



THE MAKE-UP OF INFORMAL POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS IN EUROPE

How Beauty Vloggers talk about politics online



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RHIANNON JONES

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Why I care about PewDiePie's politics and think you should too?	5
Talking on the Internet	6
What is an Influencer?	7
Influencers Influencing: The Impact of the Influencer on Youth and the World	10
Why my research matters	16
Chapter Two: The Politics of Beauty	21
The Female Focus: Femininity	21
Chapter Three: Literature review	26
Social media	26
Social media influencers	28
Informal Political Conversations	32
Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology	37
Theoretical Research	37
Methodology	39
Analysing the content	44
Chapter Five: The Beauty Vloggers	46
Ella Dvornik- Croatia	47
EnjoyPhoneix- France	48
Bianca Claßen- Germany	49
Κλαίρη Δημοπούλου- Greece	50
TheMakeUpChair – Ireland	51
ClioMakeUp Videos	52
Clio Make-up – Italy	52
Nikki Tutorials- Netherlands	53
Red Lipstick Monster – Poland	54
Dulceida- Spain	55
Therese Lindgren- Sweden	56
Chapter Six: Findings	57
Offhand Comments	57
Camouflaged conversations	62
Let's talk politics	66
Chapter Seven: The EU and Conclusions	67
Why the EU should care	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Limitations and Potential for further research	72

List of Graphs

Figure 1 Scatter of political conversation style in all videos studied	44
Figure 2 Scatter of political conversation style in videos from Ella Dbvornik	47
Figure 4 Comparison of topics discussed by Maria Lopez.....	48
Figure 3 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Maria Lopez	48
Figure 5 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Bianca Claßen.....	49
Figure 6 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Claire Dimopoulou	50
Figure 7 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Sinead Cady.....	51
Figure 8 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Clio.....	52
Figure 9 Scatter of political conversation style in videos by Nikki De Jager.....	53
Figure 10 Scatter of Politcal conversation style in videos by Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu	54
Figure 11 Scatter of Political conversation style in videos by Aida Domenech.....	55
Figure 12 Scatter of Politcal conversation style in videos by Therese Lindgren.....	56

List of Tables

Table 1 Name, Channel name, nationality and subscriber count of YouTubers studied	40
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Abstract

Young people are often perceived to be uninvolved or uninterested in politics, and in some ways this perception is even more extreme when it comes to the EU; as a supranational organisation it can often be difficult to see how it directly impacts your lives, or if it does how can an individual influence it. This makes many assume there is a lack of interest by young people in what is arguably the most important political organisation in Europe. However, in a more globalised world, it is now not uncommon for citizens to get their information from more international sources or from social media figures. These social media influences can provide information as supplementary to other content as in the case of Kim Kardashian informing her followers (many for the first time) of the Armenian Genocide. Or they can intentionally act as the primary source for content as with YouTubers like Phillip De Franco who produces a daily news show in a neutral informative manner. Contra Points and Sargon of Akkad are two producers of content about current events with a specific political leaning. Contra Points from Bread-tube (an interconnected group of specifically left-leaning content creators) and Sargon of Akkad for the alt-right (later joining UKIP as a political candidate).

Influencers can be viewed as friends by their followers who may number in the millions due to the formation of parasocial relationships. Meaning the informal political conversations that they have in their videos can have the effect of a million one-on-one conversations with a friend. What are they talking about and how are they talking about politics? By looking at beauty vloggers informally talking about politics it is possible to gain an understanding of how young women and girls are learning about politics. By studying 100 videos by European YouTubers and seeing how they talk about politics, the methods and styles that they use to talk about politics, asks the question are these a much more powerful group, that are forming the political opinions of young people than anyone previously thought.

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Chapter One: Why I care about PewDiePie's politics and think you should too?

When you log into your social media platform of choice it can feel like entering a different world you are no longer you in your regular life, with regular problems, now you can be anybody. You can be anonymous and silent seeing what thousands around you say, or share your opinion with little fear of response, saying something that less than a generation ago would have been left to live in your diary for nobody else ever see. The thing is that even when you do not want your friends and family to know what you are watching and who are your embarrassing fave's, it can still affect all of us. It can shape your opinions on politics both local and international and if enough people around you are impacted, it can change your local politics too. This still exists even if you as an individual pretend that the internet and influencers do not exist, the world is changing, and it is too late to turn around.

So, what kind of reach do these influencers have? PewDiePie a Swedish Vlogger has 111 million subscribers,¹ these are not merely casual viewers who stumble across an article, but people who have actively bookmarked this content producer, in order to be notified whenever he has an opinion to share.

While changing elections may seem like the extreme result of the Influencers, whose opinions are blasting in your ears as you do the dishes, they are shaping the society you live in. In this thesis, we will be examining what EU Beauty YouTubers talk about and what political views they share with their audiences. This chapter however is focused on Why? What is an influencer and why do they matter as well as the

¹ Felix Kjellberg "PewDiePie about" YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/@PewDiePie/about>>

broader reasons this research is being done? And hopefully, all of this will convince you that you should care about PewDiePie's politics too.

Talking on the Internet

Despite the value of the content and the impact that it has, social media and social media influencers have often been misunderstood and devalued. This is partly because it is a new and ever-changing medium that has created an age gap in understanding.² The younger you are the more likely you are to understand and as the internet generation age and become settled into their careers there is a greater understanding and respect.³ Another part of it however is an international part of the social groups and influencers who do not portray themselves as serious. The content of *YouTube* (the site we are focusing on) is intentionally goofy and ridiculous, and the intentionality can often be missed when observing and studying it. The Influencer is talking about politics in a tone and manner that is non-serious, informal, and riddled with slang in a way that can make it hard for someone uninitiated to understand. This is not new and historically new genres start their lives as low brow before they can be seen as serious or important.⁴

This tonal difference can make it hard to sound serious when talking on the internet, formal language is difficult to integrate with social media. Because of tonal differences, this thesis will be more informal than typical to help communicate the

² Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

³ Christina Navarro and others "The challenge of the new gatekeepers for public relations. A comparative analysis of the role of social media influencers for European and Latin American professionals" (2020) Public Relations Review 46

⁴ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

tone that is attached to the research and data collected. As well as to match and connect to what we are talking about which is a meme-laden, joke-riddled informal zeitgeist that still matters and still has an impact on politics.

What is an Influencer?

It is hard to talk about a topic without the language to do so and when talking about influencers there are numerous terms that can be used. In this thesis, we will use the term social media influencer, shortened to influencer and SMI. Here it means an online content creator who has a big enough platform that they can influence others and receives a majority of said influence from their work on social media.⁵

Influencer is the most popular term in academic and non-academic sources, but it is not without controversy. There are a variety of individual influencers and researchers that have preferences for all the terms discussed and many others. Influencers often have negative opinions of the term and the connotations that it comes with.⁶ Others meanwhile like the term, and many children are aspiring to become influencers and adopt the label for themselves.⁷ There are a variety of other terms for influencers, some share definitions, others vary slightly, or they widen or narrow the scope and individual influencers and researchers have their own preferences. Just as with the influencer label there are debates over whether it should be simply influencer, online influencer or Social Media Influencer.⁸

⁵ Jaywant Singh and others "To trust or not to trust: the Impact of social media influencers on the reputation of corporate brands in crisis" (2020) *Journal of business research* 119 464 at 464-465

⁶ Interview with Brittney Broski, Nyannyan Cosplay, Tay Zonday viral meme stars (Anthony Padilla, Anthony Padilla YouTube channel 5 February 2020) at 1:28

⁷ Alexandra Ruiz-Gomez and others "Playing YouTube: How the Nancy YouTuber doll and app position children as aspiring YouTube influencers" (2021) *International journal of cultural studies* 25(2) 121 at 121-123

⁸ Weili Wang "Twenty-first century celebrity: fame in digital culture" (2020) *Information, communication & society* 23(1) 157 at 158

When focusing on the celebrity status of the Influencer you can see the use of the term micro-celebrity or just celebrity with no need to specify further. These were not fit for purpose in this thesis as they do not distinguish the difference between influencers and more traditional celebrities, ignoring the focus of this thesis while providing little information. While micro-celebrity ignores that they can have more fans and a larger reach than traditional celebrities while still failing to acknowledge the differences between them.

There are also labels that narrow the scope and look specifically where the influencer became famous. For example, Vloggers or YouTubers, *Instagram* models or Tic Tokers. These work well to divide Social Media Influencer's further allowing for easier identification and lets the individual take on the stereotypes of the platform. This can give a false image of the influencer as few exist on only one platform while it also ignores the flexibility of social media and how influencers can change platforms and specifically their main platform.⁹ Should Jake Paul (20.4 million)¹⁰ still be called a vine star? It's where he became famous, but the site no longer exists and he is now one of the most subscribed YouTubers on the platform.¹¹ Taking a narrow perspective thus ignores the full reach of the influencer while also preventing change, making it impractical when discussing their full reach.

When distinguishing Influencers from traditional celebrities the line is not black and white and there is a grey area that some of the influencers discussed can fall into.¹²

⁹ Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) International Journal of Strategic Communication (2019) 336 at 340

¹⁰ Jake Paul "Jake Paul About" YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/@jakepaul/about>>

¹¹ Natalie Robehmed "How YouTube Star Jake Paul Went Viral" (2 October 2017) Forbes.com <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2017/10/02/how-youtube-star-jake-paul-went-viral/?sh=71424c30150e>>

¹² Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy "'Zoella hasn't written a book, she's written a cheque:' Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities" (2020) European Journal of Cultural studies 23(1) 112 at 114

This is caused by difficulty in distinguishing the two as well as what happens when their worlds interact. Is Kim Kardashian an influencer? There are many similarities in how she posts on *Instagram* and *Twitter*, how she makes a profit from them, setting up companies that sell directly through her social media marketing.¹³ However, she became famous through a Reality TV Show. Paris Hilton has referred to herself as the world's first influencer despite becoming famous prior to the propagation of social media sites.¹⁴ Their mainstream success as well as gaining fame through traditional media outlets not controlled by themselves is different enough to prevent them from meeting the definition. But if they don't count does Tana Mo'Nique a stereotypical SMI who later got a reality TV show on MTV,¹⁵ or does Justin Bieber a mainstream pop artist who was first noticed and got his start on *YouTube*?¹⁶

The complexity and multifaceted nature of the term is caused by the fragmented nature of the system and this nuance is important to bear in mind in the rest of this thesis. We will be referring to them as Social Media Influencers even when they are on TV or interviewing with a newspaper because they are being given the label due to their role online. Because while there are many good reasons to choose the term social media influencer the main reason is that they are influencing others on social media and that is the focus of this thesis.

¹³ Madeline Berg "Kim Kardashian West is officially a billionaire" (6 April 2021) Forbes.com <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/maddieberg/2021/04/06/kim-kardashian-west-is-officially-a-billionaire/?sh=13fa179a21bb>>

¹⁴ Lindzi Scharf "Paris Hilton, Hollywood's original influencer: 'I just want people to know the real me'" (5 December 2019) Los Angeles Times <<https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2019-12-05/paris-hilton-hollywood-influencer-dj-simple-life-star-tabloids>>

¹⁵ Lauren Rearick "Tana Mongeau on Her New Reality Show and "Negativity" Around Her Engagement to Jake Paul" (15 July 2019) Teen Vogue <<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/tana-mongeau-new-reality-show-negativity-engagement-jake-paul>>

¹⁶ CNN "Justin Bieber: From YouTube to global superstar" (3 September 2019) <<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/26/entertainment/gallery/justin-bieber/index.html>>

Influencers Influencing: The Impact of the Influencer on Youth and the World

Influencers are having an increased impact on society, which gives only a handful of individuals significant power. While we should not forget that successful and profitable SMIs are typically represented by management corporations worth millions, their value comes from only a handful of face-fronting people. This is a significant change from previous generations where there were more barriers between famous individuals and their audiences.¹⁷ There are also other factors which increase the influence and power that SMIs have. These are a large and intricate web of interconnected and changeable factors but some that are relevant to my research and are discussed in this part are parasocial relationships, internet echo chambers and the control and type of audience.

Parasocial relationships are the one-sided relationships between a celebrity and a fan; one party is deeply involved while the other most likely does not know they exist.¹⁸ This leaves the fan creating an intimate and deep emotional connection caused by viewing the content of that celebrity over a long period of time and can have effects similar to feeling like being friends.¹⁹ These similarities are both in the emotional closeness but also the impact of the relationship on political views.²⁰ While these relationships exist both with traditional celebrities and with social media influencers, social media can increase their likelihood and intensity.²¹

¹⁷ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

¹⁸ Eugene Cheng-xi Aw, Stephanie Hui-wen Chuah "Stop the unattainable Ideal for an ordinary me! Fostering parasocial relations: the role of self discrepancy"(2021) *Journal of Business Research* 132 146 at 147

¹⁹ Rodney Duffet "The YouTube Marketing Communication Effect on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Attitudes among Generation Z Consumers" (2020) 12(12) *Sustainability* 1 at 19

²⁰ Eugene Cheng-xi Aw, Stephanie Hui-wen Chuah "Stop the unattainable Ideal for an ordinary me! Fostering parasocial relations: the role of self discrepancy"(2021) *Journal of Business Research* 132 146 at 147

²¹ Erin Meyers "Can you handle my truth: Authenticity and the celebrity star image" (2009) *The journal of popular culture* 42(5) 890 at 895

The increased connection on social media can maximise the relationship between the fan and the celebrity due to the decrease in barriers. Unlike with a traditional celebrity, the fan is more likely to get a response from their idol and the style of content from the SMI is often designed to enhance the relationship.²² Famous vlogger Zoella tries to appear as if there is no distance between her and her fans.²³ Using informal and personal language so that they appear as if she is talking to friends and equals creating a level of perceived authenticity.²⁴ The closer the Parasocial relationship is, the more likely the audience is to identify with and trust the influencer. The more the audience identifies with the Influencer the more intimate the relationship and the greater the influence.²⁵ The more they are used to receiving advice from the influencer the more their opinions are shaped by them.

The content that an influencer provides is often viewed in a bubble or echo chamber meaning that they lack any counter-narratives due to the social media sites' algorithms. Social Media sites aim to give you more of what you want to see, and most people don't want to see information that contradicts their beliefs.²⁶ So the algorithm provides you more videos like you just watched and what others who

²² Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) International Journal of Strategic Communication (2019) 336 at 337-340

²³ Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy "'Zoella hasn't written a book, she's written a cheque:' Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities" (2020) European Journal of Cultural studies 23(1) 112 at 114

²⁴ Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy "'Zoella hasn't written a book, she's written a cheque:' Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities" (2020) European Journal of Cultural studies 23(1) 112 at 115

²⁵ Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) International Journal of Strategic Communication (2019) 336 at 337-338

²⁶ Jessica Keating, Leaf Van Boven, Charles M Judd "Partisan underestimation of the polarizing influence of group discussion" (2016) Journal of experimental social psychology 65 52

watched it wanted to see and thus clicked on.²⁷ This can have a radicalising effect on an individual, as they are shown videos that are just slightly more extreme than they have previously watched.²⁸ This can also apply when the audience member was not specifically looking for political opinions. The influencer they were watching just leans in a political direction or occasionally mentions it, this can lead to a political view being adopted without conscious thought or knowledge as it slowly began to appear until it seemed to be the norm.²⁹

When a political opinion has been adopted, it is hard to change, as that means admitting that you were wrong. However, even if you are open to change and are willing to research it yourself and not just listen to those you trust, the system is set up to make it hard for you to learn. The algorithm will continue to show you what it thinks you want to see and so even as you search for information similar videos will be provided.³⁰ If you use a clean account or a different site, you may be in the same situation as before as while the algorithm can't stop you, your time in the bubble has a lasting impact.³¹ The language and phrases that you are researching are often unique to the bubble you were in. Thus, the research you are being shown was written by and for people with your opinions and can be biased and designed for this

²⁷ Jessica Keating, Leaf Van Boven, Charles M Judd "Partisan underestimation of the polarizing influence of group discussion" (2016) *Journal of experimental social psychology* 65 52

²⁸ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online" (15 may 2017)

<https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 20

²⁹ Mathilda Åkerlund "Dog whistling far-right code words: the case of 'culture enricher' on the Swedish web" (2020) *Information communication and society*

³⁰ Jessica Keating, Leaf Van Boven, Charles M Judd "Partisan underestimation of the polarizing influence of group discussion" (2016) *Journal of experimental social psychology* 65 52

³¹ Harris, L. and Harrigan, P. Social Media in Politics: The Ultimate Voter Engagement Tool or Simply an Echo Chamber?. *Journal of Political Marketing*. 2015; 14(3):251-283.

purpose.³² This allows you to think that you are well-researched and have looked at all sides despite having never left the echo chamber that was aimed at you.

While features like Parasocial relationships and online echo chambers have an impact on the audiences and their absorption and interpretation of information, there is also an impact on the influencer. Influencers have more control over the content as they are the ones with the platform and audience rather than being brought in by someone with a platform causing a more dramatic shift.³³

The influencer has control of the message and the audience without having to rely on an editor or director to reach them. ³⁴Audiences will follow an influencer to different channels and platforms and while those platforms do have power the influencer does too. This is why platforms like *Twitch*, *YouTube*, and *Facebook* gaming have spent millions for influencers to stay on or move to their platforms.³⁵ Audience loyalty now is far greater than it was pre-internet due in part to the parasocial relationship and ease of access.

