, its central position as a bond that holds society and social order together, has been achieved in the recent past by shifting from the sphere of production and power to the field of consumption. Individual freedom in society is, above all, the freedom of the consumer. And its existence depends on the existence of an

effective market, which in turn assures the conditions of existence of the market. Freedom in this case, in short, is a privilege. Or, *man is basically free as he is responsible for the consequences of his behavior.* Although its religious foundations are rejected, this is a sense of freedom which is derivative of certain ethical values or legal structures.

The two main features that exhibit the authenticity of the Western liberty phenomenon, which originated from the Magna Carta, are striking: the first one is the close link to individuality, and the second is the genetic and cultural connection to market economy and capitalism. The main principle of individualism lies in "the sense of open distinction between my existence and other people." However, at this point, it is necessary to touch on the duality of modern earthly individualism. Individualism, on the one hand, is the natural, inalienable, non-transferable right of every person; on the other hand, it is something that is created, educated, legislated and forced by the powers that act for the benefit of "common happiness" of the whole society.

According to some sociologists, individuality as a value which lies at the roots of modern individualism, is the violent anxiety about the divergence and originality of the individual, the painful experience of being a self and having a self at the same time (just like a property, a person taking care of themselves, defending themselves and keeping themselves clean) and the lack of a clear and comprehensible rule that can provide or enforce a definite prescription of behavior for the instantly changing conditions of everyday life. A person has the ability to observe and correct his own behavior, just like a *"gyroscope"*, which allows ships traveling alone in a strong, dominant current to stay on their course. This ability is called *"self-control."*

We can show self-consciousness, which is an indicator of a person's dominance over their conditions, as the most important feature of modern freedom. The behavior directed by the conscious mind is identified with the rationalization of society. And this is expressed as a common achievement of humankind (Bauman, 1997, pp. 17–69). The desire for freedom comes from experiencing pressure. In other words, this desire arouses a sense of doing something that one should not do, or not being able to rest until doing what s/he wants to do. Sometimes we find the source of pressure in people we know, people with whom we communicate directly.

But no matter how the person explains the sense of pressure, the origins of this feeling always lie in the conflict between a person's own goals and the possibility of acting according to their goals. It goes without saying that in a modern society that is functionally divided, the individual needs more than ever the "friendly warmth" that one can only receive from

those with whom s/he has close relations. For some reason, the same society which, due to functional differentiation, gives the individual many choices in almost every field and truly raises them to the position of a *"free"* human being by leaving the responsibility to make choices to them, at the same time, contradictorily, has also greatly increased the experience of pressure. When the experience of pressure is common, in this regard, waiting for the impulse for freedom to be different cannot go beyond dreaming. In spite of state of conflict, freedom and the need for social interaction are inseparable (Duverger, 1971, p. 189). This is like a permanent attribute of the human state.

3. Globalization of Communication/Global Media Culture

Castells (2004, pp. 115–117) refers to the modern society that Luhmann described as the social system as a social structure composed of information networks based on an interconnected but decentralized set of nodes. In trying to impose this emerging "new world order" as a "single thought" in every field from politics to ideology, finances to culture and art, another weapon that is at least as effective as the money markets is "global media". Global media, in one sentence, can be defined as media system and understanding that the new world order, or the new right in the political sphere, neoliberalism in the economic sphere, and one single idea in the ideological sphere is trying to be extended throughout the world (Duran, 2001, p. 8).

Globalization is defined both as "the downsizing of the world" and "the strengthening of the world consciousness as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 21), quintessentially, as "a world process" (Hall, 1998, p. 38). Bauman (1999) says that the deepest meaning emerging from the idea of globalization is "the ambiguous, unregulated and solitary nature of world issues," and that globalization does not "have a center, a control desk, a board of directors, and an administrative office" (p. 69).

The use of the concept of globalization to define the mutual dependence of modern societies creates the illusion that globalization is an irrepressible phenomenon independent of the nature of social systems. In this context, globalization becomes a dominant reality of today. Societies are now connected with information and communication networks, and networks hide the truth more than explaining it (Alemdar & Erdoğan, 2002, p. 509). Luhmann (1990) comments on the matter as follows: "*Worldwide communicative system has established a world to cover all possibilities*" (p. 178).

According to Hardt and Negri (2001), globalization can be called an *empire* as it has influenced the whole world, neutralized borders and it lacks a specific center.

The expansion of capitalism has been accompanied by the continuous push of communication networks and streams of the world's borders for the last two hundred years. The concept of world-communication, which is indistinguishably connected to terms such as the world economy and the world-society, signifies the articulation of the production and commercialization space within the communication industry into the world economy space. Mattelart clearly places the concept of world-communication which is used to cover these points into a critical perspective in his work *La Mundialización de la Comunicación* [The Globalization of Communication]. And according to Chase-Dunn (1999, p. 191), globalization of communication is associated with a new era, informatics and information technology.

When we review the production style properties of this period, which emerged as post-industrialization information technologies, we come across certain concepts such as automation, computer and telecommunications. The general opinion is that the factor that creates the global market is not the national markets that are separated from each other, but information technology; because it creates a favorable environment for economic competition (Chase-Dunn, 1999, p. 189).

