

# Adolescents as Cultural Activists

## Remixing Celebrities in Fandom Communities

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### Introduction

This chapter explores the practices of a group of teenage girls who are part of a fan community organized around music celebrities (Duffett, 2014a). We consider them activists in the context of popular culture (Jenkins, 1992/2013) as they participate in the community with other fans using multimodal discourse (Kress, 2010). In this chapter, we regard these celebrities as a collective construction linked by emotional ties that connect the community. In addition, fans' activities are understood to be a form of social action which we consider, in the broadest sense of the term, to be activism (Hartley, 2010; Ratto & Boler, 2014). We base our definition of "activism" on the works of Robinson and Rundell (1994) in order to examine the culture work that stands between creative and critical practices (Duvall, 2010). We analyze multimodal discourse as a form of expression which is rebuilt as it circulates through a network.

We focus on fans of two musical groups whose members are international celebrities who are admired by fans and garner extensive media attention. Also, brands have been built around these bands with the goal of achieving commercial success (selling records as well as merchandising) and filling their concerts when they tour around the world (Wohlfeil, 2018, p. 6202).

Among the musical groups followed by the girls who participated in this study, two were shown to be fundamental. The first is *One Direction*, a pop band

comprised of five London-based teenagers that formed in 2010 and disbanded in 2015. Their most famous albums topped the charts in major markets and they also starred in their own films and “authored” books, undoubtedly generated and written by their managers (*One Direction*, 2013, 2014), in which they disclose personal stories, show their concerts and share a part of their lives. Their followers tend to group together and are very active, participating in numerous social networks. The second is *Magcon*, which is also formed of teenage boys, aged between 16 and 20. They are far less famous than *One Direction*. They have become famous through their online videos, which are shared primarily through the social video network Vine. They uploaded quite a few of the 6-second Vines that girls considered to be funny and attractive. After Vine disappeared, the stars made the move to YouTube. Nash Grier and Cameron Dallas were probably the most popular boys in the group. As well as being part of a group, whose members have gradually changed over the years, each of the teenagers has become a celebrity in his own right. Both *One Direction* and *Magcon* are very present on social networks and that is where the groundwork is laid for their fan communities.

*One Direction* and *Magcon* are *boybands* that are usually supported by highly choreographed performances. They sing love songs targeting young females and their international success was fueled by social media. Sometimes, the relationships of these boybands with teens have some negative connotations. For example, fangirls could relate to the Teeny Booper subculture, organized around pop music, teen idols and fashion, which creates spaces away from boys and grownups. Sometimes they are seen as an anxious public, an example of the triumph of commerce over art, and the sacrifice of “depth” to surface and image (McRobbie & Garber, 2006). Traditionally, the criticisms of the young teens and adolescent girl fans’ activities is linked to their portrayal on mass media. Boys play an “active” role in the bands, they are idols, while girls are usually assigned the role of fans, taking part in a subculture associated with activities separated from the norm in adult and “official” culture. By contrast, we assume that the girls’ presence in social networks as fans of music bands not only creates their own spaces, but also facilitates active forms of citizenship and social participation.

The main objective of this chapter is to analyze the teenagers’ activities that are mediated by texts and discourses that enable collective creation. We understand these activities as a form of collective action. The chapter’s specific goals are the following:

1. *To analyze the teenagers’ participation in fan communities organized around the celebrities from One Direction and Magcon, sharing common goals which are understood as a collective endeavour, as they participate in social networks.*

2. *To examine the role of multimodal re-constructed content in maintaining and transforming the fan community.* Multimodal productions are considered intellectual and emotional supports for the members of the fan community.
3. *To explore the social activism generated in these networks, which we understand as a form of political participation.*

## Structure

As regards the chapter’s structure, the theoretical framework was revised throughout the process, as it was verified against the data provided by the multimodal productions and interviews with participants. The main concepts are the following: first, *fan communities*, organized around music celebrities (Duffett, 2013); second, we interpret fan activities in relation to *the reception, creation and distribution of multimodal texts* (Kress, 2010; Jenkins, 1992/2013), with the emphasis far more on the community than on individuals; third, *social activism* associated with community practices, which is related to the teenagers’ presence in public life (Cohen & Kahne, 2012) and allows for relationships to be established between online and offline life. The methodological approach is rooted in both ethnography (Pink et al., 2015) and anthropology (Horst & Miller, 2006). The data and qualitative analyses are structured around the particular theoretical concepts, which were the tools used for interpretation. Finally, the results are presented through several examples. We will show how theoretical concepts support our interpretation of the adolescents’ presence in the community, their celebrity constructions and the way they engage in action through relationships and shared goals with other fans.