This can be particularly clear when dealing with the corporations set up by the influencers or that they work with to organise the business side of the industry.³⁶ The influencers have the platform and the fame, thus they have more power in negotiations than previous generations' celebrities.³⁷ As change and perceptions of

³²Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online" (15 may 2017) <https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 20

³³ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

³⁴ Piet Verhoeven and others "How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media" (2011) Public relations review 38 162 at 164

³⁵ Ash Parrish "Twitch star Myth signs exclusive deal with YouTube" The Verge (online, ed, 12 July 2022)

³⁶ Steffi De Jans and others "#sponsored how the recognition of sponsoring on Instagram posts affect adolescents' brand evaluations through source evaluations" (2020) Computers in Human Behavior 109 at 113

³⁷ Piet Verhoeven and others "How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media" (2011) Public relations review 38 162 at 164

inauthenticity lower the SMI's value and chances that the audience will buy products from them.³⁸ This means that a company coming in and changing aspects of the content to make it more advertiser or family-friendly can end up devaluing the influencer's brand.³⁹ If the SMI has been claiming they love diet coke for two years and now have a sponsorship with Pepsi people are less likely to buy Pepsi and will stop watching the influencer's content. This can similarly apply to politics; when Casey Nightstat a vlogger encouraged people to vote for Hilary Clinton it came out that he recently met Bill Clinton. Some in his audience wanted assurance that he hadn't been paid before considering his opinion.⁴⁰ Authenticity and relatability have far more cache with Social Media Influencers than with traditional celebrities who often encourage a distance between themselves and the audience to make them better actors.⁴¹

This changes the reach and power of the influencer over corporations and CEOs, However, it does not mean that money is not involved, and that corruption does not exist; just that it is different than in the pre-internet entertainment economy.⁴² An aspect of this comes from a lack of gatekeeping as it is a common belief that anyone with a phone can become an internet phenomenon. While this is technically true it ignores biases in the system and the audience.⁴³ It can be quite concerning that the

³⁸ Du yuon Kim Hye-young kim "Influencer advertising on social media: the multiple inference model on influencer-product congruence and sponsoring disclosure" (2021) *Journal of Business research* 405 at 406

³⁹ Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (2019) 336 at 339

⁴⁰ Cian Varley "Did Casey Neistat just commit the ultimate YouTube sin?" (6 December 2017) BBC Three <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/24f75660-01bb-45b6-8e67-98115115bc57>>

⁴¹ Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (2019) 336 at 340

⁴² W Mangold David Faulds "Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix" (2009) *Business Horizons* 52(4) 357.

⁴³ Eugene Cheng-xi Aw, Stephanie Hui-wen Chuah "Stop the unattainable Ideal for an ordinary me! Fostering parasocial relations: the role of self discrepancy"(2021) *Journal of Business Research* 132 146 at 147

more traditionally attractive you are and your access to money and resources the better chance that you have.⁴⁴ While anyone can post a video not everyone's video will be seen by millions if anyone at all.⁴⁵ This makes it interesting to research as there are more voices being heard and while they are likely to be privileged, they are less likely to have been told what to say by the head warner bros in a way that a traditional movie star has.

These audiences are mainly made up of young people, which leads to their own differences in impact. Young people are more likely to participate in online entertainment and be affected and influenced by SMI's.⁴⁶ This means that these first views that they are being exposed to are without context or with a context which is harder to find.⁴⁷ Young people are more vulnerable to this due to their lack of experience with the world.⁴⁸ These become their earliest political opinions adopted from celebrities rather than their family, friends, or teachers. They will also have more of an impact over time as the generation becomes voters and have a bigger impact on elections and political outcomes.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Piet Verhoeven and others "How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media" (2011) Public relations review 38 162 at 164

⁴⁵ Piet Verhoeven and others "How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media" (2011) Public relations review 38 162 at 164

⁴⁶ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁴⁷ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online" (15 may 2017) <https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 20

⁴⁸ Dis Steffi De Jans Liselo Hudder "Disclosure if Vlog Advertising targeted to Children" (2020) Journal of Interactive Marketing 52 1

⁴⁹ Rob Griffin Willam Frey Ruy Texeira "America's Electoral Future" (19 October 2020) Center of American Progress <<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/americas-electoral-future-3/>>

Why my research matters

The next part of this chapter is about why this topic was chosen, how it differs, and the difficulties involved in researching this topic; looking at the impact social media has, how it is misunderstood, and how it differs from previous systems. These misunderstandings and differences can make it hard to study; social media is ever-changing but that does not diminish the value of the research. Hopefully helping the current understanding and future ability to study the changes that have occurred.

Social media is full of information and the internet has allowed the world to be at our fingertips, there is a reason people initially named it the information superhighway. Still, decades later, it is a misunderstood tool with massive implications. While the focus of most research online is about the terrifying impact of misinformation it isn't all bad. There is accurate information, and it is accessible in a way that it has never been before.⁵⁰ You can watch accurate, Informative and incredibly niche content that wasn't accessible to experts in the 20th century. For example, a detailed analysis of the costuming in a muppet Christmas carol' provided by an expert. Citing sources academic and first-hand accounts from the Victorian era on everything from button placement to newspaper columns on trousers in 1841.⁵¹ This means that the layperson with a passing interest or that the algorithm thinks might enjoy the topic has better access and more information than the costuming department did when researching it. I can gain this knowledge just for fun. There are video essayists that

⁵⁰ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁵¹ Nicole Rudolph "The Victorian War on Pants: Historically Accurate Gonzo Muppets Christmas Carol Cosplay" You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yuXYy02oXQ&t=7s&ab_channel=NicoleRudolph>

cite academic articles and internationally recognised experts with *YouTube* channels.⁵² Previous generations could not do this and might not know how.⁵³

There is also misinformation that people can share at great speed without even meaning to, letting millions absorb and believe it. This can be with big things like anti-vax or white supremacy issues but also with minor things that can change targeted aspects of a person's views as the environments they are in radicalises.⁵⁴ It could be that the EU wants to ban prawn cocktail crisps, but this time without anyone inside the EU knowing and being able to dispute it.⁵⁵

Despite the value of the content and the impact that it has, social media and social media influencers have often been misunderstood and devalued. Its underestimation has happened since its beginning from the early days of the internet in the 1990s through to today. Researchers, academics and professionals have said that social media is underestimated, but that we hope to catch up to it soon.⁵⁶ The longevity of that claim perhaps proves the incorrect assumption that we will catch up and thus that is not the aim or suggestion of this thesis. Instead, it is to record a snapshot of time and see what the impact is today. This changing nature has led to changes in research and methodology with the current assumption being that a wide variety of

⁵² Broey Deshanel "The systematic abuse of celebrities" You tube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPxktIHjKEU&t=2006s&ab_channel=BroeyDeschanel>

⁵³ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁵⁴ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online" (15 may 2017)
<https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 18

⁵⁵ Boris Johnson "Im no longer Nasty, but please stop lying about Nice" (17 October 2002) The Telegraph
<<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3582944/Im-no-longer-Nasty-but-please-stop-lying-about-Nice.html>>

⁵⁶ Pöyry Essi and others "Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication" (2019) 13(4) International Journal of Strategic Communication (2019) 336 at 337-338

research methodologies and fields need to be used to gain a fuller understanding.⁵⁷

The understanding of social media is limited by how quickly and dramatically it changed which leads to it being understood more by younger people.⁵⁸ It can be shocking for people to understand just how big of a reach and how much money can be made, which can lead to dismissal and lack of attempts to understand.⁵⁹ Part of this comes from the content of *YouTube*, it is intentionally goofy and ridiculous, and the intentionality can often be ignored in reporting, like genre changes before it, the new kid on the block starts its life as low brow.⁶⁰

This misunderstanding can then have an implication for ethics, morals and laws that impact them. As stated above there is a big influence on people's lives as unlike in corporate media it's harder to regulate and harder to enforce.⁶¹ Both with advertising and the graphicness and topics covered of some content, but for this purpose it also lacks journalistic ethics.⁶² This is a problem both in those who consider themselves citizen journalists and those whose content is similar to gossiping with friends; but to a wide audience it is measured equally and they can take it literally.⁶³ The spreading of conspiracy theories is a concern to *YouTube* and similar corporations.⁶⁴ As in a

⁵⁷ Christina Navarro and others "The challenge of the new gatekeepers for public relations. A comparative analysis of the role of social media influencers for European and Latin American professionals" (2020) Public Relations Review 46

⁵⁸ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁵⁹ Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy "'Zoella hasn't written a book, she's written a cheque:' Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities" (2020) European Journal of Cultural studies 23(1) 112 at 114k

⁶⁰ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁶¹ Christina Navarro and others "The challenge of the new gatekeepers for public relations. A comparative analysis of the role of social media influencers for European and Latin American professionals" (2020) Public Relations Review 46

⁶² Aday Sean "Chasing the Bad News: An Analysis of 2005 Iraq and Afghanistan War Coverage on NBC and Fox News Channel" (2010) Journal of Communication 2010 60(1) 144

⁶³ José Alberto García-Avilés "Online Newsrooms as Communities of Practice: Exploring Digital Journalists' Applied Ethics" (2014) Journal of Mass Media Ethics 36(3) 657

⁶⁴ Neal Mohan "Perspective: tackling Misinformation on you Tube" (25 August 2021) You tube blog <https://blog.youtube/inside-youtube/tackling-misinfo/>

matter of minutes millions can have watched a video and act accordingly. This could be believing the earth is flat or assembling a hate mob despite the influencer actively telling them not to.⁶⁵ This causes many journalists concerns about the impact on them and their ability to investigate issues.⁶⁶ While the lack of a gatekeeper allows more narratives to get through, it does not guarantee their validity or lack of.

It is not that people have changed but that the system has, for the first time we have individuals with access to everything and they can move into leaderless movements with people they have never met before.⁶⁷ This speed and aspect has created a generational divide that is more pronounced than previously due to technology and accessibility.⁶⁸ As well as how language and tone has been created inside of these bubbles and the internet as a whole; this can make it difficult for outsiders to be able to understand what is being discussed.⁶⁹

While I have mentioned that youth are more likely to watch *YouTube* and that there is a generational divide it is important to note that people of any age can fall victim. People have reported their parents and grandparents being “Stolen” by Qanon an internet conspiracy theory based around Donald Trump.⁷⁰ It creates an overwhelming and sudden shift in the values and opinions of those that believe in it,

⁶⁵ Asheley R. Landrum Alex Olshansky Othello Richards “Differential susceptibility to misleading flat earth arguments on youtube” (2019) *Media Psychology* 24(1)

⁶⁶ Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy “‘Zoella hasn’t written a book, she’s written a cheque:’ Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities” (2020) *European Journal of Cultural studies* 23(1) 112 at 114

⁶⁷ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁶⁸ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁶⁹ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online” (15 may 2017) <https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 20

⁷⁰ Ashitha Nagesh “The moment QAnon took the person I love most” (17 September 2021) BBC News <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57369349>>

often having been “Indoctrinated” on *YouTube*.⁷¹ Especially when you consider that some of these people are willing to kill or be killed over the beliefs that they have adopted.⁷² These groups however do tend to have different age groups with different languages and terms to skirt around the language issues.⁷³

Influencers like PewDiePie may seem like they are a world away from you, and thus don’t affect you. It can feel like if you don’t watch them then they are irrelevant to your life but because of the size of their audiences and the influence they hold over them they are helping to sculpt the world around them even if they don’t intend to. They influence the political views of others in a way that previous generations’ celebrities have not had, and they do so without the checks and balances that we are used to. They have limited the power of industries like Hollywood but also of the BBC as well as those of our political institutions. So despite the intentional ridiculousness and cloak of disinterest, research into influencers is important.

⁷¹ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online” (15 may 2017) <https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline-1.pdf> at 20

⁷² Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

⁷³ Angela Nagle *Kill All Normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right* (Zero Books, Croydon, 2017)

Chapter Two: The Politics of Beauty

The previous chapter was about the internet and social media influencers and why they should be studied and the value that has. This chapter is about the key difference in this thesis compared to the majority of research on the topic. This thesis concentrates on femininity rather than focusing on the most widely viewed vloggers such as PewDiePie or any of the other Male youtubers. This thesis is about Beauty Vloggers; women whose content is focused on feminine things and aimed at other women. The focus on the more female side of your tube will be explained in this chapter as to why we have focused on the feminine side of *YouTube* and specifically beauty Vloggers.

The Female Focus: Femininity

Female-orientated media often gets ignored and seen as vapid or irrelevant, because it does not fit into traditional power structures.⁷⁴ It does not aim to interest men and thus its value is dismissed; women can also not take it seriously as they enjoy it, as it does not have the trappings of respectability that they have been taught to look for. When content doesn't have that veneer of respectability the audience is less likely to consider its deeper impact and how it influences them politically because there is an assumption that it does not.

The respectability of subject matter is tied to gender and thus we cannot accurately look at content aimed at women that lacks respect without considering it. You can see this connection when change occurs in a medium or career, the more respected it becomes, the more male it becomes, and the more male it becomes, the more

⁷⁴ Dannielle Blumenthal *Women and Soap Opera: Cultural Femenist Perspective* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Santa Barbra, 1997) at 87 to 89.

respected it becomes.⁷⁵ This can be seen in software engineering or coding; in the 50s it was deemed a women's job and thus low-skilled and monotonous with the real skill and importance being in who is ordering the code.⁷⁶ When the job became more important and central to the modern world, women were pushed out because this was now a difficult well-paid job that should be done by men. The thinking was that it is no longer easier for women to code because of genetics as was previously thought, but now it's impossible for women to do it because math's is hard.⁷⁷

When comparing the attention that female influencers get to male influencers, we see that men fit better into traditional narratives and are reported on more widely. Male influencers dominate the top ten lists of influencers, and their political discussions are analysed in more detail because they are familiar. They use similar talking points to the mainstream media and when they are focused on those, however when the mainstream media talk about internet influencers (arguably their competition) it tends to highlight white supremacy and violence. When women are discussed in these conversations it tends to be of women in the boy's club behaving similarly to their male counterparts but women in more traditional roles are ignored.⁷⁸

As women have been viewed as less involved in politics there is also less of an association between their actions of it. This view of women, the language differences between gendered conversations and the more subtle methods of talking about politics it is easier to go under the radar. This lack of focus and acknowledgement

⁷⁵ Dannielle Blumenthal *Women and Soap Opera: Cultural Femenist Perspective* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Santa Barbra, 1997) at 87 to 89.

⁷⁶ Dannielle Blumenthal *Women and Soap Opera: Cultural Femenist Perspective* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Santa Barbra, 1997) at 87 to 89.

⁷⁷ Dannielle Blumenthal *Women and Soap Opera: Cultural Femenist Perspective* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Santa Barbra, 1997) at 87 to 89.

⁷⁸ Linda Lindsey *Gender Roles: A sociological Perspective* (5th Ed, Pearson, Boston) at 386.

may mean that some of women's political conversations can skirt around censorship as the people creating the infrastructure are more likely to be men and thus do not see the same ques.

Conversations that focus on women online and female influencers concentrate on the implications of traditionally feminine things. Discussions of female influencers tend to be about beauty standards and body dysmorphia which are serious and important topics, but they are discussed as if they only affect young girls and no one else.⁷⁹ There isn't a focus on women influencing politics overall, even if they do, and their political impact does not vanish because it is bathed in pastel pinks and soft voices.

Women are political and talk about political issues online in their own circles similar to how they talk about it in real life. Influencers that are women with mainly girls as their audience influence their political opinions and it isn't always true or positive.⁸⁰ Mrs. Midwest and the trad wife movement, encourage young girls to marry young and ignore higher education; with some added hints of white supremacy.^{81 82} There are women involved in all online movements and their role should not be dismissed because of their femininity.

Qanon a movement that encouraged the January 6th insurrection in the USA has distinct differences between the male and female-led groups. Despite the differences in narratives, they both participated in the insurrection and have the same aims and

⁷⁹ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

⁸⁰ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

⁸¹ Catlin Huber "How to become a homemaker" You Tube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMYeVvx3viY&ab_channel=MrsMidwest>

⁸² Ask Hadley "Tradwives: the new trend for submissive women has a dark heart and history" (27 January 2020) The Guardian <<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2020/jan/27/tradwives-new-trend-submissive-women-dark-heart-history>>

beliefs, instead, the difference is style and focus.⁸³ The Qanon movement's female wing is often called pastel Qanon and it targeted women using female influencers. Its focus was on the abuse of children and the need to save and protect them. Unlike the male-centric routes focus on the need to protect the nation (and children) through force.⁸⁴

The Beauty Vloggers content will always have a layer of politics because life is political but also become beauty and femininity is. The beauty industry is worth billions and profits of unattainable beauty standards and during the pandemic (the time that we studied) women's lessening use of Make-up products threatened the industry.⁸⁵ Beauty standards are not set in stone and instead they change over time to reflect society and the political zeitgeist. Racism and white supremacy are reflected in beauty standards⁸⁶ and that is something that the Beauty Vloggers either acknowledge or don't but either way they are a part of that system. There is a reason that the most common way that the beauty vloggers mentioned racism was to discuss the availability of make-up shades, it's the part that affects them.

Influencers like beauty vloggers can have an impact on politics, the same as gamers, just because they focus on the female and don't target men with their opinions, they still have sway. Women have a role in politics and where they are developing and being introduced to political ideas matters. The potential danger of misinformation is not lessened because it's combined with a tutorial on how to get the best Smokey

⁸³ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

⁸⁴ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

⁸⁵ Coco Marrett "How Covid-19 Changed The Beauty Industry" *Tatler* (Hong Kong Online ed, 13th November 2020)

<https://www.tatlerasia.com/style/beauty/hk-how-covid-19-changed-beauty-industry>

⁸⁶ Paul Taylor "Malcolm's Conk and Danto's Colors; or Four Logical Petitions Concerning Race Beauty, and Aesthetics" in Peg Brand *Beauty Matters* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2000) 57

eye. Additionally, the benefit of an enlightened view is not lessened because it is combined with a tutorial on shaping the perfect eyebrow.

Chapter Three: Literature review

We discussed why social media Influencers are a relevant and an important topic to study, and how this thesis will differ from other studies in the focus on female influencers. This chapter looks at the research that is already out there on social media influencers and political discussions, to set the groundwork for the research and analysis of this thesis, looking at how Beauty Vloggers talk about Politics. So firstly, we must look at the research on social media and how to research the research, then investigate how political conversations happen and why they matter.