The concept of world-communication inspired by Fernand Braudel's concept of world-economy assumes the role of "reminding that networks intertwined with the international division of labor make space hierarchical, and leads to an ever-growing polarization between the center(s) and the periphery (-ies)" (Mattelart, 2001, p. 100).

Harvey's (2006, p. 270) *"time-space jam"* and McLuhan's (2001, pp. 44–48) *"global village"* concepts also dramatically express the globality of communication. "Time-space jam" indicates that telecommunications lifts borders, causing an inward collapse. Harvey uses this concept to describe general globalization which includes economic and ecological interdependence as well as globalization of communication. McLuhan's concept of a "global village" refers to a cultural loss. There is the concern that the development of electronic communication tools shifts the world from a visual orientation to an auditory orientation, pushes people to laziness in terms of culture, literacy will decline, and that there will be a return to primitiveness.

The electronization of the communication field causes synchronization all over the world, gives rise to the idea that the world is becoming a village community, and this is viewed as a cultural loss.

Globalization according to Morley and Robins (1997) is defined as follows: "*global space is a space of flows, an electronic space, it has no center, it is a space where borders and fronts can be penetrated*" (p. 181). When the developments in the field of communication are interpreted, globalization comes to be defined as a place/placelessness where borders in the world are lifted, meaning spaces lose their constancy and everything is only in flow. Rodrik (2006) says that technological advances in the transportation and communication sectors have made national borders more transitional for foreign competition than ever before and nothing except severe government limitations can turn this back (p. 64).

On the other hand, as a result of developments in the means of communication and transportation, communication networks that occur on a global scale give a new dimension to the forms of social relations. Virtual relationships that were not experienced at any time in history are now occurring in virtual environments, and at the same time virtual societies or communities are formed (Bauman, 1999, p. 25; Morley & Robins, 1997, p. 181).

Schiller (1992) also suggests that international media is becoming widespread by establishing an ideological information infrastructure and that this process is supported by market research done by advertising agencies (Önür, 2002, p. 161; Schiller 1992). Since the media is under the control of strong classes in society, the messages that are popularized in this way reproduce the class system, and the power structure of society is preserved through media ownership. While tools of communication and transportation lead to the dissolution of locality and kinship on the one hand, they allow for "replacement" by facilitating access to "close" relatives who are far away or by giving an opportunity to simultaneously meet with them in communication environments (Giddens, 1998, p. 137). By revealing new forms of sociality such as Internet communities, they pave the way for intellectual and emotional "close" relations between individuals from geographically distant distances who have never met each other, they free the individual from the abstraction of modernity and bring it back to the subject state.

In short, the media culture that prevails all over the world today is beyond nations. It operates with a global perspective, and is produced by transnational holdings. One of the important arguments of cultural expansion is that this is done more in the name of "modernization" and "development". In this process, the mass media helps standardize behavior and consumption patterns necessary for the industrial production system by flowing images into "mass consciousness." In other words, the fact that these products which emerged in the form of consumption culture have turned into "lifestyle" is considered as a result of cultural imperialism.

The circulation of images across the world, the standardization of lifestyles through mass consumer goods form the basic views of cultural globalization. This symbolization implies that global cultural codes actually exist in their own "native" sources, thus reproducing them and providing a legitimate basis for their acceptance. In this way, society tends to perceive itself as part of the dominant cultural world.

It is envisaged that the media is causing an erosive impact on national and local cultures with the international network of relations and the sovereign discourse it creates. In other words, today's cultures are surrounded by media culture as isolated areas. One of the most important characteristics of modern culture is the clear and transformative impact of the media on cultural life.

4. Digital Culture or Digitalization of Culture

Although many definitions have been made over time, culture has become one of the concepts that have been discussed thoroughly and yet a consensus has not been reached on the matter. Taylor defined culture as "a whole composed of all the talents that man has acquired as a member of society, including knowledge, faith, art, morality, law, customs and traditions" (Köse, Tetik & Ercan, 2001, p. 221). Digital culture is one of the concepts that have been frequently emphasized in recent times in terms of its effects. As a result of innovations and changes brought by the age we are in, technology is used to indicate the change of habits by its increased participation in daily life.

Digital culture, in the 21st century, is viewed as a phenomenon expanding its field of influence by spreading out towards various fields and continuously renewing itself as a response to the needs created by the modern capitalist lifestyle (Gere, 2008, p. 224). Digital technology transforms culture. In this age, where technology is an indispensable part of everyday life, consumption habits change incredibly fast. At the same time, encountering a new tool that contributes to the spread of digital culture every day has become an undeniable reality. In this context, it is possible to define the process we are in as a process independent of time and space, where there are no boundaries, where individuals set the rules and real life norms are reproduced.

Digital culture is an instant and interactive structure by nature. Users can connect and create content at any time and share that content with other users instantly.