## Theoretical Framework

In this study, we assume that fans who participate in communities organized around celebrities share common goals. It is also clear that young people reconstruct the celebrity’s persona (Marshall, 2014b) through the information provided on social networks, where they interact with other fans and also with the teams that manage celebrities’ online presences. In these virtual contexts, both fans and celebrities use multimodal discourses (Kress, 2010).

### Celebrities and Music Fan Communities

We start with the notion of community. Anthropology and cultural psychology provide definitions of community that involve useful concepts from which to

explore adolescent fan communities. Lave & Wenger (1991) focused on communities of practice, understood as groups of people who share values, goals and ways of acting. Sometimes, their presence in the community is guided by other members who are more experienced in certain types of tasks. Usually, those who teach are distinguished with a certain social power, which is not always explicit, but which contributes to configuring social relationships. From this perspective, Rogoff (2012) refers to the concept of guided participation, a social role which allows for bridges so that apprentices establish connections between what they already know and new practices.

We are interested in exploring fan communities organized around music celebrities. According to Marshall (2014a), there are no communities at the time when a celebrity appears in the public sphere, but rather “a cluster of individuals are given greater presence and a wider scope of activity and agency than are those who make up the rest of the population. They are allowed to move on the public stage while the rest of us watch” (p. 751). The celebrity is an individual and other people are a simple addition. However, this situation changed with the emergence of the internet, because celebrities now inhabit a social world in which they are close to their fans, who can follow them through ubiquitous images. This now happens with much greater intensity than it did in the past (Marshall, 2014a). In this study, we consider fans not as a mass of individuals, but as people who participate in a community, from which they rebuild the celebrity, who is conferred hero status.

This chapter examines communities organized around music celebrities, which are often considered an example of counterculture. According to Duffett (2014a), while the internet has transformed these communities, several aspects remain unchanged, including musical fascination, romantic ideology, and an emphasis on the idol or idols. Duffett defines media fandom as “the recognition of a positive, personal, relatively deep, emotional connection with a mediated element of popular culture” (Duffett, 2013, p. 2). This author attributes three characteristics to fan activity, defined in terms of types of pleasure: connection to hero or story, appropriation of its meaning and particular kinds of performance enacted by the fans themselves. In terms of male music celebrities, Duffett (2014a) writes (referring to Elvis) that the hero is more than a musician—he is a seducer, someone whose music is a vehicle for intimacy. Duffett speaks of love, a feeling which is mentioned very frequently in teenage fan communities. We ask what it means to love a favourite musician; someone the fan has never seen. To Duffett, “Fan passion often seems an exceptional form of love, collectively expressed but open to change and review” (2014a, p. 149). It is an emerging love with no intimacy and can be transformed by a certain knowledge of reality. It is love not so much for a person as for a performance; it is conditional love.

In his classic study on fandom, Jenkins (1992) proposed that being a fan means an emotional intensity and intellectual involvement in relation to particular people or objects which arouse the fan’s passion. However, he also added that the interaction with that object is mediated by particular texts, so fandom culture relates to specific forms of reception and participation which are rooted in group practices. In addition, these reception processes are associated with various competencies, which involve more than causal contact with the object of admiration. Moreover, according to Jenkins,

these relationships between readers and texts are continually negotiated and viewers may move fluidly between different attitudes toward the material. As several accounts of fan culture suggest, a sense of proximity and possession coexists quite comfortably with a sense of ironic distance. (1992, p. 65)

That is to say, the texts are interpreted on the basis of previous experiences which shape the fans’ relationships with the hero and other members of the community, through dynamic processes.