Social media

In the 21st century, social media has fundamentally altered the way that we communicate and gain knowledge. It is, however, hard to define what social media is; in part due to its novelty and how much it has changed in a short period of time -- from the blogosphere to *Twitter* it has changed quickly and dramatically. However, the definition used here is, “an online platform that is in an integrated network that both audience and creators overlap on.”⁸⁷ Within this definition people are able to communicate with other users around the world and to set up communities not affected by physical boundaries.⁸⁸ The main sites considered are *YouTube*, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram*, however, there are others and it should be noted that while *Facebook* and *Instagram* are separate sites they are both owned by Meta.

⁸⁷ Richard Hanna, Andrew Rohm, Victoria Crittenden, “We’re all connected: the power of Social media ecosystem” (2011) 54 *Business Horizons* 265

⁸⁸ Eric Ngai, Spencer Tao, Karen Moon “Social Media research: Theories, constructs, and conceptual frameworks” (2012) 35 *International Journal of Information Management* 33 at

While social media is an online internet phenomenon it does not mean that it is irrelevant to offline life. It is not a separate sphere in which youths' lives take place, instead, it is an aspect of life that impacts the real world.⁸⁹ This has led to corporations going online to meet the people where they live but is not always taken seriously.⁹⁰ In 2012 PR professionals in Europe were seeing social media as a giant in the room that would soon overtake traditional journalism as the industry's pre-eminent source.⁹¹ However, an issue they were having was getting the elite to take it seriously, an ongoing issue within the EU which as an organisation focuses on EParticipation rather than social media, despite young people's clear preference for the latter.⁹²

One way of viewing social media is as a modernisation of traditional media. While this analogy is useful for understanding its reach, it is also inaccurate as it misses some aspects of social media. It fails to point out that social media is a two-way street as any user can share and produce content.⁹³ These users change the narrative by taking it out of the hands of the traditional gatekeepers, allowing the

⁸⁹ Lori McCay-Peet, Anabel Quan-Haase "What is social Media and what questions Can social Media research help us Answer?" In Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (1st edition, Sage publications Limited, 2017) 13

⁹⁰ Richard Hanna, Andrew Rohm, Victoria Crittenden, "We're all connected: the power of Social media ecosystem" (2011) 54 *Business Horizons* 265

⁹¹ Pier Verhoeven, Ralph Tench, Ansgar Zerfass, Angles Moreno, Verčič Dejan "How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media" (2012) 38 *Public Relations Review* 162

⁹² Dimitra Karantzeni, and Dimitris Gouscos, "eParticipation in the EU: Re-focusing on social media and young citizens for reinforcing European identity" (2013) 7 *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*

⁹³ Eric Ngai, Spencer Tao, Karen Moon "Social Media research: Theories, constructs, and conceptual frameworks" (2012) 35 *International Journal of Information Management* 33 at

sites to be controlled by the users. And as such the content creators and users of the platform create the culture and the norms of the site.⁹⁴

There is also an intricate linguistic phenomenon on these sites that can differ from each other.⁹⁵ This can be controlled by the limitations of the platform, for example, *Twitter* has a character limit, and others are influenced by the audience feedback.

This anomaly means that the same phrases can have different meanings in different places and some terms can be unique to a community. This differs from some traditional linguistic features as this is not geographical and does not always connect directly to the site as there is integration and communication between sites.⁹⁶

Social media influencers

From Social media and the ability to “Broadcast yourself” (*YouTubes* original slogan); influencers have been born, a new generation of celebrities without gatekeepers.⁹⁷ A social media influencer is someone who took the social media platforms and gained an audience and following. The audience is of primary importance, with the popularity making them a social media influencer acquiring a large number of followers.⁹⁸ Their success is in the metrics, what numbers are they pulling in, what

⁹⁴ Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase “Introduction to the Handbook of Social Media Research Methods: Goals, Challenges and Innovations” In Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (1st edition, Sage publications Limited, 2017) 1

⁹⁵ William Housley, Bella Dicks, Karen Henwood, Robin Smith “Qualitative methods and data in digital societies” (2017) 17 *Qualitative Research* 607

⁹⁶ Richard Hanna, Andrew Rohm, Victoria Crittenden, “We’re all connected: the power of Social media ecosystem” (2011) 54 *Business Horizons* 265

⁹⁷ Elmira Djafarova Elmira, Oxana Trofimenko “‘Instafamous’ – credibility and self-presentation of micro-celebrities on social media” (2019) 22 *Information, Communication & Society* 1432

⁹⁸ Abaid Ullah Zafar, Jiangnam Qui, Ying Li, Jungguo Wang, Mohsin Shazad “The Impact of Social media Celebrities posts and contextual interaction on impulse buying in social commerce” (2021) 115 *Computers in Human Behaviour*

are their views, subscribers, likes and comments count, all of which affects their value and affects the algorithm.⁹⁹

So, what exactly is involved with the job, how does one get the role and what does it mean and do? An important aspect to understand is that there is an incredibly low barrier to entry to most social media sites. It typically requires a steady internet connection and for many nothing more than a phone. However, quality is important and that often comes from more expensive equipment. For instance photo sharing sites, which most platforms will have at least some connection to, the quality of the images is the most important factor in following an influencer.¹⁰⁰ Who agree that the quality of their posts is essential to gaining a following.¹⁰¹ There is an element of interaction and doing what is needed to create a following and keep it. The role of social media influencers is essentially that of a storyteller, a role that has existed throughout human history and in today's age, this role takes the form of selling themselves. They have to sculpt and create a narrative that will give them fame.¹⁰² The reality is like most things in life privilege impacts success and the appearance of wealth and conformation to beauty standards improve the likelihood of success.

Gaining success typically involves creating an identity that the audience can connect to, often leading to the creation of a parasocial relationship. Parasocial relationships are the one-sided relationships between a celebrity and a fan. This leaves the fan

⁹⁹ Mingyi Hou "Social Media celebrity and the institutionalization of YouTube" (2018) 25 *Convergence* 534

¹⁰⁰ Elmira Djafarova Elmira, Oxana Trofimenko "'Instafamous' – credibility and self-presentation of micro-celebrities on social media" (2019) 22 *Information, Communication & Society* 1432

¹⁰¹ Shu-Ming Wang, Judy Chuan-Chuan Lin, "The effect of social influence on bloggers' usage intention" (2011) 35 *Online information review* 50

¹⁰² Serhat Kaymas, Orhun Yakin "Bodies in alliance: rethinking cultural and economic logics of social media celebrity constitution in Turkey's new media ecosystem" (2019)12 *Celebrity Studies* 20

creating intimate and deep emotions caused by viewing the content of that celebrity over a long period of time.¹⁰³ The way this is changed on social media is the connection to the fans where the fan might get a response. Famous vlogger Zoella and many others try to appear as if there is no distance between her and her fans.¹⁰⁴ Using informal and personal methods so that they appear as if she is talking to friends and equals which gives a level of authenticity.¹⁰⁵ The closer the parasocial relationship the more likely they are to identify with and trust. The way that the audience identifies with and the more comfortable they feel in a community the greater the influence and the more used to receiving advice from them they become.¹⁰⁶

While for their audience the role of the social media influencer is to entertain and to engage with them in a parasocial relationship. This relationship assists the creator to increase their influence and their ability to sell products or services. The use of celebrities to advertise a product is not new. It has been used since the 1920s but with social media, there are more micro-celebrities than ever before. That influence is great but specific to an individual arena,¹⁰⁷ Micro-celebrities have also been used for decades, (some consider social media influencers to be Micro-celebrities) Disney recognised and used such fans as early as the 1930s to promote snow white and the

¹⁰³ Rodney Duffet “The YouTube Marketing Communication Effect on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Attitudes among Generation Z Consumers” (2020)12 Sustainability 5075

¹⁰⁴ Mingyi Hou “Social Media celebrity and the institutionalization of YouTube” (2019) 25 Convergence 534

¹⁰⁵ Mingyi Hou “Social Media celebrity and the institutionalization of YouTube” (2019) 25 Convergence 534

¹⁰⁶ Dholakiach U, Bagozzi R, Pearo L “A social influence model of consumer participation in network- and small-group-based virtual communities”(2004) 21 International Journal of Research in Marketing 241

¹⁰⁷ Olympia Kiriakou “Big name Fandom and the (inevitable) failure of Disflix” (2019) 30 Organisation for Transformative Works

seven dwarfs and still has an influencer program to advertise a wide variety of products.¹⁰⁸ The difference between these Micro-Celebrities and Influencers is their reach and number of them, they are treated similarly to the fan-to-fan marketing of the past. The Internet is a consumer space and social media influencers are third-party endorsers, a genre that was not as available before, they can shape the opinion of the audience in positive and negative ways.¹⁰⁹ With many making money throughout the world through advertising. Comparing historic advertising methods and micro-celebrities can be useful in researching this modern field.¹¹⁰

Authenticity is an important aspect of trustworthiness on social media, but it is not without work and pitfalls. Failure to communicate or the appearance that outsiders have come in and are taking over can cause a backlash.¹¹¹ There is trust and credibility when an audience sees someone as authentic, that they believe that they are the same person when no one is watching.¹¹² This belief of them being authentic and trustworthy then passes on to the information that they share with the audience with a perception that what they are saying is true and the information they are

¹⁰⁸ Olympia Kiriakou “Big name Fandom and the (inevitable) failure of Disflix” (2019) 30 Organisation for Transformative Works

¹⁰⁹ Karen Freberg, Kristin Graham, Karen McGaughey, Lara Freberg “Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality” (2011)37 Public Relations review 90

¹¹⁰ Abaid Ullah Zafar, Jiangnam Qui, Ying Li, Jungguo Wang, Mohsin Shazad “The Impact of Social media Celebrities posts and contextual interaction on impulse buying in social commerce” (2021) 115 Computers in Human Behaviour

¹¹¹ Olympia Kiriakou “Big name Fandom and the (inevitable) failure of Disflix” (2019) 30 Organisation for Transformative Works

¹¹² Essi Pöyry, Matilde Pelkonen, Emma Naumanen & Salla-Maaria Laaksonen “A Call for Authenticity: Audience Responses to Social Media Influencer Endorsements in Strategic Communication” (2019)13 International Journal of Strategic Communication 336

sharing is credible without the fan needing to do further research.¹¹³ Allowing the influencer to be seen as honest even if they also have an agenda.¹¹⁴

The closer the parasocial relationship, the more likely the audience is to trust the opinion of the influencer. It stops mattering if they have credentials in the field or the opinions of their intelligence, the opinion is trusted and given the same credence as that of a friend.¹¹⁵ This does not take away from demographic factors such as age and region which affect audience trust. Citizens of the UAE tend to be trusting of social media influencers,¹¹⁶ while Russian citizens are not.¹¹⁷ All of this impacts the ability and money-making potential of the influencer as well as their impact on politics.

Informal Political Conversations

Political views are not formed in a vacuum, instead they are sculpted by the world around us, affected by the events we see and the people we listen to. The theories surrounding informal political conversations see those we speak to as having an important impact on those views.¹¹⁸ These conversations vary greatly from one on

¹¹³ Min Xiao, Rang Wang & Sylvia Chan-Olmsted "Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model" (2018) 15 Journal of Media Business Studies 188

¹¹⁴ Brian Loader, Ariadne Vromen, Michael Xenos, "Performing for the young networked citizen? Celebrity politics, social networking and the political engagement of young people" (2015)38 Media, Culture & Society 400

¹¹⁵ Sanna Inthorn, John Street "Simon Cowell for prime minister'? Young citizens' attitudes towards celebrity politics"(2011)33 Media, Culture & Society 479

¹¹⁶ Muhamad Ali Sham, Viola Gjylbegaj, Maryam Balfagieh "The Effects of Using Social Media Celebrities For Product Endorsements" (2017)10 International Journal of Arts & Sciences 339

¹¹⁷ Elmira Djafarova Elmira, Oxana Trofimenko "'Instafamous' – credibility and self-presentation of micro-celebrities on social media" (2019) 22 Information, Communication & Society 1432

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Stromer-Galley "Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users' Perspectives" (2003) 8 Journal of computer-mediated communication

one dialogues between close friends to screaming matches across a picket line, yet these are both informal political conversations which impact the creation of an individual's views.¹¹⁹ This can also exist in parasocial relationships, meaning that the influencers studied in this thesis have similar sway to those seen in friends and family members.

The impact of Informal Political Conversations is varied and possesses a range of conviction, having both an effect on the individual and a wider societal effect.. There is an agenda-setting impact like the conversations that we have privately and informally, these effect the public conversation.¹²⁰ This leads to politicians having to talk about issues that the public is talking about and thus can become the issues that matter. This is why Informal political conversations can sometimes be called the foundation of Democracy.¹²¹ Without these conversations the public lose their agenda-setting role and a key method of working out who to vote for.¹²²

Studying Informal Political conversations is difficult due to there variety, and some can be easy to forget despite their lasting impact.¹²³ These conversations might be forgotten or not labelled as such as they do not feel like a political conversation if it is

¹¹⁹ Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck, Christiane Gill "From the Livingroom to the meeting hall? Citizens' Political talk in the deliberative system" (2020) 37 Political Communication 832

¹²⁰ William Everland, Alyssa Morey, Myiah Hutchers "beyond deliberation: New Directions for the study of informal political conversations from a communication perspective" (2011) 61 Journal of Communication 1082

¹²¹ Steven Schneider "Creating a democratic public Sphere through political discussion: A case study of abortion conversations on the Interenet" 1996 14 Social Science Computer review 373

¹²² Jennifer Stromer-Gallery "Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users' Perspectives" (2003) 8 Journal of computer-mediated communication

¹²³ William Everland, Alyssa Morey, Myiah Hutchers "beyond deliberation: New Directions for the study of informal political conversations from a communication perspective" (2011) 61 Journal of Communication 1082

not explicitly labelled as such.¹²⁴ When you agree with your conversation partners it can seem non-political even as it reinforces opinions and have a lasting impact.¹²⁵ This can be quickly forgotten and thus missed in the data and not be considered when internally reflecting on your political views. When views are supported by the group the opinions are reinforced and we are more able to support ourselves against contradictory views.¹²⁶ An introduction to those contradictory views and values allows for growth and change, expanding your own views and understanding.¹²⁷ Even if your beliefs remain the same your knowledge and understanding have expanded.

The internet has allowed for both an increase in the views that we can be exposed to and the ways that we can shield ourselves from other opinions. Echo Chambers allow people to talk and converse without interacting with contrary views, however, it would be incorrect to forget that those echo chambers exist in the real world as well.¹²⁸ Family and friends often share the same views and thus going online and talking to strangers can be the first time someone may be presented with a contrary view; and the first time that the opinion is seen as political.¹²⁹ The internet is not

¹²⁴ William Everland, Alyssa Morey, Myiah Hutchers “beyond deliberation: New Directions for the study of informal political conversations from a communication perspective” (2011) 61 *Journal of Communication* 1082 at

¹²⁵ Jennifer Stromer-Gallery “Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users’ Perspectives” (2003) 8 *Journal of computer-mediated communication*

¹²⁶ Mads Sørensen “Political Conversations on Facebook- the participation of politicians and citizens” (2016) 38 *Media Culture and Society* 664 at

¹²⁷ Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck, Christiane Gill “From the Livingroom to the meeting hall? Citizens’ Political talk in the deliberative system” (2020) 37 *Political Communication* 832

¹²⁸ Jennifer Stromer-Gallery “Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users’ Perspectives” (2003) 8 *Journal of computer-mediated communication*

¹²⁹ Jennifer Stromer-Gallery “Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users’ Perspectives” (2003) 8 *Journal of computer-mediated communication*

solely used for political discussions, it is used to make friends and talk, those talks can turn political. This can thus break through the echo chamber as the algorithm is not trying to prevent such talk and be a place for learning.

Social Media has a low barrier to entry and gives users the ability to converse with people all over the world allowing people to talk to like-minded people who they normally never would have come into contact with; as well as with people who disagree with their views. Allowing people to both enter and break free of echo chambers can expose people to other opinions, but can also have a radicalising effect.¹³⁰ As the slow exposure method of pointing you towards a more extreme viewpoint can be subtle and the recipient may be unaware they are going through such a change.

Social media is addictive and can be all-consuming and with its use some people do have political conversations.¹³¹ While online however the individual is less important than the content they post, the identity of the poster is less visible than the content itself.¹³² The content is also current and instantaneous in a way that historically was not possible. Memes in particular can be created by anyone and often have political undertones that can be shared either with the opposing view or with like-minded

¹³⁰ Jennifer Stromer-Galley "Diversity of Political Conversation on the Internet: Users' Perspectives" (2003) 8 *Journal of computer-mediated communication*

¹³¹ Keith Hampton, Inyoung Shin, Weixu Lu "Social Media and Political Discussions: when online presence silences offline conversations" (2017) 20 *CITMAS* 1090 at

¹³² Steven Schneider "Creating a democratic public Sphere through political discussion: A case study of abortion conversations on the Internet" 1996 14 *Social Science Computer review* 373

people.¹³³ This is a modern form of informal political conversation and one that has an impact on individuals but that might not be considered.¹³⁴

¹³³ David Beskow, Sumeet Kumar, Kathleen Carley "The evolution of political memes: Detecting and characterizing internet memes with Multi-module deep learning" (2010) 57 Information processing and Management

¹³⁴ William Everland, Alyssa Morey, Myiah Hutchers "beyond deliberation: New Directions for the study of informal political conversations from a communication perspective" (2011) 61 Journal of Communication 1082 at

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

Previous chapters of this thesis have examined the broader context of the world into which this thesis is coming into; -- the wider context of the research, how it differs from other works and why it's important and then the current field of related research in the form of a literature review. This chapter positions the unique perspective of the thesis, focussing on the research design and methodology. The chapter looks at the aims of the thesis and the methods and theories it uses to achieve them.