As elements of digital culture, network websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia-type websites, e-Government and e-commerce websites, digital media websites such as Youtube,

DailyMotion and Instagram, blogs and messaging on different platforms (WhatsApp, SMS, etc.) are regarded as virtual media (Türkoğlu, 2013, p. 35). Among these, the electronic mail (e-mail) application is seen as the most important component of digital culture with its ability to disseminate information throughout the whole world in very short periods of time (Yılmaz, 2016, p. 356).

Thanks to today's technological development, many processes are carried out through digital tools and platforms in every field from art to sports, music to literature, science and education to culture. Therefore, it has become possible to talk about digitalization in every aspect of the life world that constitutes sociality. As the United Nations Human Development Reports revealed, the speed of adoption and implementation of digital technologies has reached considerable dimensions. Today, information and communication technologies can be seen in almost every region of the world. Although its effects vary from country to country, digital technologies are changing all around the world at a great pace. Despite regional differences, digital culture has become one of today's fundamental realities thanks to this structural feature.

The development of industrialization related to communication technologies is increasing the impact of communication on culture more and more. In the post-industrial social order which Toffler (2008) described as the Third Wave after the agricultural and industrial revolutions, respectively, all cultural elements are commercialized.

Within the social and cultural fabric of industrial capitalism, culture is shaped by mass media around a standard concept of popular culture. The cultural industry deals with objects in a way that allows the capital to reproduce itself. The culture industry, which erodes the critical aspect of culture over time, allows culture to reach more people through mass media (Erdoğan & Alemdar, 2005, p. 329).

The differentiating structure of masses that benefits from communication in the age of digitization is also among the factors affecting culture. As the power of culture which is based on modern mass communication increases, crowds that do not receive a share of cultural activities become cultural consumers. Thus, the heterogeneous structure of the masses demanding cultural products forms a mosaic texture (Abadan-Unat, 1983, p. 68). Individuals in the communication process are involved in the cultural process using technological innovations, while communication tools create a giant wave of change which seems to be independent of each other but affects all communication tools. During this period, new tools replace mass media. Moving away from mass, the industrial ecosystem becomes an ecosystem of information (Toffler, 2008, p. 210).

While the visual culture directed by photography is at the forefront in the industrial ecosystem, social culture is created with a greater impact in the information ecosystem. The new culture of communication emerging through digitization affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, storage, manipulation and distribution of information (Manovich, 2001, p. 19). In the advanced world shaped by digital technology, the Internet, penetrating almost every aspect of modern life, offers an uninterrupted digital environment. At home, at work, in the office and wherever conceivable; individuals, firms and governments realize their goals based on digital technology (Gere, 2008, p. 14).

Digital technologies that reproduce everyday practices online are also rapidly digitalized because of their identity and relations. In digital habitus, users internalize network practices by both establishing identities and following others. Individuals have the opportunity to display different identities at the same time by socializing on their Facebook accounts, sharing their political views on Twitter, digitalizing their personal life on Instagram with selfies, and competing with their professional skills on LinkedIn (Güzel, 2016).

Goffman's theatre example (2016, p. 76) offers an illustrative approach to the digital culture atmosphere that the actors of virtual networks breathe. Goffman states that we create our understanding of behavior in the culture we live in by using two models. In the first model, the individual gives a genuine, sincere and honest performance. This performance consists of a person's reactions to the situation in which s/he is in. The second model contains a performance similar to the theatre play performed by professional actors. This performance, which is expected to be taken seriously but at the same time is factitious, includes carefully combined, false behaviors and these behaviors have nothing to do with reality. This model reminds us of the exaggerated self-presentations that social media users often perform. Users make many of their daily actions public on social media through factitious performances.

There are communities in digital environments that Castells (2008) conceptualizes as virtual communities. There are structural and qualitative differences between virtual communities and traditional communities. Given these differences, maintaining membership in virtual communities, the degree of solidarity, the extent of interaction and the sense of belonging remain superficial. On the other hand, virtual communities are considered artificial associations that are not related to real life and are in contrast to real-life communities.

In general, in the digital age, as Castells (2008) dramatically expresses, networks form the new social morphology of societies. Thus, networks that significantly change the functioning and consequences of the power and culture processes provide the material grounds required

for the expansion of digital culture products in the entire social structure even if they are produced in different times and places thanks to the new technological paradigm (p. 622).

Studies on digital culture have regarded the Internet as the beginning of the history of digital culture, and have sharply separated individuals in today's societies from each other by dividing them into categories such as *"digital immigrants"* who were born before the Internet era and *"digital natives"* who were born after the Internet (Güzel, 2016, p. 84). The digital consumption habits of people in digital culture indicate what kind of digital consumers they are. Digital consumers who care more about the image that a product has and shows rather than just the physical, functional characteristics of the product are undoubtedly involved in a new economy and a new culture formation (Odabaşı et al., 2012, p. 104).

In fact, it is important to address the phenomenon of digital culture together with the concept of new economics in terms of understanding the concept. Since technological advances in computer and communication systems are the main characteristic of the new economy, information creation, improvement and distribution processes acquired a digital format together with the new economy (Aslan, 2007, p. 303). Therefore, in our current age of information, technology, together with the shaping power of communication and media, inevitably entered into a multi-layered and complex cultural transformation process.

