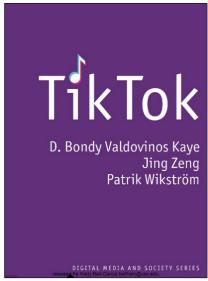D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, Jing Zeng, and Patrik Wikström, **TikTok: Creativity and Culture in Short Video**, London, UK: Polity, 2022, 251 pp., $22.00 (paperback).

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This book, *TikTok: Creativity and Culture in Short Video*, starts with a systematic introduction to the history of the development of short-video history in the United States and provides a comprehensive, detailed account of TikTok's development. The rapid growth of TikTok and other short-video services is regarded by the authors as leading to a "short-video turn" right after a longstanding phenomenon of "visual turn" practiced in social media. Technological affordances that become available to mobile users, such as 5G Internet, also facilitated this turning process toward an "audiovisual-centered" streaming mode of communications.

The book is divided into seven chapters, including the introductory chapter on short-video history, TikTok platform infrastructure, TikTok communities, TikTok activism, TikTok governance, and a final chapter on the future of TikTok. The authors define platform as "online software infrastructure in the form of apps or web interfaces that allow users to share, interact, or develop new forms of use and utility" (p. 15). They point out that ByteDance, TikTok's mother company based in China, adopts a strategy of "parallel platformization" with China's sibling platform Douyin existing side by side with TikTok marketed in the United States and other places. Douyin and TikTok are compared in the book to trace the development of the latter in the United States. Reading this book provides readers an in-depth understanding of various aspects of TikTok's overall development, governance, creative applications, and marketing strategies, as well as challenges and future limits.

TikTok garnered widespread attention, attracted a huge amount of U.S. users, and defeated other competitors in the United States. This is indeed phenomenal and is the first time for such a foreign victory in U.S. media-related industries. The authors describe this phenomenon as a Chinese challenge to Silicon Valley domination, arguing that the reasons for TikTok's success lie in its platform creativity and its target audience echoing the digital generation's need to establish *Gesellschaft* (society) via this type of social media.

The authors conceptualize creative practices and culture of short video in terms of four types: vernacular, social, distributed, and circumscribed creativity. Vernacular creativity refers to TikTokers' affective and platform-specific communication style; social creativity means the involvement of a mutually-shaped creative process; distributed creativity describes TikTokers' participatory production among community members; and circumscribed creativity refers to both the affordance of TikTok platform and its boundary limit of TikTokers' autonomous productions. With these creative practices, users can generate their

own productions, share their own stories, show off themselves, perform self-expressions, make connections, and participate in carnivals or protests. This is where Generation Z (Gen Z) can collectively represent their identity and creativity. This generation has grown up digitally and is used to online interaction and virtual culture. Gen Z's interacting and sharing activities are enhanced by TikTok's platformization—a unique capability in algorithmic recommender systems and content creation. TikTok provides user-friendly interfaces to enable users to do flexible editing on music and video productions. The platform's algorithmic technology can trace each user's behavior, memorize their habits, and deliver content and relevant commercial information rather efficiently.

TikTok users not only use the platform for entertainment purposes; they also take advantage of this platform as an empowering mechanism—to participate in collective actions. Two case studies of activism are presented by authors to shed light on TikTokers' strategic use of the platform to inform, educate, and mobilize others. The first case in this book is activism around wider ecological concerns aiming to raise awareness and initiate actions for combating the world's climate crises. TikTok is regarded as a good source for promoting environmental sustainability and sustainable consumption to Gen Z (Lin, Wang, & Dam, 2023). The second one, on the other hand, is for the self-protection of TikTokers' rights to keep using the platform when it was under threat of being banned by the U.S. government in 2020.