Theoretical Research

Aims

This research looks at the internal political conversations on social media by women and girls based in the European Union and has dual aims in doing so. Firstly, learning about how Social Media Influencers talk about politics and secondly how content aimed at women differs from the patriarchal norm.¹³⁵ It does this by examining the content of European beauty bloggers (A female Focus genre) and seeing how and when they talk about politics. Using critical discourse analysis to look at the methods and stories that these influencers use and engage in and the messages that they pass on to their audience.¹³⁶ This will help us gain a deeper understanding of how an often-overlooked political group, younger women engaging with politics converse with each other.¹³⁷

Theory

The theory utilised is Critical Discussion Analysis (CDA), as it takes a wide approach to the context of and suspends traditional categories, this is useful when researching a new medium while also trying to look past traditional views of politics.¹³⁸ This is used in two ways in the research. Firstly with the medium of Beauty Vlogging, and what is political. CDA

¹³⁵ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

¹³⁶ Melissa Johnson, Ethan Mclean "Discourse Analysis" in Audrey Kobayashi *Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Elsevier Ltd. 2020) 377 at 378

¹³⁷ Mia Bloom Sophia Moskalenko *Pastels and Pedophiles : Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University press 2021) at 40

¹³⁸ Dianna Mullet "A general critical discourse analysis framework for educational research" (2018) 29(2) *Journal of Advanced Academics* 116

encourages and necessitates the use of wider context and the content that any influence produces is part of a wider story than just that video.¹³⁹ We have to look at the genre as a whole to see what tropes and patterns exist before looking at the style of the individual influencer. Their lives shape their content so their political views, personal life, and nationality are essential parts of analysing the content. All of this has to be taken into account when examining the videos to see what the conversations are and if they are political.

Further, we use two lenses. Informal Political Conversations when looking at their content to examine what is political and whether they are political conversations. As the theories and research view political conversations and narratives as broader than specific mentions of politicians and policy.¹⁴⁰ Thus this allows for a more realistic view of the beauty vlogger's political conversations and their impact, particularly in a new medium style that isn't black and white. Then looked through the lens of Gender as we want to see how women specifically speak about politics when talking to other women.¹⁴¹

Questions

With the aims and theory in mind, we have one primary question and the two sub-questions with the intention of supporting and clarifying the answers to our primary question:

- *How do beauty vloggers talk about politics in the EU?*

This question is the beginning of our research, and it is important to note that we are looking at how they talk about politics, not what their political opinions are. To contextualise this question, we have sub-question 1:

- *What are the style and methods used to discuss politics*

¹³⁹ Melissa Johnson, Ethan Mclean "Discourse Analysis" in Audrey Kobayashi *Encyclopaedia of Human Geography* (Elsevier Ltd. 2020) 377 at 378

¹⁴⁰ Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck, Christiane Gill "From the Livingroom to the meeting hall? Citizens' Political talk in the deliberative system" (2020) 37 *Political Communication* 832

¹⁴¹ Dannielle Blumenthal *Women and Soap Opera: Cultural Feminist Perspective* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Santa Barbra, 1997) at 87 to 89.

This question is essentially asking how? It had been done by comparing and analysing all of the videos to see any trends or commonalities between them.

The second sub-question

- *How does this relate to the EU?*

All the Influencers looked at are European and their audiences are primarily EU citizens, and as such current or future voters.

Methodology

To look at how beauty vloggers talk about politics in the EU, we are looking at the content that beauty vloggers create. As there are many Beauty vloggers in the EU, 10 were chosen that focused their content internally, by this we mean aimed at a domestic audience. While they may have some outside followers, this is not who they cater to thus the political conversation should be dominated by domestic issues. From these 10 Beauty vloggers, we chose 10 videos from each as an example of their content. These final 100 were then watched and studied for political content and relevance for us to draw our conclusion.

- Gathering data

To get to the 100 videos that were in our data pool we had to find our influencers and then their videos. Starting with the aim to find 10 countries that would do a good job of representing the geographic and cultural differences of the European Union. Sweden and Ireland from Northern Europe, Italy Spain and Greece from Southern Europe, Germany France and the Netherlands from Western Europe and Poland and Croatia from Eastern Europe. This meant a spread across all of Europe, with a mix of cultural differences. It also included a variety of times in which they joined the EU: from founding members through the different periods of enlargements to its newest member, Croatia who joined in 2013.

Then we searched for the beauty vloggers that would represent each country and we established three parameters that they would need to fit into that would help us achieve our research aims. Firstly, as we are looking at this through a gender lens, female influencers were chosen. And while we are looking at beauty vloggers which is a female-focused genre, we wanted to ensure that this was what we were getting. Secondly, looking for informal conversations, so avoiding channels that only did strict tutorials. This means that either some content was not tutorials or that in said tutorials they spoke outside of giving instructions. Finally, as this is meant to be an internal conversation, we wanted youtubers that spoke in their native languages. There are two exceptions to this, NikkiTutorials from the Netherlands, this is very much the exception to the rule here which will be discussed more later in this chapter. The second exception is the MakeupChair from Ireland which speaks English as it is the main spoken language in Ireland.

The method for finding the vloggers did not involve studying their content first, as this could have led to bias in the selection criteria. We did not want to choose vloggers that spoke a lot about politics simply because they did, even if it was subconsciously, we wanted a more varied data pool. This meant it was essential to rely on the vlogger's audiences and recommendations. This involved googling for Beauty YouTubers from X country, and lists of good channels on Reddit and similar sights. This felt more like how a non-researcher would find channels outside of recommendations from friends. When multiple lists and recommendations were found we compared them to try and get the most popular and then briefly checked to see if they met the parameters.

This means some of the channels shifted their content away from make-up tutorials before the time period or some had moved into the genre afterwards. If the channel was inactive for the time period or no longer fit the parameters another channel was chosen. However, if the channel had shifted away from beauty content but was still in a similarly female arena *i.e.* Shopping or family vlogging they were kept. A summary of the vloggers, who they are and what kind go content they make is in Chapter 5.

Table 1

<u>Country</u>	<u>Channel Name</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>YouTube</u>
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Croatia	Ella	Ella Dvornik	0.092million ¹⁴²
France	EnjoyPhoneix	Marie Lopez	3.68 million ¹⁴³
Germany	BibisBeautyPalace	Bianca Claßen	5.88 million ¹⁴⁴
Greece	Κλαίρη Δημοπούλου	Claire Dimopoulou	0.185 million ¹⁴⁵
Ireland	The MakeupChair	Sinead Cady	1.5 million ¹⁴⁶
Italy	ClioMakeup	Clio	1.36 million ¹⁴⁷
Netherlands	Nikki Tutorials	Nikki De Jager	14 million ¹⁴⁸
Poland	Red Lipstick Monster	Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu	1.47 million ¹⁴⁹
Spain	Dulceida	Aida Domenech	2.17 million ¹⁵⁰
Sweden	Therese Lindgren	Therese Lindgren	1.04 million ¹⁵¹

From here the final step is to narrow it down to 100 videos, choosing 10 videos from each channel. To have consistency throughout the channels the same time period was studied providing the highest chance of overlap. The time frame chosen was 7 months in 2020 as it was a reasonable amount of time to narrow it down and still have a wide variety of videos, the 1st of March to the 30th of September 2020. This was a time period in which a lot occurred politically, ranging from the covid-19 pandemic to the Black Lives Matter movement but also gave a chance to see what other comments that the vloggers might bring up in content that was more typical for their normal lives.

¹⁴² Ella Dvornik "About Ella Dvornik" YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/user/EllaDvornik/about>>

¹⁴³ Marie Lopez "About Enjoy Phoenix Marie" You Tube
<<https://www.youtube.com/c/EnjoyPhoenixMarie/about>

¹⁴⁴ Bianca Claßen "About BibisBeautyPalace" You Tube
<<https://www.youtube.com/user/BibisBeautyPalace/about>>

¹⁴⁵ Claire Dimopoulou "About Claire Dimopoulou" Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/c/ClaireDim/about>>

¹⁴⁶ Sinead Cady "The make-up Chair About" Youtube < <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheMakeupChair/about>>

¹⁴⁷ Clio "About Clio Makeup" You tube <<https://www.youtube.com/c/ClioMakeUp-official/about>>

¹⁴⁸ Nikki DeJager "About NikkiTutorials" You Tube < <https://www.youtube.com/@nikkietutorials/about>>

¹⁴⁹ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "About RedlipstickMonster" YouTube
<<https://www.youtube.com/c/RedLipstickMOnster/about>>

¹⁵⁰ Aida Domenech "About Dulcedia" You Tube < <https://www.youtube.com/c/dulceida/about> >

¹⁵¹ Therese Lindgren "About Therese Lindgren" You Tube
<<https://www.youtube.com/c/ThereseLindgren/about> >

Due to the plethora of available videos, 10 videos were chosen per channel based on if they were relevant to the data as a whole; while also being a good representation of the channel. Finally, when the videos were selected, the data could start to be collected watching the videos and noting political conversations and aspects of note within.

As mentioned above NikkiTutorials the Channel from the Netherlands is the exception to the language rule and in many ways the exception to all of them. She is by far the biggest channel and it is because she speaks in English and courts an outside audience meaning that she is not having an Internal conversation, even though she does sometimes aim her audience inwards. This allows for a comparison of inward and outward conversations as well as still being a European. She is also an example of what the norm is for beauty vloggers, as she is a major international channel that has widespread success and acclaim.

- Difficulties

This research encountered two main difficulties: language and social media. Both of which were expected. Social Media research has been discussed in the first chapters of the thesis, as it is a new and ever-changing field, the difficulties of studying it are less known and the pitfalls move.¹⁵² On top of this, the content is not straightforward or consistent and they are often intentionally confusing or odd and so that had to be kept in mind when researching. The language was a much bigger difficulty than first imagined, and one that consistently had to be considered and worked around. The majority of the videos have automatic captions that can then be translated through AI translators, provided by *YouTube*. I would often use multiple translators to get a better idea when there was confusion or the translated subtitles did not match the context of the video. We would also ask people who spoke the language if it made sense. If one word was a problem we would get translations of that word and then see how it was used on social media and even use google images to get the gist of it in its online cultural context.

¹⁵² Dimitra Karantzeni, and Dimitris Gouscos, “eParticipation in the EU: Re-focusing on social media and young citizens for reinforcing European identity” (2013) 7 Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy

To get the full meaning of the videos, descriptions given by the creator were also used as well as comments from the audience. Additionally, a wider context was gained by looking at what was going on at the time and from other videos on their channel and the content of the wider beauty vloggers community. Most follow tropes of the genre and often have similar topics or outlines with the same visual and pattern clues allowing for understanding, even when translations are not exact.

There were 33 videos that did not have subtitles which could not be directly translated and thus a different strategy was needed. These videos are arguably not translated as adequately - a limitation of this thesis. Using AI translators with the audio and replayed those while getting the wider context that was discussed above to see what they were talking about and tidy up translations.

While this is a limitation and difficulty encountered when studying it arguably does not diminish the research. As we are not looking for the exact wording or the political views of the influencer; we are trying to understand how the genre talks about politics and we get that from the style, tone and audience impressions. This allows us to look at that overall impression and learn from it and study it.

Analysing the content

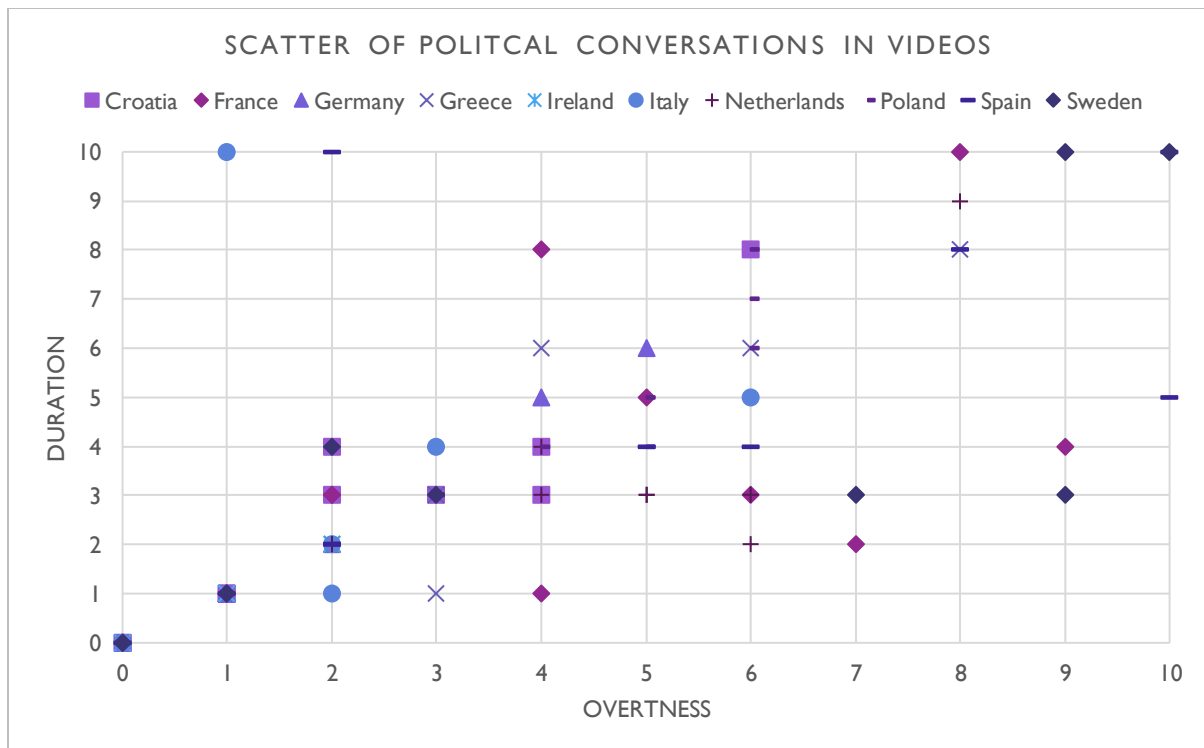


Figure 1

After finding, watching, and studying the 100 videos the next step was to find an easy way to view this data. The biggest finding in doing this was that a yes, no answer on whether the content was political was an inadequate place to start. Although only 14 out of the 100 videos were found to have no political content. Instead, when studying the videos there were two questions that came up. How much of the content was political and how overtly political it was. The easiest way to display this is a scatter graph. The two axis we are using are length and overttness. Length/focus is about how long the political speech is but also how much of the video that the speech takes up. Overttness is about how openly transparent the political speech is and how much the influencer has intentionally identified the content as political.

Quantifying data consisted of applying a numerical rating for both duration and political overttness. The duration was identified as a relative ratio of the time where politics were discussed, compared to the overall length of the video. The score for political overttness was subject to personal interpretation which was easy when dealing with the extremities but required. A judgement call when the content was at times imprecise. Just how explicitly

political the vlogger is being, the purpose that political speech has, and the overall impression that the influencer is giving, could push a video one way or the other when it was on the line.

This has been divided into three types of political speech for ease of discussion and will be explained in more detail in Chapter six. Offhanded Comments, (rated from a 1 to a 4 duration), camouflaged conversations (above a 4 duration below a 5 Overtness) and outright discussion (above a 5 duration and above a 5 overtness), are the three categories of speech that the beauty vlogger's political speech has been divided into. The three forms of political conversation here are not the be-all and end-all of the matter simply the best way to divide the political speech seen in the studied videos. Thus allowing them to be studied as political speech more effectively than a yes or no question and here we are focusing more on how. While they are different and have distinct features there is not a clear line separating them all.

These categories may blur together and lack straight forward and consistent distinctions, but they should still be discussed separately as they fulfil different roles both politically and as forms of entertainment. The off-handed comments despite the variety in the explicitness are there as filler and a brief mention to acknowledge either the situation or the views of the creator. While camouflaged conversations is more to do with the importance of the issue while trying to avoid the controversy, and backlash that can come with talking politics online. Along with the internal dissidence that you see when you are shown something that you disagree with, allowing for views to be more normalised. Finally, the explicit videos are there to allow the creator to openly talk about politics and can be an explanation for the more common usage of the other two.

Chapter Five: The Beauty Vloggers

Who are these peoples whose video were studied who make-up the political conversations in Europe. While in the last chapter we looked at how the Channels and videos were chosen, now we are going to look at the people and the videos. This chapter is a summary of the data collected, a way for you as the reader to gain an understanding of who the vloggers are and a bit of what they talked about. In the next chapter Conclusions and findings we will analyse and compare them, see how they differ and the patterns that emerge. Meanwhile in this chapter we will look at each vlogger individually, discussing their content and channel inside and outside of the time period to get a feel for them. Before looking at the content that was produced inside the time frame and discussing what and how they talked about politics.

Ella Dvornik- Croatia

Ella Dvornik is a Croatian You Tuber, whose channel is simple called Ella. She comes from a family of successful performers and when started her channel in 2010, she wanted to be a singer and her content reflected this.¹⁵³ Now most of her content focuses on parenting her two daughters and is not often political.

Covid-19 was a constant in her videos in 2020, some of them focus on the pandemic while in others it is a background issue. The first two videos were in March and lockdown is front and foremost. She discusses how she is parenting her daughter in lockdown both protecting them from the virus and taking care of their overall wellbeing.¹⁵⁴ This is a theme in videos of the period, as they try to stay safe and keep in contact with family overseas. Her second video of the period is a step-by-step guide on how to shop safely.¹⁵⁵ The content later shifts to family travel vlogs with the pandemic being in the background rather than the focus.