In a world globalized in parallel with this development, relations between countries, institutions and individuals are concentrated and moved to the digital environment. Thus, digital communication tools, which have become an inseparable part of everyday life, also subject culture to a comprehensive change.

5. The Structure of Power in Digital Culture

In a few short years, open source software production and social Internet applications like Napster, Wikipedia, and YouTube have created digital media communities with millions of participants, for whom sharp distinctions between production, distribution, and consumption no longer map to everyday experience. Such platforms, in turn, have become touchstones for a wave of accounts of digital culture that emphasize its participatory dynamics and, sometimes as a corollary, the obsolescence or at least discomfiture of older cultural industries. This perspective shift has been sharpened by the seemingly endless series of high-profile conflicts between new and old cultural intermediaries: YouTube versus media companies, Wikipedia versus traditional encyclopedias, Napster (or Grokster or iTunes) versus the recording companies, or Google versus publishers, to name only a few. These conflicts have highlighted

the social and legal construction of digital culture in ways that, for older technologies, were comparatively settled or slow moving. In a few short years the convergence of experiential critique, institutional conflict, and new intellectual entrepreneurship has fostered an explicit and often contentious public debate about the organization of culture and the nature of cultural authority in the digital era (Karaganis, 2007).

Digital technologies are engines of cultural innovation, from the virtualization of group networks and social identities to the digital convergence of textural and audio-visual media. User-centered content production, from Wikipedia and YouTube to Open Source, has become the emblem of this transformation, but the changes run deeper and wider than these novel organizational forms (Karaganis, 2007).

5.1. New Powers for Surveillance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is part of our daily lives. This technology shapes how people access information, interact with devices, share personal information, and even understand foreign languages. It also transforms how individuals and groups can be tracked and identified, and dramatically alters what kinds of information can be gleaned about people from their data. AI has the potential to revolutionize societies in positive ways. However, as with any scientific or technological advancement, there is a real risk that the use of new tools by states or corporations will have a negative impact on human rights (Article 19, 2018).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications are a part of everyday life: from curating social media feeds to mediating traffic flow in cities, and from autonomous cars to connected consumer devices like smart assistants, spam filters, voice recognition systems and search engines.

The sudden rise of these applications is recent, but the study and development of AI is over half a century old: the term was coined in 1956, though the concept goes back even further, to the late 1700s. Current momentum is fueled by the availability of large amounts of data, affordable and accessible computational power, continued development of statistical methods, and the fact that technology is now embedded into the fabric of society. We rely on it in more ways than most are even aware of (Cath, Wachter, Mittelstadt, Taddeo, & Floridi, 2017).

According to Karaganis, digital culture is also about the transformation of what it means to be a creator within a vast and growing reservoir of media, data, computational power, and communicative possibilities. We have few tools and models for understanding the power of databases, network representations, filtering techniques, digital rights management, and other new architectures (Karaganis, 2007).

Karaganis claims that digital technologies are powerful forces of deterritorialization—of disembedding knowledge and culture from existing institutions, practices, and geographies—but they are also tools of continuous social and political reterritorialization, as borders are redrawn, new institutions and structures emerge, and new forms of control are established (Karaganis, 2007).

The current research on digital culture and power include emergent forms of personal agency and authority, from our changing relationship with the digitally mediated past, to the expanded scale of interpersonal networks, to the emergence of new systems of trust and credentialization. It includes new powers for surveillance and for tacit, system-level control of behavior exercised by corporate actors and states. It includes the roles that different technical architectures play in conditioning and distributing these new forms of power, authority, and sociability. It requires, finally, attention to the differential effects of flows of information, culture, and technology around the world, as these interact with patterns of structural inequality and distinctive social histories (Karaganis, 2007).

According to Karaganis et al., digital culture, is not just about new forms of collaboration or about corporate control, although these features are central. It is also about the transformation of what it means to be a person or a cultural actor located within a vast and growing reservoir of media, data, computational power, and communicative possibilities. Of these aspects, communication may be the most familiar dimension and the easiest one to study and understand. In contrast, we have fewer tools and models for understanding the power of databases, network representations, filtering techniques, and other new architectures of agency and control. We have fewer accounts of how these new capacities transform our shared cultures, our understanding of them, and our capacities to act within them (Karaganis, 2007).

We are already seeing the first developments of combining artificial intelligence with surveillance. IC Realtime is one example. Its flagship product, unveiled last December, was billed as Google for CCTV. It's an app and web platform named Ella that uses AI to analyze what's happening in video feeds and make it instantly searchable. Ella can recognize hundreds of thousands of natural language queries, letting users search footage to find clips showing specific animals, people wearing clothes of a certain color, or even individual car makes and models. Ella runs on Google Cloud and can search footage from pretty much any CCTV system. "[It] works well on a one-camera system — just [like] a nanny cam or dog cam — all the way up to enterprise, with a matrix of thousands of cameras.