### Reconstructing Celebrities through Multimodal Discourse

Goffman (1956) is an excellent starting point to explore how the celebrity’s representation is built in everyday life in online/offline communities. The information about the celebrity comes from three sources: first, the celebrity, who in turn becomes the object of representation by others. In the case of *One Direction*, it is clear that the band projects a certain image online, using both written and audiovisual language. Second, a person’s image depends on how they are perceived by specific individuals who are close to them; in our case, fans form small groups, providing proximity, which helps contribute to creating this image. Finally, Goffman refers to audiences and the collective representations that are present in the fan community.

Goffman’s ideas can be interpreted within the framework of the digital revolution, which transformed young people’s relationships with the media, providing new experiences related to production and distribution. Fans are responding to these challenges using multimodal discourse. As Kress expresses it, “mode is a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning” (2010, p. 79). There are multiple examples of modes used in representation and communication, including image, writing layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects. Multiple expressive modes are present in social networks. On many networks, images are the predominant mode. According to Rowsell (2013), visual discourse is usually associated with creativity during childhood, as well as

the representation of the instant. The visual can express messages differently from other modes, since connections are established not only with knowledge but also with affection, the latter being very relevant to fan communities.

We will now look beyond the concept of multimodal language, which focuses on code, to messages considered as discursive practices. Dijk (2014) highlights how these communicative interactions are embedded in social and cultural contexts. Today, the study of language goes beyond an analysis of abstract structures of words, clauses, sentences or propositions. It is now part of an integrated account of multimodal discourse, supported by socially, culturally and cognitively situated in the frame of human interaction and communication (Dijk, 2007, p. 396). In terms of the discursive practices used, strategies involving remixes are particularly significant in the fan community and relevant to our work. Manovich (2015) defines remixes as compositions created through the union of previously existing parts, which are edited to create a particular aesthetic, object or sign in order to produce a specific effect.

In line with this perspective, Barron and D.Y.N.C. (2014) recognise that social media, especially Twitter, have transformed the way in which people approach celebrities. Celebrities' activities become texts that fans actively rebuild. These ideas place the emphasis on something that has already been analyzed in depth by Bakhtin and Holquist (1981), who allude to relationships between heroes, built into texts by authors, through dialogue. New media contribute to this dialogue because audiences become conveyors of the events in a celebrity's public and private life. This information is now retransmitted minute to minute (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Relationships are less distant than when communication was mainly unidirectional.

In this chapter, we show how adolescent girls use multimodal discourse within the framework of the fan communities to rebuild the celebrity's image. These fans organise around celebrities that they consider, consciously or otherwise, as a certain type of hero. Fans not only participate in particular communities actively, but they reinterpret and redraw texts through social networks, contributing to creating new dimensions in the celebrity's public persona.

### Fans, Celebrities and Social Action

Several studies focus on the relationships between popular culture and civic engagement, or perhaps social participation, of which fandom is one form. Jenkins (2008a) points out that fan communities are built upon ideological affinities, using this term to refer to the interests and goals that the participants share. These forms of participation are present in the everyday lives of young people, who are considered

agents of social action. Cohen and Kahne (2012) and Jenkins, Ito, & boyd (2016) argue that political participation among young people may be linked to interactions between peers which elevate their voices to the public arena. These forms of participation include activities such as: sharing information through the media, engaging in online conversations, acting together with others through the internet, for example through blogs or podcasts, creating online content, performing curator activities—going beyond the information and generating new meanings—and building databases, which act as a starting point from which to expand and reconfigure the information.

Adopting this perspective, we will consider how the social action we have just described also takes shape through activities which are much closer to what has traditionally been understood as political action. This is what boyd (2014) is referring to when she addresses a difference between *new ways of being public and being in public*, highlighting that “*Networked Publics Get Political*.” She highlights Baudelaire's example of people who walk not only to get somewhere, but also *to see and be seen*. This is the behaviour she attributes to teenagers who participate in social networks. They choose to participate in order to be part of the audience, but at the same time they want to project a certain image about themselves. The issues of visibility, spreadability, persistence, searchability and affection are present in their experiences as online public figures. They must negotiate invisible audiences and they face situations that are not always coherent, and are often contradictory.