She is not a politically focused channel instead only talking about it when it affects her life. Mainly the pandemic but also hauls (a video where a vlogger displays their shopping) where finances and wealth are discussed.¹⁵⁶ Similarly language a fiercely political issue in Croatia,¹⁵⁷ is discussed because she is trying to learn a new language, or her husband struggles with Croatian.¹⁵⁸

Ella's Videos

BALIE US BRIGA / VLOG 6/2020

WHAT DOES SHOPPING LOOK LIKE IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC?! VLOG7/2020-

H&M Haul za Balie

24 HOURS WITH A BABY AND A TWO-YEAR-OLD GIRL

IN DIR PO ZAGREB / VLOG 9/ 2020

ZARA , STRADIVARIUS & ASTORIA HAUL / VLOG 10 / 2020

I'M GOING TO GET A TATTOO AGAIN / VLOG 11 / 2020

FAMILY VISIT IN DALMATIA / VLOG 13/2020

BALIE FINALLY MET THE SHEEP AND WE ENDED UP IN SISKI BY ACCIDENT / VLOG 17/ 2020

HOW DO I PACK? / VLOG 18 / 2020

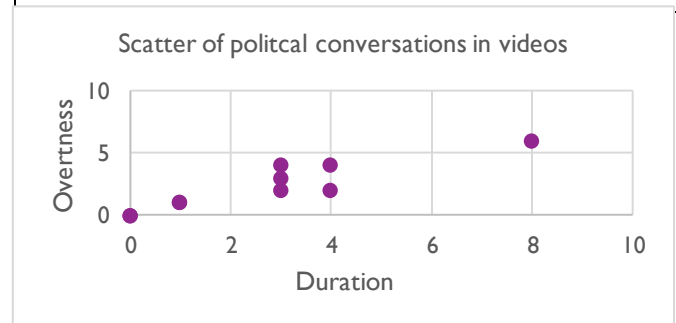


Figure 2

¹⁵³ Ella Dvornik "Ella Dvornik videos" You Tube < <https://www.youtube.com/user/EllaDvornik/videos>>

¹⁵⁴ Ella Dvornik "Balie nas Brigga" (21st March 2020) You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em1bibM26ZI&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtqGzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=1&ab_channel=Ella>

¹⁵⁵ Ella Dvornik "KAKO IZGLEDA SHOPPING USRED PANDEMIJE!!! VLOG7/2020 (26th March 2020) You Tube < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPzZHh22BIs&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtqGzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=2&ab_channel=Ella>

¹⁵⁶ Ella Dvornik "H&M Haul za Balie" (28th April 2020) you tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr0GgOA0nbc&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtqGzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=3&ab_channel=Ella>

¹⁵⁷ Ivor socolik "my neighbour, the criminal: how the memories of the 1991-1995 conflict in Croatia effect the serb minority" (2017) 23 nations and nationalism 790 at 791

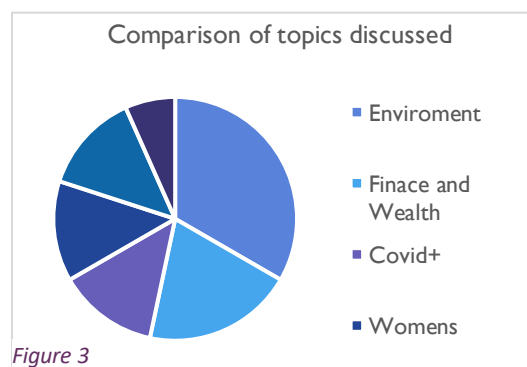
¹⁵⁸ Ella Dvornik "Balie us Brigga" (21st March 2020) YouTube<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em1bibM26ZI&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtqGzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=1&ab_channel=Ella>

EnjoyPhoneix- France

Enjoy Phoneix is the main channel of Marie Lopez a French born Youtuber. She produces content on a variety of content, including beauty cooking and lifestyle. Marie is politically active, talking about political issues on her channel as well as interacting with politicians. In February of 2020 she produced a video spending the day with the minister of Ecological and inclusive transition and going to meetings with him.¹⁵⁹ In 2021 she appeared on government spokesperson Gabriel Attal's channel in the outreach effort #sansfilter.¹⁶⁰

Enjoyphoneix discussed the expected topics of Covid and The Black Lives Matter movement. Two videos concentrate on Covid, discussing mental health and support lockdowns. She has one video talking about Black Lives Matter, but it

critiques Cancel Culture even though she says she agrees with BLM.¹⁶¹ However she speaks more often on protecting the Environment and wealth and the problems with wealth and luxury goods more often. Often connecting the



¹⁵⁹ Marie Lopez "Une journee dans la peau d'une ministre" (22 February 2020) You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKzXzLwnoDc&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

¹⁶⁰ Alexandra Milhat "enjoyphoenix deplore l'absence de journalistes sur la chaine twitch de gabriel" (26 Feb. 2021) Republic Lorrain <<https://www.republicain-lorrain.fr/politique/2021/02/26/enjoyphoenix-deplore-l-absence-de-journalistes-sur-la-chaine-twitch-de-gabriel-attal?fbclid=IwAR1x2vDWDmBSBPVwL8EijJtm4kpwn4oxdh8bqBTqgVBQFoXXgSaV0xRjoLU>>

¹⁶¹ Marie Lopez "Le vrai problème de la Cancel Culture" You tube (25th July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6RSz_Ix_lo&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

¹⁶² Marie Lopez "ARRÊT DE LA PILULE : Les conséquences et les bienfaits sur mon corps (2 ans après)" You Tube (18 July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNnGBdLXZT8&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

EnjoyPhoneix video's

YES, I WAS A SMOKER: My addiction to cigarettes

The LUXURY items I REGRET buying! (+ COMPETITION)

my NIGHT routine (real girl, no youtuber)

why am I leaving? (but I'll be back anyway)

10 tips to stop being SAD! *promise it works*

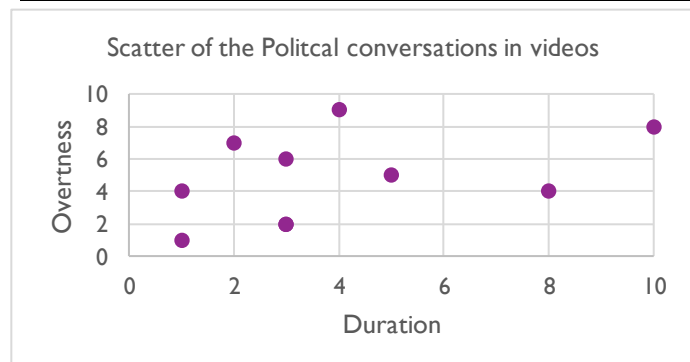
STORYTIME: When subscriber meetings turn into a NIGHTMARE

STOPPING THE PILL: The consequences and benefits on my body (2 years later)

The real problem with the Cancel Culture.

Project Revelation, Drama Queen & Positivism | vlogging

Crashtest Vegan Dishes with a Meat Addict!



environmental issues to surrounding issues, including smoking, vegetarianism, luxury goods and immigrating. One video I found particularly interesting was stopping the Pill, in this video she discusses why she stopped the pill, Women's health care and discussions of libido and preventing pregnancies where deemed an important thing for young people to consider.¹⁶²

Bianca Claßen- Germany

Bianca Claßen is a popular German youtuber, receiving mainstream success in Germany appearing in offline advertisements and content.¹⁶³ She set up her channel in 2012 she has moved from solely beauty content to including comedy, lifestyle content.¹⁶⁴ She is married to another German You Tuber with two children which is now a part of her content.

Bianca does not overtly discuss politics, although as she vlogs about her life political aspects come into it. This can be a brief aside, when playing a game about meme's Angela Merkyl is briefly mentioned,¹⁶⁵ or talking about her health and how covid restrictions affect her giving birth.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, when discussing her pregnancy, her husband having to learn how to do basic chores comes up as does wishing she had the language skills to raise her children bilingual.¹⁶⁷ She does comparisons of cheap vs Expensive baby clothes and discuss accessibility in the financial troubled times that occurred during lockdown.¹⁶⁸ However does not go into the details about that, almost contradictory she also has a video asking her friends to try and spend €500.¹⁶⁹ In this she doesn't talk about the troubled times and instead is focused on luxury at a time when other celebrities are being criticized for flaunting wealth.

Bibi'sBeautyPalace videos

I'm not allowed to move anymore 🤔 What's going on? ..| Bibi

Can Julian be present at the birth because of Corona?!

🤔 | Bibi

I minute to spend 500€! | Bibi

My last time... 🤔 | Bibi

The same baby item for €0.01 vs. €84.00 🤔 | Bibi

We're getting a playground in our garden 😊 | Bibi

My honest opinion about the 3rd pregnancy .. | Bibi

Julian vacuums me (very disturbing! 🤔) | Bibi

We wear the most embarrassing partner outfit 🤔 |

Bibi

First video with .. 🤔 | Bibi

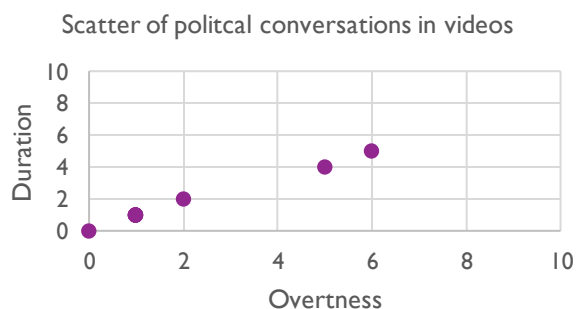


Figure 5

¹⁶³ "Telekom bietet Special Edition Smartphone für Bibi-Fans" (21 October 2015) Telekom <<https://www.telekom.com/de/medien/medieninformationen/detail/telekom-bietet-special-edition-smartphone-fuer-bibi-fans-349376>>

¹⁶⁴ Bianca Claßen "Videos BibisBeautyPalace" You Tube <<https://www.youtube.com/user/BibisBeautyPalace/videos>>

¹⁶⁵ Bianca Claßen "Erstes Video mit .. 🤔 | Bibi" (27th September 2020) You tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUVrBSYVQ9A&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

¹⁶⁶ Bianca Claßen "Darf Julian wegen Corona bei der Geburt dabei sein ?! 🤔 | Bibi" You tube (19th March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPWXPmL6FXk&t=1s&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

¹⁶⁷ Bianca Claßen "Ich darf mich nicht mehr bewegen 🤔 Was ist los? ..| Bibi" You Tuber (1st March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QafAXRh2v_Y&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

¹⁶⁸ Bianca Claßen "Gleicher Baby Artikel für 0,01€ vs. 84,00€ 🤔 | Bibi" You tube (3rd May 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNLxrsnPb-U&t=2s&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

¹⁶⁹ Bianca Claßen "1 Minute Zeit um 500€ auszugeben ! | Bibi" You tube (23rd April 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwOIVzGf3CQ&t=2s&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

Κλαίρη Δημοπούλου- Greece

Claire Dimopoulou or Claire Dim is a Greek YouTuber and make-up artist based in London.¹⁷⁰ She has two channels one English language and one Greek language and while they both include make-up tutorials, but the Greek is more personal. She describes her Greek channel as being about 'Make-up minimalism and Travel', with the minimalism content focused on the environment.¹⁷¹

Claire Dim talks subtly about using clean natural ingredients, allowing imperfections, or in tutorials talking about finding tones that match darker skin tones, and dealing with fatphobia and unrealistic beauty standards.¹⁷² Then there are the videos specifically about minimalism and buying less that are more overt about their purpose for example so that the canals of Venice can be blue again.¹⁷³ The best example is the Stepford wives inspired make up look. She discusses the inherent sexism that the movie portrays and how even when you love make-up it shouldn't be compulsory along with the problems with beauty standards and how women are treated.¹⁷⁴ She then talks about prettiness gap in couples and brings up Donald and Melania Trump all of this is between an active tutorial about the techniques used and tips to make it easier.

Claire Dimopoulou's video

Conversation & Makeup | GRWM ft. Iris Georgiadou
 Tips For Total Clearance | Minimalism Series
 What Not to Buy After Quarantine | Minimalism Series
 Quarantine Routine | 10 Self-Care Tips That I Apply
 Bachelorette Party Makeup | Cut Crease In Earth Tones
 London After The First Lockdown | Get Ready With Me
 Jewelry: My Collection | Minimalism Series
 Stepford Wives Inspired | Eye "Corner" & Pink Lip
 Late Summer Get Ready With Me In Tinos
 How I Became a Makeup Artist | My Makeup Story (Tag)

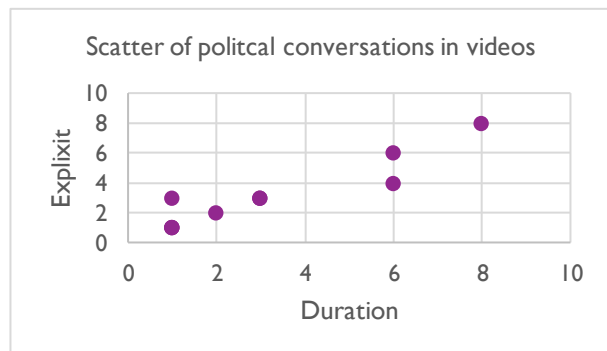


Figure 6

¹⁷⁰ Claire Dimopoulou "Κλαίρη Δημοπούλου about" Youtube

<<https://www.youtube.com/@ClaireDimopoulou/about>>

¹⁷¹ Claire Dimopoulou "Κλαίρη Δημοπούλου about" Youtube <

<https://www.youtube.com/@ClaireDimopoulou/about>>

¹⁷² Claire Dimopoulou "Conversations Κουβέντα & Μακιγιάζ | GRWM ft. Iris Georgiadou" (1st March 2020) Youtube <

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FM9oZIIAQw&t=3s&ab_channel=%CE%9ACE%BB%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85 >

¹⁷³ Claire Dimopoulou "Τι Να Μην Αγοράσετε Μετά Την Καραντίνα | Minimalism Series" (5th April 2020) Youtube <

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILOplBsZrJI&t=1s&ab_channel=%CE%9ACE%BB%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85 >

¹⁷⁴ Claire Dimopoulou "Stepford Wives Inspired | Μάτι "Γωνία" & Ποζ Χείλη" (10th September 2020) youtube <

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwWeDlCx-4&t=30s&ab_channel=%CE%9ACE%BB%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85>

TheMakeUpChair – Ireland

Sinead Cady is an Irish YouTuber whose channel is called the Make-up Chair and he book is called The Make-Up Chair handbook.¹⁷⁵ When describing her channel, she says she named it because when someone is in the makeup chair, they talk about more than make however she mainly does eye-make-up tutorials. She has however mentioned that she wishes that she could be more creative and do more but is restricted by the algorithm.¹⁷⁶

While her videos do not tend to have fluff and personal discussion in the videos looked at there are two exceptions one in which she discusses the issues with the algorithm and trying to find make-up that she can use as she is so pale.¹⁷⁷ The other is a more personal video at the start of September in which she ‘rants’ about her health.¹⁷⁸ How she can’t always post videos before complaining about how there is an inconsistency with eyelash pricing and that the cheap ones can be much better.¹⁷⁹ Both of these issues have political undertones but as can be seen here that is not her intention in bringing them up. Her content is rarely political and instead always remains as offhanded comments that acknowledge a situation without deeper discussion. Because of this her 10 videos only reach three points on the graph as three have no political content, five who score one in both regards and two who score two in both.

TheMakeUpChair Videos

Beginners Makeup Tutorial | How To Apply Foundation Concealer Powder | Foundation Routine
Not an eye makeup for beginners video...Just Me Doing Makeup in My Living Room
Drugstore Eye Makeup For Beginner | TheMakeupChair
Coral Peach Eye Makeup | TheMakeupChair
Classic Makeup Tutorial | Sheer Beige Pink Soft Glam | Makeup for Cool Skin Tones
Eye Makeup Tutorial Using Urban Decay Naked Ultra Violet Palette | Purple Smokey Eye
Classic Makeup Tutorial | Nude Beige Soft Glam | Makeup for Warm Skin Tones
Get Ready With Me... I'm Sorry I'm having a Rant
Beginners Eye Makeup Tutorial Using One Matte and One Metallic | How To Apply Eyeshadow
How to Apply Blush, Highlight, Contour, Bronzer + Bake with ONE Brush

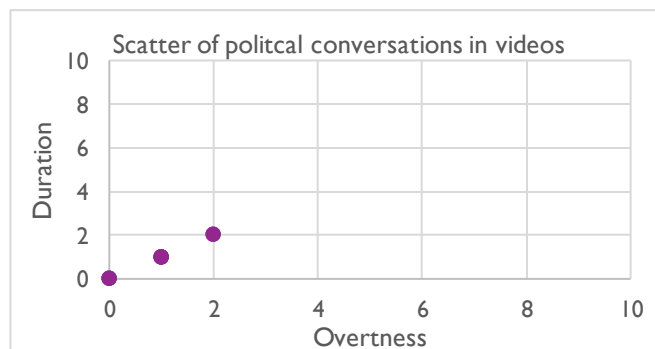


Figure 7

¹⁷⁵ Sinead Cady “The make-up Chair About” Youtube < <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheMakeupChair/about> >

¹⁷⁶ Sinead Cady “Not an eye makeup for beginners video...Just Me Doing Makeup in My Living Room” (28th April 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r5J5eqex5M&t=641s&ab_channel=TheMakeupChair>

¹⁷⁷ Sinead Cady “Not an eye makeup for beginners video...Just Me Doing Makeup in My Living Room” (28th April 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r5J5eqex5M&t=641s&ab_channel=TheMakeupChair>

¹⁷⁸ Sinead Cady “Get Ready With Me... I'm Sorry I'm having a Rant” You tube (3rd September 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5u6Me1DMOQ8&t=12s&ab_channel=TheMakeupChair>

¹⁷⁹ Sinead Cady “Get Ready With Me... I'm Sorry I'm having a Rant” You tube (3rd September 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5u6Me1DMOQ8&t=12s&ab_channel=TheMakeupChair>

Clio Make-up – Italy

Clio Make-up is an Italian *YouTube* channel 'dedicated to make-up with video tutorials reviews and tips'.¹⁸⁰ She is successful and mainstream selling her own products and one of the videos looked at was her making her own tv ad.¹⁸¹ She moved to New York and was based there for the time studied but moved back to Italy to raise her children.¹⁸² When she was based in America, her content was still aimed at Italians. She has content like "Charlotte tilbury arrives in Italy" reviewing it as if it was new.¹⁸³

Unlike others her tutorials often do not have discussion, but the content can still be political. The most explicitly political content on the channel is her exploring deserted New York video.¹⁸⁴ In this she discusses with her husband their own experiences in

New York and give a tour through the empty streets that were closed due to covid. When walking down one street she mentions that they were BLM protests here only briefly mentioned what they protested instead she was focusing on the crimes committed and damage done. Not long after when they reach the 9/11 memorial site, they spend a lot longer their discussing the harm and cruelty of the terrorist attack.