China provides one example of what this can look like. Its western Xinjiang region, where dissent from the local Uighur ethnic group is being suppressed, has been described as "a laboratory for high-tech social controls," in a recent *Wall Street Journal* report. In Xinjiang, traditional methods of surveillance and civil control are combined with facial recognition, license plate scanners, iris scanners, and ubiquitous CCTV to create a "total surveillance state" where individuals are tracked constantly in public spaces. In Moscow, a similar infrastructure is being assembled, with facial recognition software plugged into a centralized system of more than 100,000 high-resolution cameras which cover more than 90 percent of the city's apartment entrances. "It's troubling to me that a lot of these systems are being pumped into our core infrastructure without the democratic process that would allow us to ask questions about their effectiveness, or to inform the populations they'll be deployed on," says Whittaker. "This is one more example in the drumbeat of algorithmic systems that are offering to classify and determine the typology of individuals based on pattern recognition drawn from data that embed cultural and historical sources."

5.2. Database as a Central Cultural Form

According to Bowker and Star (1999) over the past 200 years, massive new waves of information classification and standardization have taken place—international classifications were developed for diseases, work, criminal physiognomy, and so forth. Facts could be split apart, sorted into pigeonholes, and reassembled in new ways. It is a direct outgrowth of this work at the turn of the 21st century that we get the emergence of the database as a central cultural form. Lev Manovich (1999) puts it beautifully (p. 225):

> As a cultural form, the database represents the world as a list of items and it refuses to order this list. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events). Therefore, database and narrative are natural enemies. Competing for the same territory of human culture, each claims an exclusive right to make meaning out of the world.

Manovich (1999) develops the syntagm–paradigm couple, where the syntagm represents a statement that is made and the paradigm represents the set of possible statements. He argues that with the new technology: "Database (the paradigm) is given material existence, while narrative (the syntagm) is de-materialized. Paradigm is privileged, syntagm is downplayed. Paradigm is real, syntagm is virtual" (p. 231).

Bowker (2007) gives a name to the current epoch by calling it the epoch of potential memory. To continue Manovich's trope, this is an epoch in which narrative remembering

is typically a post hoc reconstruction from an ordered, classified set of facts that have been scattered over multiple physical data collections. The question is not what the state "knows" about a particular individual, but rather what it can know should the need ever arise. A good citizen of the modern state is one who can be well counted, along numerous dimensions, on demand. We live in a regime of countability with a particular spirit of quantification. Michel Foucault (1991) pointed out that this is one of the principles of governmentality: A modern state needs to conjure its citizens into such a form that they can be enumerated. The state may then decide what kind of public health measures to take, where to provide schooling, what kind of political representation should be afforded, and so on (Bowker & Star, 1999).

Bowker claims that in order to be fully countable and thus remembered by the state, a person needs first to fit into well-defined classification systems. At the start of this epoch, the state would typically— where deemed necessary—gain information on its citizens through networks of spies and informers writing narrative reports. Such information gathering continues today but is swamped by the effort to pull people apart along multiple dimensions and reconfigure the information at will (Bowker & Star 1999).

According to Bowker and Star (1999), information integration, then, has a lot to do with the power of the state—the ability to collect data from numerous disparate resources, collocate it through the production of (im)mutable mobiles, and then use it to plan the future. The information tools of empire (i.e., statistics, databases) lend a certain sense of inevitability to all the changes that we witness—we are either enthralled by the spectacle or deadened by the difficulty of imagining change (Bowker & Star, 1999).

As we have seen, at a transitional movement into a new regime of memory practices, new configurations of knowledge/power come into play. These new orderings of the past are generally portrayed post hoc as liberatory by those who benefit from the change. Our new orderings are not more accurate (the past is being reworked now just as much as ever) nor more liberatory than previous regimes. However, there are new opportunities presented, and it is a key task for the social scientist to plumb the political roots of the new information infrastructures we are building (Bowker & Star, 1999).

5.3. Big Data and AI

According to Wachter (2019), Big Data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) draw non-intuitive and unverifiable inferences and predictions about the behaviors, preferences, and private lives of individuals. These inferences draw on highly diverse and feature-rich

data of unpredictable value, and create new opportunities for discriminatory, biased, and invasive decision-making. Data protection law is meant to protect people's privacy, identity, reputation, and autonomy, but is currently failing to protect data subjects from the novel risks of inferential analytics.

Wachter (2019) claims that individuals are granted little control and oversight over how their personal data is used to draw inferences about them.

According to Cowls et al. (2018), the idea of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Social Good (henceforth AI4SG) is becoming popular in many information societies and gaining traction within the AI community (Hager et al., 2017). Projects addressing AI4SG vary significantly. They range from models to predict septic shock (Henry, Hager, Pronovost, & Saria, 2015) to game-theoretic models to prevent poaching (Fang et al., 2016); from online reinforcement learning to target HIV-education at homeless youths (Yadav, Chan, Jiang, Xu, Rice, & Tambe, 2016) to probabilistic models to prevent harmful policing (Carton et al., 2016) and support student retention (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). Indeed, new applications of AI4SG appear almost daily, making possible socially good outcomes that were once less easily achievable, unfeasible, or unaffordable (Cowls et al., 2018).