From another standpoint, these ideas are consistent with those proposed by Hartley (2010) in relation to the concept of citizenship and how it is rooted in interactions in social contexts through the pursuit of common goals and relationships with others. According to Hartley, “In the very process of consumption of commercial pop culture, ‘citizens of media’ also act as producers of ‘imagined communities’—and real associations—that cut across formal citizenship” (2010, p. 239). That is, citizenship is also related to the idea of productive audiences. Participation in the community is expanded through the acquisition of new skills and mastering particular discourses that allow for new forms of participation, which give rise to a DIY (Do-It-Yourself) culture (Ratto & Boler, 2014) that extends beyond physical reality to include media communication and the mastery of information technologies. DIY activists were early adopters of the internet, which soon resulted in “DIWO” (Do-It-With-Others). In the author's opinion, this indicates a more expansive fifth stage of the concept of citizenship than the one proposed by Marshall (1963). At this point it is important to look at Marshall's proposal of five stages in the evolution of the concept of citizenship, each of which is associated with different practices and goals: (1) *Civic*, related to the pursuit of human rights and personal freedoms, (2) *Political*, related to the ability to vote and shape

decision-making, (3) *Social*, associated with a state which seeks the wellbeing of society and focuses on economic issues, (4) *Cultural*, associated with mass media and directly with several forms of activism, (5) DIY/DIWO, which emphasises the productivity of the consumer, self-organized associations and what he refers to as “silly citizenship,” which is associated with the participation of children and young people. Below, we explore two examples of this type of activity.

## Methodological Approach

In line with the theoretical framework outlined above, we analyzed the fans’ practices around two musical groups, *One Direction* and *Magcon*. In the communities organized around them, relationships between fans are mediated by the creation, distribution and interpretation of multimodal texts (Kress, 2010; Pink, 2013). More specifically, we examine how multimodal productions allow for the expression of values, of meaning that we can potentially attribute to fans’ practices. We adopt an ethnographic approach (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, Taylor, 2012; Pink et al., 2015) which uses inductive techniques that evolve throughout the research process. We place particular emphasis on the theoretical model and the role of the researcher and we interacted with the participants both through real-world and online relationships. Our work is also closely related to anthropology (Lave, 2011; Horst & Miller, 2012), in that it seeks cultural principles which recognise the importance of digital instruments, understood as gateways to participation in community life (Horst, 2009). Photography is a methodological tool (Pink, 2001) where the practices of researchers and participants converge. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1990) have inspired an understanding of photography as a form of human practice linked with value systems which are related to social groups and even artistic criteria.

### Participants

This study is part of a broader body of research aimed at developing digital literacy in children and pre-adolescents (Lacasa, de-la-Fuente, & Martín-Garrido, 2016). We design workshops ranging from five to thirty hours which take place at schools or community centres. The participants in this particular study were selected from among the young people attending our workshops. This chapter focuses on a group of five girls aged 13 and 14. The girls’ names have been changed in this chapter to allow for total anonymity. The girls and their parents expressly agreed to and gave permission for participation in the study.

We monitored them over the course of an academic year, through their participation in formal and non-formal educational contexts. The girls were friends with each other and followed different music groups, of which they openly professed to be fans. All of them attended the same school, which is where the research team did its work. The five girls were selected because they were active participants, producing new content in fandom communities rather than retweeting or simply marking other people’s publications as favourites; that said, as we will see, re-posting is one of their main activities. We knew they were friends because of our informal conversations with the girls. They also attended the private workshops organized by the research team outside of the school environment (Lacasa, de-la-Fuente et al., 2016). In addition, the girls had a clear awareness of their shared interests as fans and that they were different from the boys in their class, who were more interested in video game communities.<sup>2</sup> The girls were monitored during the school year within the context of their being members of the fan community, rather than simply monitoring their own productions (Rogoff, 2012).

## Data and Analysis

As indicated above, we observed the practices of these teenagers in and outside of school. In relation to data sources, we took the following principles into account: (a) actions in fans’ everyday lives are explored, (b) prior, thorough research design is not involved, (c) the researcher redefines and focuses the goals throughout the process, and (d) observation, informal discussions, and the material objects supporting activities are essential for the collection of relevant information for the study. A presence in the field and daily contact with the participants were essential. We recorded the conversations in audio and, occasionally, in video. We always used a professional recorder such as an iPhone and an iPad. Under no circumstances did these instruments cause distractions or become a focal point themselves. The observations made during the school year 2014/2015 were collected through summaries of each session, photographs, and audio/video recordings. Individual and group interviews were held with an approximate duration of 4 hours and 30 minutes in total, which were later transcribed.