ClioMakeUp Videos

HOMEMADE MOISTURIZING AND ILLUMINATING FACE MASK ✨
 ANTI-STRESS MAKE-UP WITH A FEW PRODUCTS MOMENT OF RELAXATION 🕯️
 TUTORIAL MAKEUP MASK SUMMER 2020 🤩 BEAUTIFUL LIGHT AND DURABLE ✨
 CHARLOTTE TILBURY ARRIVES IN ITALY 😊 🕯️ WHAT TO BUY AND WHAT TO AVOID 🛒
 ALL THE TIPS FOR A DO IT YOURSELF TOP WAXING 🧴♀️ AS FROM THE Beautician 😊
 PRODUCTS I LOVE ARE FINISHED TO THE LAST DROP HOW DO YOU MAKE A TELEVISION SPOT? 🤖 FIND OUT IT WITH ME ✨ VI PORTO IN THE BACKSTAGE OF THE NIVEA 📺 SHOOTING
 WHY I COME BACK TO ITALY 😊 AND OTHER QUESTIONS
 BOLD AND INTRIGUING MAKEUP TUTORIAL IN THE TONES OF PURPLE AND GOLD ✨ NIVEA MICELLAR GIVEAWAY
 NEW YORK DESERT IS A DIVE INTO MEMORIES

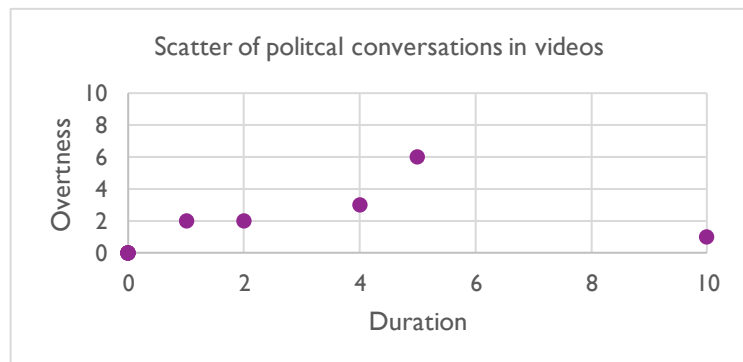


Figure 8

¹⁸⁰Clio "Clio Makeup About" You tube <<https://www.youtube.com/c/ClioMakeUp-official/about>>

¹⁸¹ Clio "COME SI REALIZZA UNO SPOT TELEVISIVO? 🤖 SCOPRITELO CON ME ✨ VI PORTO NEL BACKSTAGE DELLO SHOOTING NIVEA" You tube (28th August 2020) <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHsNhngV8L4&ab_channel=ClioMakeUp>

¹⁸² Clio "PERCHÉ TORNO IN ITALIA 🤖 E ALTRE DOMANDE" You tube (31st August 2020)
 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fomoPCjHX4s&t=1s&ab_channel=ClioMakeUp>

¹⁸³ Clio "CHARLOTTE TILBURY ARRIVA IN ITALIA 😊 🕯️ COSA COMPRARE E COSA EVITARE 🛒" You tube (14th July 2020) <
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9TkXEPoPNc&t=13s&ab_channel=ClioMakeUp>

¹⁸⁴ Clio "NEW YORK DESERTA 🤖 UN TUFFO NEI RICORDI" You Tube (14th September 2020)
 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPje10XX5B8&t=9s&ab_channel=ClioMakeUp>

Nikki Tutorials- Netherlands

Nikki De Jager is the Dutch youtuber behind Nikki tutorials which is an English language make-up channel. She makes money through adverts selling her own palettes and product placements and endorsements. She often collabs both with other youtubers and mainstream celebrities and has been invited to events like the met ball.¹⁸⁵ Nikki is a Trans-woman; a political topic that often shows up in her content from acceptance and support to how society victimises minorities.¹⁸⁶ When the issues that come with being Trans is discussed in some videos it's hard to see the jokes about it in others as apolitical. Especially considering she talks about the political power of coming out.¹⁸⁷

Her political content varies from videos where it is the focus like a full face of black owned beauty brands about black lives matter which is overt in its political nature.

Pausing to give beauty tips rather than talking politics during the natural lull of the tutorial.¹⁸⁸ This is briefly discussed in other videos with comments about the availability of darker skin tones, how tutorials focus on white skin or quickly saying Black Trans Lives Matter.¹⁸⁹ Other videos are less overtly political with the main content being apolitical but include jokes about Sex and sexuality or talk about Covid-19 and Crime. \$67 Lipstick which is a review but is consistently talking about the unreasonable price of the product when covid-19 is taking away everyone's money.¹⁹⁰

NikkiTutorials Videos

67\$ LIPSTICK? WTF! Hermes Lipsticks Review... THE TRUTH!

SECRETS EXPOSED! Studio Tour + HUGE Makeup Collection | NikkieTutorials

AFFORDABLE Flawless Makeup Transformation | NikkieTutorials

Doing My FIANCE'S Makeup! | NikkieTutorials

Instagram Filters CHOOSE MY MAKEUP! | NikkieTutorials

15-MINUTE MAKEUP CHALLENGE ft. Davina Michelle

Full Face Using ONLY Black-Owned Makeup Brands | NikkieTutorials

I Wasn't Accepted By My Entire Family... PRIDE with NikkieTutorials

SHEA COULEÉ Transforms Me Into NIKKIE COULEÉ! | NikkieTutorials

Get Glam With SELENA GOMEZ & Me! | NikkieTutorials

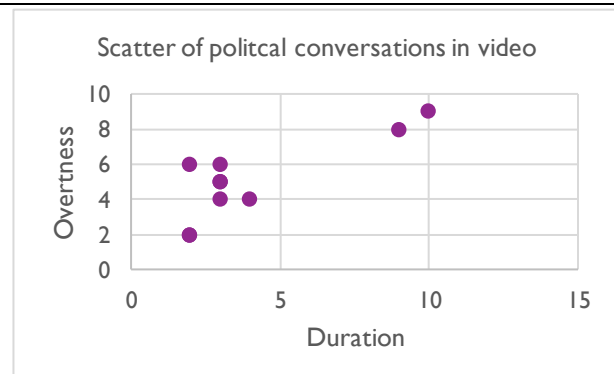


Figure 9

¹⁸⁵ Greta Bjornson "YouTuber 'NikkieTutorials' Says 2021 Met Gala Dress Was a Tribute to Trans Icon Marsha P. Johnson" People Magazine (September 14 2021) <<https://people.com/style/nikkie-tutorials-met-gala-2021-dress-meaning/>>

¹⁸⁶ Nikki DeJagger "I Wasn't Accepted By My Entire Family... PRIDE with NikkieTutorials" You Tube (26th June 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ob009jux_I&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

¹⁸⁷ Nikki DeJagger "I'm coming out." You Tube (14th January 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOOW2E_qAsE&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

¹⁸⁸ Nikki DeJagger "Full Face of Black-Owned Make-up Brands | NikkieTutorials" You Tube (11th June 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDxBkY4IIsc&t=35s&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

¹⁸⁹ ¹⁸⁹ Nikki DeJagger "I Wasn't Accepted By My Entire Family... PRIDE with NikkieTutorials" You Tube (26th June 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ob009jux_I&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

¹⁹⁰ Nikki DeJagger "67\$ LIPSTICK? WTF! Hermes Lipsticks Review... THE TRUTH!" You Tube (18th March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZZXW7hPPY&t=26s&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

Red Lipstick Monster – Poland

Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu known as RedLipstickmonster, is one of the biggest channels in Poland and was the first polish woman to reach a million subscribers. Her content is about make-up focused but she 'smuggles in socially important content'.¹⁹¹ The political content often includes of sexism, health, mental health, and the environment. This differs from her *Instagram* in which she is far more vocal and critical of the government.¹⁹² For Halloween on her channel she did a traditional tutorial but on *Instagram* she protested the polish government talking away women's rights. Her political content on *You Tube* is more focused on beauty, and sexism while *Instagram* has discusses more topics and is more critical.

She started, her channel after learning from English language *YouTube* and there is an overlap between the explicitly beauty vloggers as their style has similarities.¹⁹³ Similarly, you see the same products and she discusses the availability of products in Poland.¹⁹⁴ This shows the value of local content outside of language. As she can talk about availability, rules, and access. Along with discussing issues with a polish perspective in a video about alopecia she talks about getting assistance in Poland and how polish attitude towards a woman's hair differ to Americans.¹⁹⁵

RedLipstickMonster videos

What to do during quarantine? ❤️ Help and mental support

How can I teach you makeup when I'm SO UGLY? 😞

Get Ready With Me na KWARANTANNIE 😊

THICK TEST of exercise sets 🏋️ Polish brands + Gym Shark 🦈

I HAVE TASTED EMOTIONS 🤢 Honestly about my eating disorder

ZERO WASTE makeup removal 🌿 I test reusable pads and swabs

HARRY'S TRIKI 🤖 What have I learned from MASTER MAKEUP?

JEFFREE STAR Cremated 💀 Black & White DRAMA? + COMPETITION!

"I don't have hair, eyelashes or eyebrows" 🧑🏻👤👉👉 Is the wig still taboo?

My FIRST COSMETICS 🤖 Do I still use them?

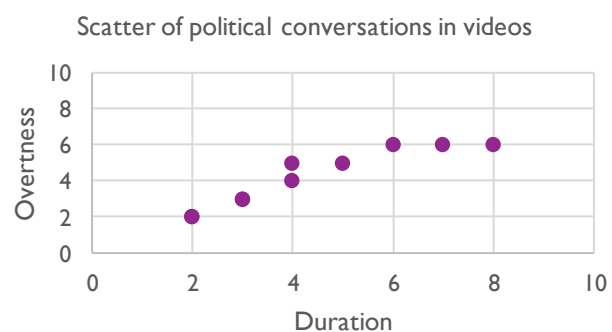


Figure 10

¹⁹¹ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "RedlipstickMonster about" YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/c/RedLipstickM0nster/about>>

¹⁹² Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "Solidarność naszą bronią Photos" Instagram (3rd November 2020) <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CHAE3yjjvJ/?hl=en>>

¹⁹³ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "Moje PIERWSZE KOSMETYKI 🤖 Czy nadal ich używam?" YouTube (4th August 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbA8XJ5Z6dw&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

¹⁹⁴ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "Demakijaż ZERO WASTE 🌿 Testuję WIELORAZOWE płatki i waciki" YouTube (30th May 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcmAimVpjjc&t=18s&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

¹⁹⁵ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu ""Nie mam włosów, rzęs ani brwi" 🧑🏻👤👉👉 Czy peruka nadal jest tabu?" YouTube (18th July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjM2xzJOn2g&t=17s&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

Dulceida- Spain

Aida Domenech is a Spanish fashion vlogger who's videos show her life, relationship fashion and make-up.¹⁹⁶ She is a Lesbian who is married to a woman who often appears in her videos and in some videos they discuss the impact of homophobia both societally and legally and how it affects them and subscribers.¹⁹⁷ Much like Nikki De Jager benefits from speaking in English and thus gets non Dutch views Dulceida benefits from how widely Spanish is spoken. While she is from Spain and her content is based on that she openly acknowledges and discusses her south American followers and how their experience and governments are different. Queerness thus permeates all of her content and is often done in an overtly political way.¹⁹⁸

The politics in her content ranges from I am talking about this law that this government official put forward to a background mention of well different countries act differently. When it came to Covid she was very firm on how serious it was and why you should stay home. In one case she talks about the relaxing of restrictions that the government implementing in part due to backlash against them and was firmly against it and the harm it would do to all.¹⁹⁹ She also has a video that she produced in the height of Black Lives Matter and talked about the harm of bigotry.²⁰⁰ She encourages her audience to think about racism and to watch the movie the help before talking about increased rates of homophobia and interviewing a queer family about their experience.

Dulceida's-videos

#QUEDATEENCASA - FIRST WEEK - DULCEIDA AND ALBA
 FRIENDS ANONYMOUSLY ASK US WHAT THEY HAD NEVER DARE - DULCEIDA Y ALBA
 IDEAS TO TAKE PHOTOS AT HOME – DULCEIDA
 24H WITH ME IN QUARANTINE - VLOG - DULCEIDA
 BIRTHDAY IN QUARANTINE - IDEAS FOR SPECIAL GIFTS - DULCEIDA
 MAKEUP WITH ALEX SAINT - HOW DID WE MEET? SWEET
 I CAN'T KEEP QUIET - SWEET
 MAKEUP WITH ALEX SAINT - HOW DID WE MEET? SWEET
 BIRTHDAY IN QUARANTINE - IDEAS FOR SPECIAL GIFTS - DULCEIDA
 HAUL 2020 SUMMER IS HERE! - SWEET
 READING YOUR STORIES #PRIDE - DULCEIDA AND ALBA
 A WEEK ON A FAMILY BOAT – DULCEIDA

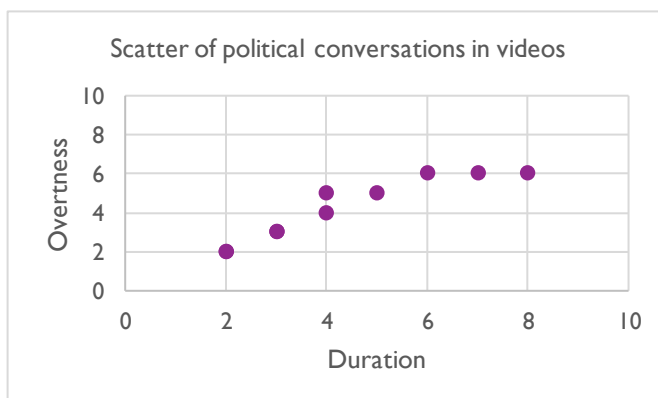


Figure 11

¹⁹⁶ Aida Domenech "About Dulceida" You Tube < <https://www.youtube.com/c/dulceida/about> >

¹⁹⁷ Aida Domenech "NO ME PUEDO QUEDAR CALLADA - DULCEIDA" You Tube (11th June 2020) < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgav6k04ngk&t=16s&ab_channel=Dulceida >

¹⁹⁸ Aida Domenech "LEYENDO VUESTRAS HISTORIAS #PRIDE - DULCEIDA Y ALBA" Youtube (9th July 2020) < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LYSCOlpUng&t=134s&ab_channel=Dulceida >

¹⁹⁹ Aida Domenech "24H CONMIGO EN CUARENTENA - VLOG - DULCEIDA" You Tube (30th April) < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EUsEoCVRgw&t=12s&ab_channel=Dulceida >

²⁰⁰ Aida Domenech "NO ME PUEDO QUEDAR CALLADA - DULCEIDA" You Tube (11th June 2020) < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgav6k04ngk&t=16s&ab_channel=Dulceida >

Therese Lindgren- Sweden

Therese Lindgren is a Swedish YouTuber that vlogs about beauty and her lifestyle she also owns a hair and beauty brand which you can buy from her channel. On her *Instagram* she describes herself only as 'vegan' and 'ambassador for suicide zero'²⁰¹ and her animal rights activism and advocacy for mental health appear throughout her videos even though they are not the main features of it. Unlike the other channels all her videos have Swedish subtitles that are created by her editor to make them more accessible to her audience.²⁰² Because Sweden's covid laws were different from other countries there is a difference in her related content.

She has 3 videos explicitly about on covid, one where she interviews a scientist on staying safe and how to take care of

older relatives, one on taking care of mental health and one in which she interviewed the Deputy PM. In her interview with the Deputy she talks about the support that he followers have for her and then the questions that effect teenagers. A lot of it discuss schools and school holidays something that teenagers should care about.²⁰³ Then whether should be strict on borders and lockdowns and the amount of money being used to support the economy. When it comes to beauty and women's body she has a video talking about how porn stars give accurate views girls bodies and body positivity along with PMS all which is discussed openly and calmly.²⁰⁴

Therese Lindgren videos

A MAKEUP TUTORIAL.

ORGANISERINGS-P*RR

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

Asking your questions to Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin

DOING MY MAKEUP FOR 10 HOURS STRAIGHT (I mean, for real)

DID NOT GO AS PLANNED...

WE HAVE TO TALK...

QUESTION HOUR - having children, weight loss, smoking...

vlog: THE HARDEST THING I'VE DONE

10 things you didn't know about me - labia reduction

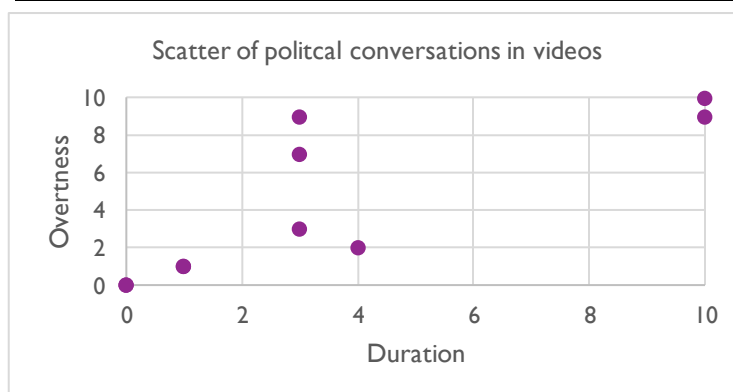


Figure 12

²⁰¹ Therese Lindgren "Therese's Page" Instagram < <https://www.instagram.com/therese/> >

²⁰² Therese Lindgren "vlogg: DET KNÄPPASTE JAG GJORT" You Tube (23rd August 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsAr-aE7P5k&t=15s&ab_channel=thereselindgren>

²⁰³ Therese Lindgren "Ställer era frågor till vice statsminister Isabella Lövin" You Tube (21st March 2020) < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDIwLvkjFqI&t=18s&ab_channel=thereselindgren >

²⁰⁴ Therese Lindgren "10 saker du inte visste om mig - blygdläppsförminskning" You Tube (7th September 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5gYTA96nfM&t=34s&ab_channel=thereselindgren >

Chapter Six: Findings

How do beauty Vloggers talk about politics? That is what this chapter is discussing by looking at and comparing the findings of all 100 videos that were studied. This is meant to look at the different methods and styles used by influencers looking both at the way this occurs in individual videos as well as in the wider context of an influencer's catalogue. The styles used have been divided into three main categories which have different roles and affect the video differently. Firstly, the offhand comment and short statements that are not a focus of the video. Secondly camouflaged conversations, political discussions or actions that are not acknowledged by the influencer as political despite their length and political nature. Then lastly open political discussions by influencers in their video.