Cowls et al. (2018) claim that, AI software is shaped by human values which, if not carefully selected, may lead to "good-AI-gone-bad" scenarios. For example, consider the failure of IBM's oncology-support software, which attempts to use machine learning to identify cancerous tumors, but which was rejected by medical practitioners "on the ground" (Ross & Swetlitz, 2017). The system was trained using synthetic data and was not refined enough to interpret ambiguous, nuanced, or otherwise "messy" patient health records (Strickland, 2019). It also relied on US medical protocols, which are not applicable worldwide. The heedless deployment and the poor design of the software led to misdiagnoses and erroneous treatment suggestions, breaching the trust of doctors and hospitals (Cowls et al., 2018).

At the same time, the genuinely socially good outcomes of AI may arise merely by chance, for example through an accidental application of an AI solution in a different context. This was the case with the use of a different version of IBM's cognitive system. In this case, the Watson system was originally designed to identify biological mechanisms, but when used in a classroom setting, it inspired engineering students to solve design problems (Goel et al., 2015). In this instance, AI provided a unique mode of education (Cawls et al., 2018).

Cawls et al. (2018), focus on factors that are particularly relevant to AI as a technology designed and used for the advancement of social good. To anticipate, these are*: (1) falsifiability and incremental deployment; (2) safeguards against the manipulation of predictors; (3) receiver-contextualised intervention; (4) receiver-contextualised explanation and transparent purposes; (5) privacy protection and data subject consent; (6) situational fairness; and (7) human-friendly semanticisation* (Cawls et al., 2018).

Microsoft's infamous Twitter bot, Tay, acquired meanings, in a very loose sense, at runtime, as it learned from Twitter users how it should respond to tweets. After deployment in the real—and frequently vicious—world of social media, however, the bot's ability to adapt constantly its "conceptual understanding" became an unfortunate bug, as Tay "learned" and regurgitated offensive language and unethical associations between concepts from other users (Neff & Nagy, 2016).

The use of AI to predict future trends or patterns is very popular in AI4SG contexts, from applying automated prediction to redress academic failure (Lakkaraju et al., 2015), to preventing illegal policing (Carton et al., 2016), and detecting corporate fraud (Zhou & Kapoor, 2011).

5.4. Digital Rights and Freedom

The past decade has seen a staggering decline around the world in digital freedom, as the nonprofit human rights organization Freedom House underscored in a report in 2018. China has largely taken center stage in this decline narrative, thanks to tools like its social credit system and facial recognition technology, which allow the country to shrink personal freedoms, especially those of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Not to be left behind, Russia also has recently announced its plan to "unplug" the country from the internet. And in March, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a "fake news" law that will severely limit online speech for its citizens (Jash, 2019).

But while observers have kept a steady eye on these admittedly unsurprising curbs on digital rights in countries like China and Russia, an overlooked method of digital repression—internet shutdowns—is most rampant not in an authoritarian regime, but in the world's largest democracy: India. According to a Software Freedom Law Center tracker, there have been more than 300 reported shutdowns in India over the past six years. (And these are just the incidents that have been reported; it's likely that there have been more.) This data point makes India the leading country for internet shutdowns globally, even surpassing countries like Iraq, Syria,

Pakistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It challenges the prevailing assumption that digital authoritarianism is only a problem in authoritarian countries (Jash, 2019).

Recently, it floated a new set of intermediary guideline rules that look to curb the misuse of social media platforms and the spread of fake news. A New York Times report in February called this a "Chinese-style internet censorship" approach. More than ever, it's become increasingly clear that this sort of "networked authoritarianism" is on display in India (Jash, 2019).

As artificial intelligence (AI) has demonstrated its power to revolutionize fundamental systems of communication, commerce, labor, and public services, it has captured the attention of the technology industry, public officials, and civil society. The potential of AI to perform tasks with speed and on a scale beyond human capability has fueled great excitement. AI systems are already deeply embedded in our everyday lives - from helping us navigate through morning traffic to offering up the day's news, to more nefarious uses of systems for surveillance (Vincent, 2018) warfare (Coughlan, 2018) and oppressing democratic dissent (Kania, 2018). Yet many of the most powerful stakeholders in the field have only just begun to consider the impact of AI systems on society, democracy, rights, and justice (Article 19, 2019).

If implemented responsibly, AI can benefit society. However, as is the case with most emerging technology, there is a real risk that commercial and state use has a detrimental impact on human rights. In particular, applications of these technologies frequently rely on the generation, collection, processing, and sharing of large amounts of data, both about individual and collective behavior. This data can be used to profile individuals and predict future behavior. While some of these uses, like spam filters or suggested items for online shopping, may seem benign, others can have more serious repercussions and may even pose unprecedented threats to the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression and information ('freedom of expression') (Dodd, 2017). The use of AI can also impact the exercise of a number of other rights, including the right to an effective remedy, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom from discrimination (Article 19, 2018).