We also analyzed their personal social media accounts and the accounts they used specifically for fan communities. Table 1 includes the number of entries in each of these networks. It is important to understand the differences between the ways in which they participate. The most active participants are Lucía and Ana. Twitter is the account the two of them used the most to participate in the fan communities. Ana has a specific account for her fan activity, though she is a fan

**Table 1.** Participation in social networks

		Luisa	Lucía	Ana Personal	Ana Fan	Elena	Dani
Twitter	Tweets	196	919	208	1385	133	
	Re-tweets	112	850	115	648	122	
	Likes	2446	1161	262	959	367	
	Followers	146	98	89	92	58	
	Following	173	130	144	208	65	
Instagram	Posts	159	19	19		18	49
	Followers	584	428	347		508	648
	Following	525	319	667		500	614
Vine	Posts		32	8		7	
	Followers		32	59		24	
	Following		53	38		31	
	Likes		254	661		26	
Wattpad	Followers	45	49	39		31	17
	Following	55	48	43		28	20
	Author		16 Chapters				
	Stories on the list	11		13		13	0
	Views		2,3 K.				
	Likes		203				
	Comments		22				

of *One Direction* on both of her accounts. We have discussed the participation of these adolescents in social networks extensively in other papers (Lacasa, Méndez, & de-la-Fuente, 2016).

The interviews and social network content were analyzed using the software NVivo, which allows Twitter accounts to be downloaded directly from the Web using NCapture, a web browser extension. To analyze the contents of the Instagram and Vine accounts we used software offered by the networks' official websites, specifically Iconsquare and Vine.com. An inductive approach was used to analyze the data and we focused particularly on photography and remixes, which we understand as discourses that allow for creativity. Having examined the interviews—which focus heavily on the teenagers' contributions on their Twitter accounts—in a previous study (Lacasa, Méndez et al., 2016), we focus here on multimodal productions. We understand these to be practices related to youth

activism and a way to access the creative discourse present in fan communities. The results seek to clarify the meaning construction processes, exploring how participants interpret their activities.

## Results

We shall now examine how a public space is built, within the scope of the fan community, which is organized around music celebrities—heroes to the teenagers—with whom affective relationships are established. We will see how a community can be constructed when fans seek to interact with the celebrity based on the images that are transmitted from the celebrity's official account. It is hard to say to what extent constructing a fan community as a general framework for fans' interactive practices is independent from the marketing activities related to celebrities, of which young people are often unaware (Turner, 2013). From this point of view, (Baudrillard, 2005) points out that celebrities become their own brand.

### Heroes, Affection and Communities

An image of Shawn Mendes, one member of Magcon, which was mentioned by Lucía, one of the interview participants, helps shed some light on fan activities. The image shows Mendes on stage in front of a packed crowd and reveals the importance of using images of cultural events to foster fan engagement. First, the fans seek connections with their heroes, including physical meetings and other connections; they look for relationships in both the real world and online. Second is the process of appropriation, which in this case is related to a performance, to which particular meanings are given. To some extent, it implies a commitment by the fans to consume media productions. The photograph, posted on a celebrity's official account, was retweeted by the teenagers, which could be understood as an example of the absorption of shared meanings even among fans who could not attend the concert in person. Third, another activity which is widespread among the fans is the construction of written narratives, with the heroes as the main characters. This is of interest in the analysis of online practices, as these texts are reconstructed and can contribute to bringing the community together.

In any case, the relationships that fans seek to establish with the celebrities go beyond attending a concert, or forwarding their images on social networks. Social relationships, both with celebrities and other fans, are mediated by affection, which contributes to strengthening the roots of the community. In line with Duffett (2014a), it should also be noted that the fans establish relationships of admiration towards the celebrities, which Duffett refers to as passion, something similar to the

feeling of love, expressed collectively. It could be considered as an emerging love without traditional intimacy, and one which varies depending on the proximity to or knowledge of the object towards which it is directed. It is not real love; according to Duffett, it is a link to a performance. This demonstrates that personal and group dimensions sometimes intermingle when associated with romantic attitudes. Several images of band members offer specific examples of the feeling of love often shown by fans and the visual elements merge with the written text to generate the message, in English of adoration for the celebrities. The two photographs were stored by Lucía on her mobile, and she shared them with the researchers.