Offhand Comments

Offhand comments are the broadest of the categories and can seem the most internally different, but the feature that unites all of the offhand comments is length. They are short quips that are not the focus of the video and can be easily skipped or ignored without it affecting the rest of the content. They can be statements to inform and remind the audience of an issue or position or can just be a statement that has a political undertone or content, but are not intentionally political; instead, being there because politics has an impact on people's everyday lives. How explicitly political these are can vary with offhand comments stretching the spectrum from a statement that's barely political or a turn to the camera saying vote for this candidate. Because of this variety, this category has three subcategories. Firstly, acknowledgement is a statement that acknowledges a situation or political event but does not discuss it further. Secondly Inference, a statement that infers a political position but does not openly give one and finally the explicit position where there is no need to infer as it is an overtly political statement.

Acknowledgement of a situation

These quippy comments can arguably be seen as the least political and most plentiful form of political speech in the studied videos. They are often said without the Influencer really thinking or with the Influencer giving the impression that they are thoughtless. For

example, TheMakeUpChair ends her videos with simple goodbye messages such as being kind to yourself but as the Covid situation ramped up those messages changed to, stay safe out there or keep safe and well.²⁰⁵ This is very short and barely acknowledges that there is a situation going on but allows an audience to interpret it however they want. That could be ignoring it completely or if they are concerned about the pandemic, they might feel relieved that their favourite YouTuber agrees with them. Even though she never talks about Covid-19 in any more detail, the parasocial relationship fills in the blank for the audience sculpting the influencer to meet their idea of them.

While the Covid-19 Pandemic was an issue that was all over the zeitgeist and hard to ignore. Many influencers felt the need to explain that they were not talking about it because their content was a light-hearted escape. The acknowledgement however can also go to an issue that is not public or only hints at the deeper politics of the issue. Ella Dvornik typically did not talk about politics on her channel but there were few comments which acknowledged a wider political view. In one of her family travel vlogs, she is eating dinner at a restaurant and chooses the vegetarian option.²⁰⁶ She uses it as an opportunity to talk about the quality of meat alternatives and how it's easy and tasty to choose vegetarian and vegan options. This takes less than a minute and can be ignored or interpreted as you the audience member should eat more vegetarian foods. This differs from EnjoyPhoenix as when she talks about vegetarian options she explicitly talks about the impact of meat on the environment.²⁰⁷ Ella does not, instead, she allows her audience to subconsciously decide whether she agrees with that or not, the individual's reaction to the same message changes the potential impact of it.

This acknowledgement can also occur if the comments are longer but still remain as only an acknowledgement rather than an opinion and when views are expanded upon elsewhere. We see this in RedLipStickMonster's review of the Jeffrey Star cosmetic pallet Cremation.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Sinead Cady "Drugstore Eye Makeup For Beginner | TheMakeupChair" You Tube (19th May 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvHNzUzjwSo&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtjCCW0m435Xz8C2vDXMhkg&index=3&ab_channel=TheMakeupChair>

²⁰⁶ Ella Dvornik "POHOĐENJE OBITELJI U DALMACIJI / VLOG 13/2020" (30th July 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDTzxrenaoc&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtq-GzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=8&ab_channel=Ella>

²⁰⁷ Marie Lopez "Crashtest de Plats Vegan avec un Addict à la Viande !" (26th September 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpIRAPpBLmg&list=PLqKcC5TSNITss8n-8bErNPMsstinMYz0uO&index=10&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

²⁰⁸ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "JEFFREE STAR Cremated ☠️ Czarno-biała DRAMA? + KONKURS!" YouTube (10th July 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOKY2m16YA&list=PLqKcC5TSNITuX5ZnQacm_sRSS8dZ4UOHw&index=8&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

Ewa starts her video by mentioning the controversy surrounding its theme of death and its timing of being released in the middle of the pandemic. She quickly mentions the controversy but acknowledges that it takes a long time to produce a palate and therefore it was created prior to the pandemic.²⁰⁹ In addition, she mentions that it would have been controversial if it had been launched anytime in the next few years. The point can be interpreted differently depending on the individual's point of view, if someone thinks the pandemic is overblown they can assume she thinks the same while those who are concerned about the pandemic think she agrees with them. The flexibility of the statement is due to the lack of detail, and this gives the audience the opportunity to ignore or interpret the statement as they wish. Other videos that are more focused on politics and the pandemic can be skipped based on their views. If the title is "[What to do during quarantine? 🧡 Help and mental support](#)"²¹⁰ those who are anti-lockdown can bypass the videos while still assuming the influencer is not a part of the opposition.

Infers a position

Inferring a political position differs from simply acknowledging a political situation as it is harder to interpret as neutral but still easy to ignore. It tells the audience their political position on a specific issue without being overwhelming to people who disagree or don't care. These may have an impact in the way that many informal political conversations have, where they normalise and remind people of a political view which can shift and solidify an individual's views. Yet, it is still easy to ignore and not absorbed if the viewer does not want to accept it.

The shortest example of this found in the research was in BibisBeautyPalace, who in her video "first time with" ... was playing a game of what do you meme with memes of political figures appearing up.²¹¹ When a photo of Angela Mykel came up the tone changed,

²⁰⁹ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "JEFFREE STAR Cremated 🕯️ Czarno-biała DRAMA? + KONKURS!" YouTube (10th July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOZKY2m16YA&list=PLqKcC5TSNITuX5ZnQacm_sRSS8dZ4UOHw&index=8&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

²¹⁰ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "Co robić podczas kwarantanny? 🧡 Pomoc i wsparcie psychiczne" YouTube (22nd march 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kIYd61YYtY&list=PLqKcC5TSNITuX5ZnQacm_sRSS8dZ4UOHw&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

²¹¹ Bianca Claßen "Erstes Video mit .. 😊 | Bibi" YouTube (27th September 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUVRbSYVQ9A&ab_channel=BibisBeautyPalace>

becoming brighter and saying “It’s Angie” as they then continued to play the game. This reveals a level of opinions and feelings about the former German Chancellor and how she feels positively towards her. However, the length of the comment and the lack of anything more, means that she doesn’t overtly give a political opinion but just implies it. Meanwhile ‘now I prefer cruelty-free projects’ has a similar tone and explanation of her view and tells you her viewpoint on an issue (in this case animal cruelty).²¹² It then can be seen as more or less extreme based on how their audience wants or wishes to interpret it.

There are also statements that imply a much larger conversation and an opinion. This can be a bit like a dog whistle that’s only picked up on by other people who know about it. So, in Theresa Lindgren’s video ‘Did not go as planned’ she is watching a lot of *TicTok* videos and reacting to them.²¹³ These *Tic Tok*’s included videos about Periods and Covid-19, when watching a video with a man helping his partner with period pain she reacts joyfully. However, when she talks about it, she talks about positive masculinity and how this is a good example.²¹⁴ The term positive masculinity is part of a much wider context and discussion about, positive and toxic masculinity as well as institutionalised sexism. Certain phrases and terms are linked to a political position as the alternative political view has different terminology for similar contexts. Thus, by using this terminology you imply your position without having to enter into a deep conversation about it, while the dog whistle will not be picked up by other audience members who do not echo those values.

Explicit Position

This is in-your-face and here is my opinion, accept it, it is not designed to be interpreted to fit the audience's views or to be ignored. That doesn’t mean that it can’t be interpreted

²¹² Claire Dimopoulou “Πώς Έγινε Makeup Artist | My Makeup Story (Tag)” (27th September)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjmZpPJyXuc&list=PLqKcC5TSNITu51B-pM1rYdERf7EzVMDhB&index=10&ab_channel=%CE%9A%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85>

²¹³ Therese Lindgren “BLEV INTE SOM PLANERAT...” You Tube (27th March 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXQOnJxHFTM&list=PLqKcC5TSNITvYp2HRwetopS9rur25RpeB&index=6&ab_channel=hereselindgren>

²¹⁴ Therese Lindgren “BLEV INTE SOM PLANERAT...” You Tube (27th March 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXQOnJxHFTM&list=PLqKcC5TSNITvYp2HRwetopS9rur25RpeB&index=6&ab_channel=hereselindgren>

incorrectly as anything can be, but it is intentionally direct. I have ranked the three examples that fit this section best, in order of just how overtly political they are and how hard they are to ignore. The ability to ignore is not just related to length but whether it takes you out of the normal tone and speed of the video.

The first example and the one closest to inference were created by Nikkitutorials in her first in-person collaboration video.²¹⁵ She explains at the start that whilst filming the collaboration, she had followed all the rules of their lockdown and filmed it safely specifically with Covid-19 in mind; she then praises the lockdown referring to it as intelligent and discusses how it is working, which takes it from an inference or acknowledgement of the situation to an explicit position, but it is easier to ignore than the others in this category.

The second example is from Dulceida in her video '24h in Quarantine', it is a vlog video that has her showing her life and encouraging others to stay safe and inside in typical vlog form.²¹⁶ Then without skipping a beat she turns to the camera and talks about how teenagers are being let out of their houses in Spain for the first time since the pandemic began. This was the result of a new law change that the Spanish government had just reviewed due to a backlash from the public. Dulceida talks about how this change is a bad idea and the possible impact that it's going to have on their Covid rates and why if you are a teenager you should stay home and everyone else stay 2 meters apart and wash their hands.²¹⁷ The turn from the camera changes the beat and flow of the video making it hard to ignore, but it is still such a small part of the video that it's skippable and before you know it the video moves on and so can the audience.

The final example is that of EnjoyPhoneix, talking about why she is leaving France and moving to Belgium, two of her points could be considered political; discrimination and recycling.²¹⁸ The recycling issue, however, is the clearest of these, it is thorough and at the

²¹⁵ Nikki DeJagger "15-MINUTE MAKEUP CHALLENGE ft. Davina Michelle" YouTube (2nd May 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6n_6Hutgn8&list=PLqKcC5TSNITtJDWbTBInnUXDzV1oW-EZ2&index=6&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

²¹⁶ Aida Domenech "24H CONMIGO EN CUARENTENA - VLOG - DULCEIDA" YouTube (30th April) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EUsEoCVRgw&t=12s&ab_channel=Dulceida>

²¹⁷ Aida Domenech "24H CONMIGO EN CUARENTENA - VLOG - DULCEIDA" YouTube (30th April) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EUsEoCVRgw&t=12s&ab_channel=Dulceida>

²¹⁸ Marie Lopez "pourquoi je pars ? (mais je reviendrai quand même)" (23rd March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsiGNLkAoR8&list=PLqKcC5TSNITss8n-8bErNPMsstinMYz0uO&index=4&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

end, she briefly takes it beyond just herself and looks at benefits for all. She wants to live somewhere that sorts its recycling and takes care of the planet and notes that France should be doing the same.²¹⁹ It is a quick statement in length but the power of saying one of the reasons why I am leaving the country is her country's domestic policy is huge and emphasises the value that she put on it.

These issues are big, direct and in your face and tell the audience what the influencer thinks that they should do and what they (the Vlogger) values. The comments are still short enough that you can move on from them without absorbing them and the statements are probably over by the time you have moved to skip it or bring up another video. However, they are also overt political statements that can influence the audience and encourage a political position. All of the quick comments that discussed have an impact even if they are only small, it is about the dozens of comments from many influencers that combined can help change politics.

Camouflaged conversations

This style of political conversation are defined by their lack of acknowledgement of their political nature. They are indirect in their political nature, these videos talk about politics without acknowledging the political nature of it. There are two subtypes of this, the critical conversation skirts the political nature of the topic by taking a political situation and discussing it, including criticisms or encouragements, without any acknowledgement of the political nature of the topic, then linking it back to a political position. Normalisation activism is where the focus of a video is political without even mentioning it. Acting like it is completely normal with the undertone of, this is how it should be and you should do as I am. By repeatedly seeing this behaviour it stops being seen by the viewer as strange and instead becomes the norm.²²⁰ This is seen often with LGBTQ activism and Influencers where in some videos they talk about it as a political topic, discrimination and legislation being at the forefront while in others' vlogs they are just openly gay.

²¹⁹ Marie Lopez "pourquoi je pars ? (mais je reviendrai quand même)" (23rd March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsiGNLkAoR8&list=PLqKcC5TSNI7ss8n-8bErNPMs8tnMYz0uO&index=4&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

²²⁰ Melanie McCarry, Nancy Lombard "same old story? children and young people's continued normalisation of men's violence against women" (2016) Feminist review 112 128

Critical Conversations

As with everything there is a range in how overtly political something is and how much criticism and discussion there is on the topic in the video. When it comes to economic issues the place where beauty vloggers tend to talk about this most is in Hauls or Comparison videos. Talking about Price, Quality, Value for money and what you should buy is a form of political discussion, it is the most basic economic conversation. Price, cost and value for money are an inherent part of these videos and there are different ways that the Influencers handle them. Bibi'sBeautyPalace turns this discussion into a game comparing expensive and cheap baby costumes and guessing which is which.²²¹ She feels the fabric and the patterns and gets half of them right, meaning that 50% of the time she believed that the cheapest item was the more expensive and better purchase. Bibi leaves this as an open question for the audience to make any other assumptions about why that's the case and what you should do or think about this. Meanwhile, other influencers might discuss cost openly talking about how expensive items are and how prices affect people in a recession.²²² Talking about knowing your brands so that you know whether it is worth it pricewise, or a reminder that cheap can be better. This can be by completely ignoring the price and not mentioning it or including it in your video.

Part of the critical conversations about an attitude are obviously in the video, this is similar to normalisation. In RedLipstickMonster's video on zero waste options, she discusses the price and how it relates to quality but that's the topic of the video it's a background feature.²²³ Another background issue that comes up in this and is also an aspect of economic politics is where the products are made and whether they are Polish owned. This is not gone into in further detail and the video is a review not about why you should buy locally owned, which is a political issue that governments often encourage. The topic of the review however is about zero waste which she doesn't go into and thus we see the camouflaged aspect of this political discussion. By not being in your face about politics but

²²¹ Bianca Claßen "Gleicher Baby Artikel für 0,01€ vs. 84,00€ ☹️ | Bibi" You tube (3rd May 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNLxrsnPb-U&t=2s&ab_channel=Bibi'sBeautyPalace>

²²² Marie Lopez "Les articles de LUXE que je REGRETTE d'avoir achetés ! (+ CONCOURS)" (21st March 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvTpmeXIWWI&list=PLqKcC5TSNIITss8n-8bErNPMsstinMYz0uO&index=2&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

²²³ Ewa Grzelakowska-Kostoglu "Demakijaż ZERO WASTE 🧼 Testuję WIELORAZOWE płatki i waciki" You tube (30th May 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcmAimVpic&t=18s&ab_channel=RedLipstickMonster>

still discussing it, the audience is less likely to go into this with an adversarial mindset and thus we are more likely to have actual change.

Critical conversations are often about subsets of wider political issues; as we are talking about beauty vloggers, sexism is one of the issues that come up the most as it affects the lives of the influencers. This is a broad and complex topic that has so many sub-categories, and thus an influencer talking about one of those sub categories in detail for 20 minutes is political. EnjoyPhonex dedicated a 20-minute and 30-second video to contraception and her positive and negative experiences with it.²²⁴ She never talks about the wider issues of sexism or how the government has an effect; which she has on other issues (recycling is one that has already been discussed.) The topic focuses on the viewer's health and prioritising your health and why you have to talk to and potentially argue with your doctor and medical professionals to get the care you need and deserve.²²⁵ Part of that is her talking about how the medical community has not historically cared about women's health, thus you will have to do this for yourself. This is made even more political by her emphasising how one of the reasons she changed her birth control was because she wanted to have her libido back while still not worrying about getting pregnant. Here she is emphasising an issue championed by second wave feminism all while acting like it's no big deal. By never acknowledging that she is telling women to take charge of their own bodies and argue with doctors. Thus she does not have to say 'keep your laws off our bodies' she's telling her audience to expect that while also telling them they may have to speak up to get it.

Normalisation

Is the act of acting or treating something as if it is normal so that others will not view it as controversial and act similarly. It is a form of activism that has been used by political organisations, governments and businesses in which you try to make something happen by acting like it already has. Dulceida is a Queer Influencer, and she has a wife, being a lesbian is part of her life and thus part of her content. In some videos she emphasises and discusses it as a political issue, often focusing on the effect that homophobia and family reactions

²²⁴ Marie Lopez "ARRÊT DE LA PILULE : Les conséquences et les bienfaits sur mon corps (2 ans après)" You Tube (18 July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNnGBdLXZT8&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

²²⁵ Marie Lopez "ARRÊT DE LA PILULE : Les conséquences et les bienfaits sur mon corps (2 ans après)" You Tube (18 July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNnGBdLXZT8&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez>

have on LGBTQ youth.²²⁶ In A WEEK ON A FAMILY BOAT – DULCEIDA she doesn't talk about homophobia instead. She posts a happy video that gives hope to young people and normalises gay marriage and family acceptance. Celebrating her wedding anniversary on holiday with her parents and siblings, the fact that they are gay does not need mentioning.²²⁷ Instead, everyone can just focus on hope, and see the way the world should be so that they can change to make that happen.