The various principles developed by industry and states have, as of yet, failed to develop strong accompanying accountability mechanisms. They lack concrete and narrowly defined language (Article 19, 2018), independent oversight or enforcement mechanisms, and clear transparency and reporting requirements. This means that no matter how laudable the principles are, there is no way to hold governments or companies to said principles. The general lack of transparency mechanisms leaves no pathway for other stakeholders to know

whether or not companies and governments are complying with their own principles. And in cases where noncompliance is revealed, there are inadequate mechanisms to hold companies and governments accountable for their wrongdoing (Article 19, 2019).

For instance, after Google received pushback from its own employees surrounding Project Maven, a partnership with the US Department of Defense to improve drone targeting using AI, the company published a set of AI principles that elucidated its commitment to ethics, and made a public pledge to refrain from building certain types of technology (Fang, 2019). But Google has not disclosed to what extent these principles are embedded in concrete work in the company, and there has been no demonstrable change in how the company has altered its internal decision making processes. This is particularly worrying because in the case of public-private partnerships such as Project Maven, the accountability that governments otherwise owe the public is potentially diluted by the use of technology built behind closed doors and vague, non-binding commitments (Article 19, 2019).

Facebook even signed resolutions calling for the development of ethical principles in the US Congress. Yet at the same time, recent research shows that Facebook discriminates on advertisement delivery on the basis of gender and race (Ali et al., 2019) and has also been charged with housing-related discrimination (Article 19, 2019).

Facebook's efforts towards ethical AI had no demonstrable bearing on its practices. Indeed, these partnerships and other loose commitments did not create any requirement for the company to follow through on these ideals, nor did they provide mechanisms to hold the company to account (Article 19, 2019).

As discussed above, there are various cases of governments working together with industry to improve surveillance of dissidents, precision targeting in drones, or facial recognition software for law enforcement purposes. These partnerships regularly take shape in the absence of safeguards or meaningful oversight (Article 19, 2019).

For example, Google's partnership with the Chinese government to develop a censored search engine (known as "Project Dragonfly") would have excluded search results that were viewed as politically "sensitive" by the Chinese government (Gallagher, 2018). This represents an egregious violation of international human rights standards on freedom of expression and information, and also violates Google's own ethical principles on AI (Article 19, 2019).

Another problem with trusting companies to do "the right thing" comes from their lack of understanding of the societal impacts of technology and appropriate ways to deal with them.

For instance, in April 2018, in his testimony before the United States Congress, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed the company's increasing reliance on AI tools to solve problems of hate speech, terrorist propaganda, election manipulation and misinformation. But research and media reports have shown that AI tools are ill-suited to do this work - they are not technically equipped to understand societal nuances or context in speech, and often make the problem worse (Article 19, 2019).

In fact, prior to the 2017 escalation of military attacks on Rohingya people in Myanmar, local activists gathered substantial evidence that Facebook was automatically censoring the word "kalar", a derogatory local slur used to refer to Rohingya Muslims. By simply flagging the word as problematic, without accounting for the immediate context in which it was being used, this step led to the censorship of numerous posts in which people attempted to discuss use of the term, its history, and efforts to curb hate speech in the country. Meanwhile, users who wanted to use the term as an insult simply opted for an alternative spelling. All told, Facebook's effort to deploy AI in order to reduce hate speech in this volatile political environment resulted in censorship of legitimate speech and had no demonstrable effect towards curbing hate speech (Article 19, 2019).

In her book Cyberselfish Paulina Barsook has examined the degree to which a loathing of government intervention, or indeed government altogether, combined with a belief in the capitalist entrepreneurship as the best means to encourage creativity, have become the unquestioned tenets of those working in the computer industry. As she points out, such beliefs bear little or any relation to the realities of that industry and the means through which it has developed and continues to be supported. The most extreme manifestation of such libertarianism is possibly to be found in the discourse surrounding freedom of expression and privacy in relation to the Internet (Gere, 2008).

The Internet is the paradigm of the emergent, self-regulating, self-organizing structures that can develop and thrive without governmental intervention. In this it is a material realization of the idea of the market as a spontaneous natural phenomenon that lies at the heart of neo-liberal economics. A model of the economy as an evolved and optimized natural system clearly resonated with the cybernetic and ecological concerns of the post-war era. It also militated against hierarchical planning and elevated the role of the individual, while still promoting the idea of the collective and the common good (Gere, 2008).

Opposing the hegemony of techno-utopian capitalism has been the development of subcultural styles in literature, music and design, through which questions of alternatives and

modes of resistance could be rehearsed. These have interacted and combined with theoretical developments such as French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concepts of assemblages, rhizomes and nomads; Jacques Derrida's analysis of thinking as writing; the Autonomist Marxist's ideas about the General Intellect and Immaterial Labour; Donna Haraway's conception of the cyborg as a model for thinking about gender and identity in a high-tech world, and Hakim Bey's concept of 'Temporary Autonomous Zones', which act as enclaves against the powers that be, and are dissolved before they can be repressed or co-opted. Punk in the late '70s, itself a response to the dislocations of capitalism as it shifted to an informational mode, inspired many of these developments, including the sci-fi genre Cyberpunk, musical styles such as Industrial Rock and Techno and other electronic genres, as well as deconstructionist graphic design and fashion. Out of these different elements there has emerged a distinctive digital style in which the extraordinary social and cultural developments of the last twenty years have been reflected (Gere, 2008).

