From Fans to Followers to Anti-Fans. Young Online Audiences of Microcelebrities

# Details

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# Abstract

Scholars and the general public have taken notice of the transformations and tensions in fan (and audience) cultures. Inspired by Crystal Abidin's conceptual framework of internet celebrity, we will turn our attention to the audiences addressed, invoked and imagined by these microcelebrity practitioners, and this will enable us to outline three main types of young audiences – the "fans", the "followers" and the "anti-fans" – of microcelebrities. Combining ideas from well-established theories and theoretical concepts (e.g., en/decoding in reception analysis, para-social relationships, structuration theory) and our own findings from different empirical audience research enables us to explore a variety of ways in which young audiences relate and engage with the microcelebrity-generated content that is omnipresent in today's youth's routine media repertoire.

# Outcome

"As digital culture often follows a participatory logic this also means that fandom and fan culture in a larger sense have gone through a transformation. Additionally, in the fragmented mediascape, audiences are fragmented as well. We argue that, although there are noticeable shifts and transformations, established theories are also still applicable and enable us to understand contemporary dynamic audience formations." (Murumaa-Mengel Siibak, 2020, p. 240)
"The findings of our empirical studies indicate that microcelebrity-audience practices are mainly individual rather than collective. In fact, studies indicate that the pleasures of viewing microcelebrity content is built on an affective relationship between the microcelebrity and each fan, follower or anti-fan." (Murumaa-Mengel Siibak, 2020, p. 241)