When it comes Covid-19, and normalisation videos, it is about videos where you don't talk about the issue, instead you just follow health guidelines. This can be seen in videos where the influencer's just wearing masks or keeping two meters apart. It can also exist in videos where influencers talk about how to survive lockdown and stay sane without saying you must stay home because of Covid. This was a common thing done by many of the influencers, particularly early on in the pandemic. My favourite example of this is by Ella from Croatia who does a, how to shop in a pandemic video.²²⁸ I have put this in the category of normalisation because she goes above and beyond the norm of how to stay safe in March. She includes the norm of the time of keeping a distance changing clothes and washing your groceries. However, unlike other videos from the time she talks about masks and gloves and safely helping others. This is the next step and instead of treating it like the advice she treats it as if this is how she does it, is this not how everyone does it?

The peak of the form however of the camouflaged conversation and acting like this is normal and non-controversial until it becomes so. Clio Makeup, the Italian YouTuber living in New York, makes a video about how to do make up with a mask. She smiles as she does it in a perky, this is just a normal tutorial way, during the anti-mask protests that will continue in a country where this was an incredibly controversial and political issue.²²⁹ She ends this video which is just a make-up tutorial by placing a mask on her and then her young daughter

²²⁶ Aida Domenech "LEYENDO VUESTRAS HISTORIAS #PRIDE - DULCEIDA Y ALBA" Youtube (9th July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LYSCOlPUnq&t=134s&ab_channel=Dulceida>

²²⁷ Aida Domenech "UNA SEMANA EN UN BARCO EN FAMILIA – DULCEIDA" You Tube (24th September 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DS5hV45MeU&list=PLqKcC5TSNITvCMPWwP9Pfbr-vFAI6_QQI&index=5&ab_channel=Dulceida>

²²⁸ Ella Dvornik "KAKO IZGLEDA SHOPPING USRED PANDEMIJE?! VLOG7/2020 (26th March 2020) You Tube<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPzZHh22B1s&list=PLqKcC5TSNITqGzVlvKQe4fsrYiBqQrH&index=2&ab_channel=Ella>

²²⁹ Clio "TUTORIAL TRUCCO MASCHERINA ESTATE 2020 🎭 BELLO LEGGERO E RESISTENTE ✨

" You tube (8th July 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvrdj2DHUQ&list=PLqKcC5TSNITso_tp5o8M7r33sruhC8g6u&index=3&ab_channel=ClioMakeUp>

with a smile to the camera. This is a political statement, but she does not act like it is or treat it as if it is one, which is a political statement in itself.

Let's talk politics

Talking politics is exactly what it sounds like and this is where the influencers openly talk about politics. They acknowledge the situation or issue they are talking about and its importance and give their opinion and position on it. The politics talked about in these videos are not meant to be hidden or ignored even if they are not mentioned in the title of the video. These videos are the most overtly and obviously political and what one might envision when someone says that YouTuber is talking about politics. There is obviously still a scale and range in this topic both in style and length of the video. Not every overtly political video is 28 minutes of sitting on the floor talking to camera even if that is quintessentially YouTube.²³⁰ Most of these videos are sitting down in front of the camera, although there are some that are in a vlog style. There is also a difference in the focus and length of the videos and whether the political topic is the sole or political issue.

While the most obvious example of this is Therese Lindgren interviewing Sweden's deputy PM asking questions her audience cares about, particularly focusing on questions that might be trivial to others.²³¹ This is not where I want to focus, in part because it is the most obviously political and the easiest to see the politics in. The cases that I would like to look at are those that most closely intertwined with their seemingly frivolous beauty content. The political make-up tutorial, because who says you can't talk politics while also doing a pastel Pink cut crease and teaching how to apply highlighter.

These political make-up tutorials can have the more subtle politics that we have been discussing for the rest of the chapter but also in the intentional this is the purpose of this video way. This can be in a video where it is still designed to be a tutorial for example

²³⁰ Marie Lopez "Le vrai problème de la Cancel Culture" You tube (25th July 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6RSz_1x_Io&ab_channel=EnjoyPhoenix-MarieLopez >

²³¹ Therese Lindgren "Ställer era frågor till vice statsminister Isabella Lövin" You Tube (21st March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD1wLvkjFqI&t=18s&ab_channel=thereselindgren >

‘Stepford wives inspired make-up look’.²³² The movie is about sexism and the pressure that women are under and so we can see this being discussed in the video. The video is about sexism but that doesn’t mean it’s not also a makeup tutorial. Because these girls are talented, they can make even the make-up advice about sexism, for example, ‘do it like this so that you look flawless because women can’t have faults.’ In this video, Claire also decides to go on a rant specifically about Donald Trump and the beauty gap because just talking about sexism wasn’t enough.

Still, in political make-up tutorials territory, we can go to the peak of this category in a ‘Full Face of Black-owned beauty.’ NikkiTutorial’s video on Black Lives Matter is done in this video while she pledges to be better, ensuring to use black-owned products.²³³ She talks about racism and institutional racism and what her audience can and should do about it. She also brings it back to the Netherlands, her home country, rather than keeping it in the States as she talks about the Racism inherent in black Pete. She occasionally interrupts her lecture to describe what she is doing with her make-up; the politics however is the focus. This is then topped by putting her money where her mouth is and asking her audience to do the same. All revenue from this video is going to BLM-related non-profits and she links them in the description asking people to donate. There is no doubt that this is designed to influence her audience's political position.

Chapter Seven: The EU and the future

The internet in general is American-focused both in who controls it and what is talked about.²³⁴ So why should the EU as an institution and its citizens care about influencers' informal political discussions? The real-life effect that the internet has and can have on the EU, the impact on culture, the power of foreign corporations and the involvement of EU citizens in American politics have been covered within this thesis. All while considering the discussion and lack thereof that the studied vloggers did.

²³² Claire Dimopoulou “Stepford Wives Inspired | Μάτι Γωνία & Ποζ Χείλη” (10th September 2020) you tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwWeDlcX-4&t=30s&ab_channel=%CE%9A%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%AF%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85>

²³³ Nikki DeJagger “Full Face of Black-Owned Make-up Brands | NikkieTutorials” You Tube (11th June 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDxBkY4IISc&t=35s&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

²³⁴ Piet Verhoeven and others “How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media” (2011) Public relations review 38 162 at 164

Social Media Influencers have an impact on politics but in the videos studied, the EU was not something that was brought up by the Influencers. However, previously there have already been cases of the EU being affected by Social Media politics and thus should matter to the institution. The Brexit vote was discussed and affected by social media²³⁵ but the time when the EU was being discussed most by Influencers was Article 13.²³⁶ The so-called meme ban which was widely discussed and disliked by internet users and this led to discussions about how the EU works and how legislation is passed.

The meme was legislation that the parliament put forward that many warned would have the effect of banning memes under copyright law.²³⁷ This led to in-person protests and calls to contact viewers individual MEPs from both EU and American YouTubers some of which do not typically talk politics.²³⁸ This for many in the audience was the first time hearing about the EU and helped to sculpt their view of it. This led to the European Union having to officially comment as well as individual MEP's having to say 'we are not banning memes.'²³⁹ Since then the potential power of social media has increased and should not be forgotten about.

Even when informal conversations do not drift into discussing the EU, they can still have an impact on it by shaping the views of its citizens and specifically its youth. If an influencer is regularly talking about why they support Donald Trump or why you should take on the politics of the American right. It does not stop it from shaping your views even if it does start by making fun of or being shocked at the lack of socialised health care in America.

This ubiquity of American politics in conversation may also have an impact on what we see to be acceptable culturally.²⁴⁰ An example from outside of Europe in Latin America is the consistent use of the 'Second Amendment.'²⁴¹ In news and communication on gun control the second

²³⁵ Max Hänska Stefan Bauchowitz "Tweeting for Brexit: how social media influenced the referendum" (2017) LSE

²³⁶ European Council Press Release "EU adjusts copyright rules to the digital age" (15 April 2019) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/04/15/eu-adjusts-copyright-rules-to-the-digital-age/>

²³⁷ European Council Press Release "EU adjusts copyright rules to the digital age" (15 April 2019) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/04/15/eu-adjusts-copyright-rules-to-the-digital-age/>

²³⁸ REACT "YouTubers React To Article 13 #SaveYourInternet" You Tube (12 September 2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBphJanne1A&ab_channel=REACT

²³⁹ European Commission "No No No, We are not banning meme" (17 November 2018) <https://europeancommission.medium.com/https-medium-com-europeancommission-no-no-no-we-are-not-banning-memes-copyright-proposal-abf4d21f65d2>

²⁴⁰ Ruth A Deller, Kathryn Murphy "'Zoella hasn't written a book, she's written a cheque:' Mainstream media representations of YouTube Celebrities" (2020) European Journal of Cultural studies 23(1) 112 at 114

²⁴¹ Lias Martins "Bolsonaro's Pro gun agenda may become law" (8 February 2022) Foreign Policy <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/08/bolsonaro-pro-gun-bill-policies-brazil-senate-vote-congress-cac/>

amendment right was often promoted leading some in Brazil to protest the taking away of their second amendment right, which is not in the Brazilian constitution.²⁴² In the studied videos this was seen with discussions of Black Lives Matter, where NikkiTutorials video focused on America's race issue with brief mentions of the Netherlands. Or Dulcedia's video on the same topic also focused on the US when it came to Race and recommended an American movie (the help), focused on the American experience to learn more about it

The Overton window means that even if they are not talking about the EU and relevant policies their viewpoint can still be shifted.²⁴³ As when something is consistently spoken about as an obvious thing that exists even if you disagree with it, the topic or issue can become normalised²⁴⁴ This could potentially change not only the individuals' views but have an impact on the culture of Europe and European nations. In the EU free speech can have a different meaning than it does in America, and an issue of the commentary and the corporation of YouTube being American is that American sensibilities can become centralised.²⁴⁵ This can be seen in issues surrounding hate speech and whether it should be illegal or banned, In Germany the use of swastikas and the Hitler Salute is strictly legislated against and in much the rest of Europe, there are consequences for denying the Holocaust.²⁴⁶ This goes against the American first amendment which historically would not have been a problem. In Germany movies or plays would either be adapted or banned for breaking these rules. (An example of an adaption is that when the Producers was performed in Germany, they used Pretzels rather than swastikas on the Nazi's arm bands).²⁴⁷

This is harder on the Internet as YouTube is an American corporation but is accessible internationally. This can show the difference in culture and attitude on issues, particularly on

²⁴² Lias Martins "Bolsonaro's Pro gun agenda may become law" (8 February 2022) Foreign Policy
<<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/08/bolsonaro-pro-gun-bill-policies-brazil-senate-vote-congress-cac/>>

²⁴³ Mackniak center for public policy "The overton window" (2019)
<<https://www.mackinac.org/overtonwindow>>

²⁴⁴ Mackniak center for public policy "The overton window" (2019)
<<https://www.mackinac.org/overtonwindow>>

²⁴⁵ Oscar Rickett "Why the Rest of the World Cares So Much About American Politics" (24th January 2017)
<<https://www.vice.com/en/article/yppvev/why-so-many-of-us-care-more-about-american-politics-than-our-own>>

²⁴⁶ JANOSCH DELCKER "Germany's balancing act: Fighting online hate while protecting free speech" (1 October 2020) Politico <<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-hate-speech-internet-netzdg-controversial-legislation/>>

²⁴⁷ [Michael Kimmelman](#) The Führer Returns to Berlin, This Time Saluted Only by Laughs (18 May 2009) the New York Times
<<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/19/theater/19abroad.html>>

attitudes toward free speech.²⁴⁸ For example, whereas free speech protects paid political advertising in America it does not in Europe where it is often condemned.²⁴⁹ On the opposite side of the spectrum nudity and sex is often less taboo throughout Europe than it is in America.²⁵⁰ Yet when the US legislative bodies passed legislation that made websites responsible for sexual content on their sites (FOSTA and SESTA) some EU citizens lost revenue or the ability to discuss sex on sites that they had used for decades.²⁵¹ The FBI took down some sites internationally getting in the way of international efforts against human trafficking and safer sex work.²⁵² The idea that actions and attitudes prevalent in America can so easily have automatic impacts on the lives of EU citizens and the attitudes they will potentially take to the voting booths is worth researching.

The fact that American companies control the potential income and audience of Social Media Influencers has a wide impact. Particularly as it is hard for the EU and EU member states to legislate and enforce laws even when the audience is in the member states. This is because much of the activity happens outside of their jurisdiction and thus every law surrounding the internet has to arrange for ways to work and legislate with third party countries.²⁵³²⁵⁴²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ Buss Krisjanis “Copyright and Free Speech: The Human Rights Perspective”(2016) Baltic Journal of Law and Politics 8(2)

²⁴⁹ Clifford Jones “Regulating political advertising in the EU and USA: a human rights perspective” (2006) Journal of Political Affairs 4(3) 244

²⁵⁰ Bits of Freedom “We can no longer talk about sex on facebook in Europe” (January 16 2019) EDRI <<https://edri.org/our-work/we-can-no-longer-talk-about-sex-on-facebook-in-europe/>>

²⁵¹ Bits of Freedom “We can no longer talk about sex on facebook in Europe” (January 16 2019) EDRI <<https://edri.org/our-work/we-can-no-longer-talk-about-sex-on-facebook-in-europe/>>

²⁵² Erin Technor “‘I’ve Never Been So Exploited’: The consequences of FOSTA-SESTA in Aotearoa New Zealand” (2020) Anti trafficking review 14 99

²⁵³ (16 December 2008) Decision No 1351 Official Journal of the European Union <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008D1351&qid=1646902507783>>

²⁵⁴ Carolynne Mckee Bevin Ashford “Legislating for the internet” (1998) Bracton Law Journal 30 23

²⁵⁵ Parliament of Australia Research Paper “Can the internet be regulated” (1995) https://www.aph.gov.au/about_parliament/parliamentary_departments/parliamentary_library/pubs/rp/rp95/96/96rp35

The top YouTubers in the world include EU citizens; PewDiePie who was mentioned in the first chapter is one of the most subscribed YouTubers on the platform with 111 million subscribers.²⁵⁶ He is a Swedish citizen who was living in Italy when he started his channel which is entirely in English because it's the language of the internet.²⁵⁷ Similarly NikkiTutorials the Dutch YouTuber studied is big worldwide and produces content in English.²⁵⁸ The European Union and many nations within it are trying to help and encourage European languages including minority languages. So having the biggest EU YouTubers producing content in English because that's where the money and audience is will be a new factor to deal with.²⁵⁹ Legislation over how much radio and TV airplay should be in the national language cannot be enforced online.²⁶⁰ This is why the influencers studied using their native languages changes their audience making it domestic and potentially lowering their income. However, it also allows provides a surface that is harder to get on the internet and for governments to support.

When broad-based subjects are promoted, gaps appear when all the entertainment emanates from the same place, this can lead to the missing of perspectives. This is seen in how Americans discuss Racism which leads to less focus on European domestic issues. Or when they are discussed, it being limited like to the end like with NikkiTutorials.²⁶¹ Or overdramatised like with the memeban.²⁶²

We can also see it in the positives the studied vloggers brought. There is knowledge that comes from seeing the prices listed in your own currency and thus being able to easily work out what you can afford. Learning what is accessible in your area and where you might be able to buy something that you have seen advertised. Similarly, you can see that some of the influencers encourage people to purchase domestically made products which can help the local economy.

²⁵⁶ Felix Kjellberg "PewDiePie about" YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/@PewDiePie/about>>

²⁵⁷ Paige Leskin The career of PewDiePie the controversial 30 year old video creator who just returned to youtube after a 30 day hiatus(10 September 2019) Business Insider
<<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/pewdiepie-youtube-felix-kjellberg-life-career-controversy-2019-9?r=US&IR=T>>

²⁵⁸ NikkiTutorials: Beauty youtuber reveals she is transgender (14 January 2020) BBC
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²⁵⁹ European Parliament Briefing "Regional and minority languages in the European Union" (September 2016)
<<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-589794-Regional-minority-languages-EU-FINAL.pdf>>

²⁶⁰ Hugh Schofield "French rebel over music language quotas" (3 October 2015) BBC News
<<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34422307>>

²⁶¹ Nikki DeJagger "Full Face of Black-Owned Make-up Brands | NikkieTutorials" You Tube (11th June 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDxBkY4IIsc&t=35s&ab_channel=NikkieTutorials>

²⁶² European Comision "No No No, We are not banning meme" (17 November 2018)
<<https://europeancommission.medium.com/https-medium-com-europeancommission-no-no-no-we-are-not-banning-memes-copyright-proposal-abf4d21f65d2>>

The benefit of this was clearest during the Covid-19 pandemic as SMIs were more focused on locals therefore they could reference domestic laws and assistance options.

A much more overtly problematic element is how can and should the EU react when their citizens are part of movements that affect the international community and what to do when they become localised.²⁶³ This can include becoming part of a hate mob that is publishing personal information of people who they disagree with (Doxing) in many cases this would be considered illegal in the EU. A movement like Gamergate or even to some extent #METOO could be seen as American but all parties to a sub-dialogue can be EU citizens.²⁶⁴ With less control over information borders and an awareness that the issues highlighted impact them, it is clear this research matters to the EU.

Limitations and Potential for further research

As mentioned, Language is a limitation of the research and we can see that when looking at what we know about the two English-speaking channels. As with NikkieTutorials and the make-up chair, we are able to note more specific details rather than in broader statements and. It is a potential for further research to get more specific. Another aspect of this limitation is that certain languages are translated more easily than others notable French and Spanish are easier to translate than German, Polish, and Greek, which were harder to translate both because they lacked subtitles and AI translators have a harder time with these languages, a situation exacerbated when there are differences in alphabets, leading to more difficulty in researching further.

Secondly, we have a limited data set of only 100 videos which means that conclusions may not scale out as widely as we would like. This is something that could be researched further in future studies by looking at more youtubers as well as more content from the channels. With more to compare and more data, different patterns might emerge.

Outside of the scope of this research, further work could also be done on the impact on their audiences and how it affects their political views.

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