The texts associated with the images express affective relationships. In one image that was retweeted, a desire for personal interaction is expressed: “*I want to be able to make Nash smile like this.*” In addition to declaring love, the girl highlights that she has received a direct message from the singer: “*Nash. Just. DMD. Me. Im crying I love him (Direct message).*” This tweet gained 3,203 Retweets and 12,239 Likes. The second image, which has been retweeted, includes an expression of admiration “*Looks like a fairy tale prince,*” referring to Harry Styles.

It is also worth highlighting that this form of expression is typical of popular culture. Bourdieu and Nice (1980) suggest that bourgeois aesthetics assume values such as detachment, disinterestedness, and indifference. By contrast, popular culture involves identifying with characters and passionately living their lives. Contemplative distance contrasts with immediate affection. We will now look at a final example of how photography and audiovisual discourse allow for the expression of values. Bourdieu and Boltanski’s (1990) reflections are particularly relevant here because they posit that photography is a form of human practice linked with value systems which are related to social groups and even artistic criteria. It is based on this approach that we must interpret fandom practices. In that sense, we understand fandom practices as being present in a sub-culture that lies on the border between mass culture and everyday personal and social life. Fans take materials from the community and establish new forms of production associated with the celebrity. We will explore this process in relation to three additional images, including a photograph that was disseminated over the internet which resulted from Google search carried out in 2016 and 2017. The main picture shows a group of fans next to their hero, waiting at the door of a concert. It was stored by Lucía on her mobile and is an interesting source of discussion in terms of fan activity patterns in relation to texts, as they contribute to strengthening the feelings of the community. Jenkins (1992/2013) highlights the following attributes of the fan community:

1. Its function as an interpretive community of particular values. In this case, every fan that has passed the photo through the social networks has had their own interpretation, supported by various types of comments.

2. Its particular traditions of cultural production. The photo is reconstructed, given that the messages combine written and visual texts, which contributes to the transformation of the meaning.
3. Its relationship to a particular mode of reception. In this case, the original picture that was posted by the celebrity has been adopted by professionals, such as the journalist reporting on *One Direction* fans in France.
4. Its status as an alternative social community. Many people outside the community refer to them as sub-cultures, in a negative or ironic tone. That said, others take a positive stance on the social aspect and the commitment shown by the fans’ activities.
5. Its role in encouraging viewer activism. The comments that appeared on Google relating to this image expressed a desire for the celebrity to visit particular countries. This is a very common practice which leads to group activity.

In short, patterns discovered in fan activities shed light on how the community is organized around music celebrities. To summarize, we would highlight three elements, as mentioned above. First, the community is organized around certain texts, which are disseminated over the internet. This process is often mediated by the intervention of the celebrity’s representatives who, for example, put images out into the market that seek to show a certain interaction with the celebrity’s fans, albeit in this case at a concert, where there is little room for individuality. Second, affection, and even the love, for the hero becomes a nucleus around which the fans’ practices are organized. Third, both the practices and the texts make sense in a certain cultural space which encompasses the fandom subculture and which is even represented in the mass media.

### Reconstructing Celebrities Through Multimodal Discourses

However, there is more: not only are pictures and words combined, but sound travels through social networks, too. An example of the changes digital media have brought to fan communities are the activities that took place around the third anniversary of the *One Direction* song *What Makes You Beautiful*. The promotional video clip appeared on YouTube, on August 19, 2011. In 2014, on the third anniversary of the launch, fans paid tribute to the song by creating productions that made the rounds on the social networks. This is example of how messages are reconstructed, combining different levels of creativity. The anniversary was commemorated on Twitter, with tweets referring to the meaning attributed to the song and its role in the shaping the girls’ personal lives.

