Social Media and Celebrity Mobility: YouTube Celebrities Becoming Mainstream

Literature Review

- Digital media has created the **social media celebrity:** someone that gains a mass following through social media platforms, rather than through an institutionalized process like entertainment or sports (Gräve 2017)
- These social media celebrities play important economic roles as influencers (Freberg 2010, Xiao 2018)
- They differ from traditional celebrities in terms of their economic value and their cultural role (Driessens 2012, Hou 2019)

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Research Question

How does one bridge the worlds of social media celebrity and mainstream celebrity?

- What is the role of mainstream media in that bridging?
- What are the implications for how celebrities' online identities are constructed?

Theoretical Lens

- Mediatization theory (Hjarvard 2008)
- Narrative identity theory (Schechtman 2012)
- Social identity theory (Stets and Burke, 2000)

Case Studies

Lilly Singh

14.9 Million Subscribers

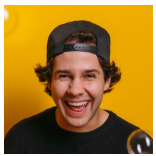
9.1 Million Followers

5.8 Million Followers

→ Late night talk show host

NBC

David Dobrik



14.5 Million Subscribers

9.6 Million Followers

4 Million Followers

→ Celebrity judge on reality TV competition

nickelodeon

Why these two?

- Similar audience sizes across platforms
- Similar content types on YouTube (both vloggers)
- Both moving into TV shows in which they are TV personalities, rather than actors
- However, being a talk show host (Singh) represents a deeper involvement in mainstream media than being a celebrity judge (Dobrik)

Methodology

Compare and contrast two case studies of YouTube celebrities participating on mainstream platforms.

Examine how the following outlets present/label the celebrity:

- The celebrity's YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter accounts
- Mainstream media articles about the celebrity
- Video interviews conducted on mainstream news outlets with the celebrity

Feedback I'm Looking For

- Data on the landscape of YouTube content creators or users that could give helpful context
- Examples outside of North America of this phenomenon
- Other theories that illuminate aspects of this phenomenon
- Any blind spots in the research or other areas that should be explored

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