These are, then, some of the main elements out of which our current digital culture has been assembled: Cold War defense technologies; avant-garde art practice; counter-cultural technoutopianism; postmodernist critical theory; new wave subcultural style. Though, as time goes on, their presence becomes harder to detect. Each of these elements is immanent within the technologies we use and the means we use to understand them. To acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of digital culture is increasingly necessary, as the technology through which it is perpetuated becomes both more ubiquitous and more invisible. The less aware we are of the social and cultural forces out of which our current situation has been constructed the less able we are to resist and question the relations of power and force it embodies. If, on the other hand, we can see that these forces are culturally contingent and in no sense natural and inevitable then we have the basis for asking questions. At the same time the power and reach of digital surveillance is increasing with great rapidity (Gere, 2008).

6. Conclusion

Digital culture has become a part of culture. The digitalization of culture increases digital wisdom to create value; to find solutions to problems, to innovate, to improve quality.

Because our lives are digitalized, "culture," which is the set of what remains of the life we live in is also digitalized. Digital culture is increasingly expanding its place as part of culture. It does this in two ways. First of all, in digitalization, existing cultural elements are digitized. For example, books are scanned and converted into e-books. Paintings are photographed with digital cameras and transferred to digital media. Sound recordings, music works, etc. can be

digitalized using similar digital devices. The second way is through cultural elements which are born digital. For example, if you take a selfie with your mobile phone and share it on a social media site, that photo and the share are born in and taken their place in an entirely digital world.

A digital platform is needed for culture (or the elements that constitute it) to be digital. This platform is required for a cultural element to be digital, whether digitalized or digitally born. The most known and widespread platform of existing digital platforms is the Internet. In addition to the Internet, mobile phones, tablets, computers and digital cameras are digital platforms as well. That is why it is not true to say the Internet equals digital culture. Digital culture includes the Internet, but it is not equal to it; it is more than that. Therefore, social media, which only forms a subset of the Internet, cannot be equated with digital culture either. Social media is a part of a digital platform (the Internet), only an element within digital culture.

Digitalization has also started to be considered as an important tool to eliminate inequality. A digital platform such as the Internet, for example, helps a new photographer become popular as well as presenting the works of a very famous photographer to the world.

In other words, digital platforms such as the Internet allow the elite and the ordinary to walk side by side. It can ensure the work of the individual to takes center stage rather than the identity of the individual. Thanks to these platforms, ordinary people even can be promoted to the elite class. A good example of this is the publication of tens of thousands of copies of the books by writers whose works are read by thousands of people on the digital platform.

Today, at this point, digital platforms such as the Internet have three key features. Multimedia, interaction and virtuality. On digital platforms, it is possible to find all media such as fixed texts, images, videos, etc. intertwined. With the Web 2.0 phase, interaction is included in the picture in every possible situation, and the consumer is also in the position of producer. And by definition, being able to exist in a virtual, or digital environment is the third complementary feature.

The ultimate goal of its digitalization is no different, since culture is a phenomenon related to cultivation. It can be said that digital culture can cultivate the individual and turn them into a "digital sage" (1). A person can turn into a digital sage by accessing information, distinguishing right from wrong, using the right information, and creating a value. For instance, solving a problem, making an innovation, an invention can create a value in the form of increasing quality in one area of life.

In addition to this, a new conceptualization reflecting the postmodern character of the digital world is *the Internet of Things* concept. It seems that the Internet of things will not only increase the comfort of people's daily life, but will also take part in solving the major problems that stand before humanity. It will be able to do this thanks to its ability to capture data. It is understood that at the heart of the work lies the ability of devices to communicate among themselves - without involving people. Thanks to this communication, such devices are now referred to as "smart".

Certainly, the development of devices in this way is actually important for another vital element for the information society to be clarified even more. Keeping record of data and turning it into information. Everything, large or small, in a state of motion produces incredible levels of data at any given moment. Data can also be defined as a trail of movement, motion. But human beings are able to record a very marginal portion of this data. The main reason for this is that humans used to have very few types of media that would take records until recently. Only human memory, and pen and paper could do that. Along with the invention of digital technologies, a new opportunity has emerged in this field. Computers began to record data, and they are devices that can be used for processing very high volumes of data. That is what lies behind the prediction, *"A few computers are enough for the world."* So much so that the fact that digital devices can record and transform data into information has been a major step in the process of information production of humans. With the Internet of things, mankind is on the verge of a much larger leap.

We have encountered a large set of data that can easily identify current social trends or reactions on any subject and draw meaningful conclusions. Google, predictably, constitutes the largest part of the big data. It will become more possible to test the results of digitalization through this big data. However, for individuals who are likely to see the period what Harari (2018) calls *"Dataism,"* the question of to what extend digitalization will cause expansion or compression still waits to be answered.

Notes

1. For conceptualizations such as digital sage and discussions on digital culture under postmodernism and digitalization section, see Tanol Türkoğlu, *TT Dijital Kültür Platformu,* https://dijitalkultur.wordpress.com/Nisan 2016-Mayıs 2019

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