Two images show patterns in the use of multimodal discourse, as discussed with Ana, another participant in the study. The text accompanying the images reveal the

personal involvement and the reflection generated by the anniversary, illustrated by an image of the group and including the comment: “#3YearsOfWMYB today, the song that changed my life, thanks @onedirection.” Neither of the two are retweets, the girl created the messages. The first image is an original combination; a remix including various pictures of the group. The second picture includes a reflection on the passing of time, though its meaning is difficult to interpret. In both cases, the images seem to come from the original video of the song, which appeared on YouTube in 2011. References to the anniversary were found on all social networks at the time, with clear links between them. Three additional images show how the anniversary was featured on Twitter, Instagram, and Vine. As indicated by Jenkins (1992/2013), fans read popular culture texts using an intertextual approach, juxtaposing them, mixing content taken from the dominant culture, and giving them new meanings.

Another pattern that emerged can be interpreted according to Manovich’s (2015) theoretical framework. The key idea is that different materials taken from the social network, or which existed previously, are combined to generate a new production. One image of only the band members’ eyes was created by a fan and then retweeted by another. The different expressions in the eyes are attached to the names of the members of the band. The author has added a message through the written text: “*I miss the old Magcon,*” “*I love you so much.*” This is active participation in the community to encourage the return of the initial band members and can be understood as a form of social action. A black and white image is also a combination of previous materials, which can be found on the internet, but this particular image is a personal creation. The author superimposed a text message on the images: “*One direction, till the end.*” This can be interpreted as the expression of a personal viewpoint highlighted for the community. It is clear that this standpoint makes sense for and within the community.

The ideas of Navas (2012) are helpful in interpreting this production. Navas referred to the remix as the possibility of recycling materials in communicative situations. He explains that there are four types of remix: (A) Extensive: broader than the original version. (B) Selective: it adds and removes material from the original composition and is also recognisable as part of the creation from which it stems. (C) Reflective: extends the aesthetics of the simple. (D) It has some autonomy, though the original remains untouched. (E) Allegory: it can be understood as a reinterpretation; the only thing that is recognisable in the remix is the title. The production may contain certain elements of all four and it can therefore be quite difficult it is to interpret this type of production.

With regard to the aforementioned remix culture, Jenkins (2008b) argues that it is more reminiscent of oral culture, in which the group takes priority, than written culture, where the individual is at the forefront. In his opinion, digitalization processes are linked to the creation of new productions and involve handling,

adapting, transforming and circulating the content of the media. For example, another image combines two photographs, which were sent by a singer’s official account and have been re-tweeted. Google searches for one of the two images then result in hits for the fan accounts that retweeted the original images.

This image evokes several ideas. Firstly, the people surrounding the idol represent the community that has emerged from a shared sense of admiration for the celebrity. Only some fans are present physically, but they represent many others who do not have the opportunity to be close to the celebrity, and who will learn about his activities through social networks. Secondly, the fans have mobile devices that allow them to record images of the moment and share them online, so other fans can access them. Thirdly, some people in the image seem to be protecting the celebrity; in this case, they are seeking to ensure his physical safety, but they could also represent producers protecting their business interests. In short, fans are placed in new contexts comprising new places and practices through which to develop personal and collective identities.

## Fans, Celebrities and Social Action

We will now look at a series of indicators, observed upon the analysis of our data, which show how teenagers engage in collective actions which seek consequences beyond the digital world. This is what leads us to speak of social activism. The girls recognize that they are involved in a community which allows them to undertake social action that goes far beyond the online world. The following fragment of the interview with Lucía is evidence of this.

### *Fragment 1. Social action*

RESEARCHER: I don’t know what you think, but fans seem to be more open to society than other people. In a way, (...) they want to change society and they campaign to achieve this.

LUCÍA: Sure. For example, Magcon have never been to Spain, and now they have split up. What we are doing is creating lots of groups, societies and so on to get them to make a comeback. But the one we want is the old Magcon, the original Magcon, the one we like.

LUCÍA: We have a lot of accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest and all social networks. We are creating a revolution, because we want Magcon to come back and visit our countries so that we can meet our idols.

LUCÍA: The problem is that they don’t listen to us. There are more of us every day, but it’s hard.