One of the most important issues discussed in this book is concerning Douyin's relations and its influences on TikTok. This comparative inquiry between TikTok (in the United States) and Douyin (in China) provides an incisive understanding of TikTok's distinctive performance in the United States. TikTok is regarded by the authors as "a creative entertainment hub" whereas Douyin has transformed itself into "an integrated digital platform" (p. 140). Douyin has involved not just information-sharing functions but also e-commerce, hyperlinked product search, onsite shopping opportunities, and online payment links. For example, *daihuo* (influencing someone's decision to purchase in a short video) and live-streaming sales have been very popular on Douyin but have not been as effective on TikTok. These rather different practices of e-commerce, the authors argue, "are indicative of the challenges of parallel platformization" (p. 27). Why can TikTok not completely model after Douyin's business model outside China? What created these two sibling platforms with two different models? Although this book made some valuable analyses on factors such as TikTok's lack of infrastructural competency and worries about consumer acceptance in the United States, more analyses on the differences in social, political, and economic structures can be explored. The contextual differences in political economy are key to understanding the existing differentiated business models.

Douyin's platformization is rooted in a particular social-economic context. Douyin established a strategic partnership for mobile shopping with China's largest online store—Taobao. Transactions for platform consumption in China are fairly quick and convenient. With just a few clicks on a mobile phone with prestored personal, monetary, and mailing information, payments via WeChat pay, AliPay, or QR code are done immediately. Ordered goods will be arranged and delivered soon after the transactions. Goods will normally arrive at consumers' designated address in one to five days and mostly comes with free delivery. The efficiency is largely enhanced by the platform infrastructure and a large, nationwide network of goods delivery systems.

China's platformization has also been highly promoted by state power for economic development. The concept of "platform capitalism" is employed to refer to China's big platform-based technological companies. Zhang and Chen (2022) point out that platform capitalism "[has] developed novel business models, organizational structures, and technological innovations . . . state power co-shapes platform capitalism through a constant process of institutional improvisation and innovation, as well as interacting with private players" (p. 1454). State involvement in supporting the development of a short-video platform has also been widespread. Lin and de Kloet (2019) examined Kuaishou—Douyin's competitor in China, and argued that "Kuaishou's platform business fits into the Party State's socio-economic agenda of 'Internet+' and 'Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation'" (p. 1). These perspectives could enhance the book's in-depth understanding of the contextual factors of parallel platformization.

At the end of the book, the authors nicely incorporate the concepts of "geopolitical contestation" and "ideological conflicts" into the analyses of TikTok's current situations and future challenges. Since the U.S.–China Trade war began during the Trump administration, followed by the Biden government's continuation with the "tech war," tensions between the two nations have continuously intensified. As a Chinese new media company, TikTok has also been influenced by this political atmosphere. It faced threats of being banned in the United States not long ago. The authors argue that "shortly after its launch, TikTok became a political forum between the two nations, setting the stage for more politically charged clashes" (p. 193). Under these circumstances, TikTok will continue to face these "geopolitical contestations." As geopolitical tensions rise, ideological disagreement becomes manifested in public debates and media representations. This also produces disadvantageous conditions for TikTok to continue its development in the United States.

Under these unfavorable circumstances, TikTok's future in the United States is unpredictable. As the authors analyze in the final chapter, "If YouTube or Instagram manage to reverse-engineer the algorithmic recommender system, or if a new platform enters the fray with a more powerful system, TikTok, the platform, may fall out of fashion and fade into obscurity" (p. 213). People are now watching TikTok's next move and cannot predict its future. Other than rising competition in the platform market, there is also one more challenge to face for the short-video platform: the emergence of generative AI (artificial intelligence). As the authors point out, "There is also a new cohort of youths, Gen Alpha, and they are fast on the way to being the new kids on the platformized new block" (p. 196). Short-video platforms will always need to search for a new form of creativity for Gen Alpha, to develop advanced applications for their orientations, and to find solutions in facing challenges emerging from other new powerful applications such as Metaverse, ChatGPT, and the like. TikTok, like all other short-video platforms, will continue to struggle to survive and thrive.

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