We will now look at how practices emerge among the young adolescents that can be related to the social dimension of life. We will consider two patterns. First,

how social action is mediated by the presence of personal identity, and second, how values connected to collective ideals are presented. Images shared by Lucía of her reactions to being ignored by her heroes show, primarily, how social action is related to a personal presence mixed with emotions. The first tweet includes a selfie, which is sent to Nash, the girl's hero. She sends him a picture of herself, even though he ignores her direct messages. The second image is another re-tweet by Lucía, a remix which once again expresses a particular feeling. This teenager, as per the transcript above, told us about the problems that had taken place in the community when the original group, Magcon, separated. The tweet mixes images and words and the text says: "*#SelfieForNash Spain loves you Nash.*" Finally, the last tweet shows a group of fans, in this case including boys, displaying a flag and saying "*We went totally crazy yesterday.*"

Two more tweets posted by the girls show how the two of them adopt collective values. The first image was posted by Lucía on her Twitter account. The values expressed there are related to the collectiveness represented by a national football team. In this case, the members of *One Direction* symbolise the values of the country, as they are dressed in particular team colors and T-shirts. The text that accompanies that image tells us: "*This has to be repeated.*" We could say that, to some extent, the celebrity is a mediator for the expression of values associated with a particular country. The second image was tweeted by Ana. She mixes two images in which the musicians are linked with the colours and flag of the gay community. The tweet also includes a text: "*Harry with the gay pride flag is life.*" It is a more abstract expression, but it nonetheless revealing, as the celebrity expresses certain values that are made explicit through multimodal discourse.

There are therefore various opportunities offered by the internet for adolescents to showcase their ideas and feelings. In this case, within the fan community, the girls' heroes are dressed in symbols that demonstrate the girls' identification with their own country or with specific communities. Political engagement takes many forms. Though the messages are often not recognised as political, many adolescents have used the tools of internet culture to express themselves politically (boyd, 2014, pp. 3358–3402). It is hard to say to what extent these images involve a political commitment in the traditional sense of the term, but it is clear that they express a commitment to certain values. They are not frivolous practices; they show the fans' own thoughts in an open society.

## Conclusion

This study shows how a group of teenagers who are fans of certain musical celebrities demonstrate various degrees of social participation and different types of

activism, mediated by multimodal discourses. In accordance with our theoretical framework, each of the sections presented in the results leads us to a main conclusion orienting future research. The study's main contribution stems from its data, which was gathered through observations of the teenagers' practices on and offline, and the interpretation of the data backed by recent and classical theoretical models.

Firstly, we were looking for the process and mechanism according to which adolescents organise the community, approaching the celebrity as the object the love in the fan community. In some way, the celebrity is transformed into an admired, loved person, with whom affective attachment links are established. The main result in relation to this point shows that adolescents prefer "real," "physical" people over holograms or virtual reality. The internet is a meaningful space where they seek personal contact with the celebrity, which never arrives. At the same time, and maybe with a view to replacing this contact, the internet is a source of information and social capital (Jenkins, 2014). In any case, the girls are aware that information appearing on the internet can be controlled by industries and the musicians' representatives. However, in those situations, the internet allows them to establish specific monitoring of information coming from other fans, to check the quality of information.

Secondly, the teenagers' practices in relation to their presence in fan communities are dependent on the use of multimodal discourse, especially photography and remixes, which are associated with particular forms of creative expression. These discursive practices stem from the teenagers' personal and social lives, both of which are present in the fan community. The study invites the reader to think about the new forms of citizenship in which young people are involved, far removed from what these concepts traditionally mean in social sciences, where they tend to be associated with adulthood.

Thirdly, the internet also generates activism-specific patterns among adolescent girls. We believe that social networks have transformed fan communities, and also teenagers' skills when it comes to managing these digital environments. They are aware of their uses, their functions and, in addition to this, they are able to fully harness their potential both for transmitting messages and finding new audiences. In the same way as other researchers (Baym, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2016) confirm that the practices of the girls in fans communities is transformed by their presence on the internet and social networks, the results found by our research showed that they used particular strategies to identify people with similar interests, for example, by looking at their profiles, which would not be possible in offline life.

We hope this chapter will guide the reader towards some of the key questions that offer a starting point for reflecting on the challenges ahead for us as researchers working with adolescents in music fandom communities.

## Notes

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2. These preferences expressed by the girls reveal gender differences in terms of how boys and girls interact with technology. There is research that delves into this more deeply (for example, Kafai, Heeter, Denner & Sun, 2008; Roddy, 2013; Keller, 2012), though it is not the specific subject of this chapter.

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