Mediated Young Adulthood:
Social Network Sites in the Neoliberal Era

Justine Gangneux

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of University of Glasgow

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education, College of Social Sciences
University of Glasgow, November 2017

Abstract

Young people's engagement with social network sites have predominantly been depicted in binary ways, overplaying either the risks posed by digital technologies or their positive benefits. Adopting a critical perspective, this thesis understands young people's uses and perceptions of social network sites as continuously negotiated and deeply entrenched in their everyday lives; and analyses them within the social struggles and power structures in which they are embedded.

Based on qualitative interview material with 32 young adults aged 20-25 and on an innovative research design incorporating digital prompts, this study explores the meanings that participants ascribed to social network sites and their everyday uses of the platforms. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice and Foucault's work on power and governmentality, the thesis argues that young people actively negotiate social network sites. Yet their uses and understandings of the platforms are constituted through a 'practical knowledge' of the world which reflects existing social divisions and, are embedded within broader neoliberal narratives of entrepreneurship, choice and responsibility, producing corresponding forms of governmentality.

Throughout the interviews, participants described their engagement with social network sites, for example their attitudes towards privacy or the ways in which they managed and maintained relationships through the platforms, in terms of individual choice, personal preference and growing up. The analysis of the data suggests, that their engagement were, nonetheless, substantially informed by the economic interests and the monopolies enforced by private corporations; by the technological affordances and playful designs of the platforms; by social processes of differentiation rendering specific uses legitimate; and by neoliberal discourses encouraging individual responsibility and understandings of the self as enterprise. All of the above combined to actively shape and produce participants' understandings of social

network sites as 'useful' and 'necessary' tools for managing the everyday and their relationships, for maximising professional opportunities, and for engaging in practices of profile-checking and monitoring.

In short, the thesis argues that young people's uses and understandings of social network sites are complex and cannot be reduced to risks or positive leverage, nor can it be understood without an analysis of the asymmetrical relations of powers between private corporations which own the platforms and users, and a critical engagement with the pervasive neoliberal discourses that shape them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank my supervisors, Professor Andy Furlong and Dr. Susan Batchelor for their constructive feedback, their continuous support and their invaluable guidance. This thesis would not have been possible without them. I am also grateful to the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow for awarding a full scholarship for this project and to all my colleagues in the School of Education and in the School of Political and Social Sciences for their help and guidance. I am especially thankful to Dr Sarah Armstrong for her early involvement in this project, her insightful comments and continuous encouragement.

My further thanks go to all my friends who supported me during the last four years; Anne-Charlotte, Guglielmo, Gokben, Grazia, Phil, Stevie, Tim, Tiziano, Ute and Valentina. I would also like to thank my family: my parents, my brother Jérôme and my sister Joanna for their support. Special thanks to Thomas for his precious help, his patience, his encouragement and all the support he provided over the years that it has taken me to conduct this project.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the young adults who took part in the research; for giving me their time and sharing their experiences with me. Their contributions have been invaluable and essential to this thesis.

This thesis is dedicated to Professor Andy Furlong,

who sadly passed away in January 2017.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures ix

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institutions.

Justine Gangneux

Introduction

The Need for Critical Perspectives on Youth and Social Network Sites

This thesis examines the meanings that young people ascribed to social network sites and to their everyday uses of the platforms. It aims to challenge binary understandings of young people's digital practices which have often focused either on addiction and risks or on empowerment and increased participation. Adopting a more critical perspective, the thesis explores young people's engagement with social network sites as a product of personal decisions informed by young people's practical relations to their social environments and shaped by corporate power and neoliberal discourses.

Context of the Study

Over the last thirty years, young people's lives have been affected by social transformations and processes of globalisation characterised by increasing uncertainty and rapid technological change (Furlong and Kelly, 2005; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Furlong at al. 2011; Woodman, 2012a; Woodman and Wyn, 2014). More recently, the global financial crisis and the policies of austerity which have emerged have exacerbated the effects of globalisation on young people's lives, wellbeing and experiences of the labour market (Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France 2016; Kelly and Pike, 2017). Furthermore, young people's everyday lives are inscribed in corporate capitalism and the development of a consumer society in which consumers have 'infinite choices on display—except the choice of choosing among them' (Bauman, 1999, p.39) (see also Hall and Jefferson, 2006; Winlow and Hall, 2009). In this context, Blackman (2005) suggests that young people's lifestyles and choices are largely defined by the market while Coté (2014a) goes so far to ask the extent to which 'youth cultures derive directly from the dominant consumer culture and

1

therefore support it economically and ideologically?' (p.160). Digital and mobile technologies, and especially social network sites, are of crucial importance in relation to Coté's argument as they have been heavily used and invested by private corporations and advertising companies seeking to capture the youth market (Harris, 2008).

Young Adulthood in the Context of Neoliberal Capitalism

Research in the field of youth studies has continuously underlined the role of social formations such as class, gender and race in shaping young people's experiences in the context of education, work, leisure and relationships (Skeggs, 1997; Reay et al., 2001; Ball et al., 2002; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Roberts, 2009; Furlong 2009a, 2013). At the same time, young people's experiences have been reshaped (often mirroring existing social divisions) by the expansion of education and training, the increase of unemployment, underemployment and non-standard patterns of work as well as the advance and implementation of neoliberal and austerity policies (Furlong and Kelly, 2005, Henderson et al., 2006; Furlong et al, 2011; Cieslik and Simpson, 2013; Coté 2014b; Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France 2016; Kelly and Pike, 2017).

Over the last two decades, youth scholars have used theories of modernisation, often drawing on the work of Ulrich Beck (Beck 1992, 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim; 2001) to examine young people's experiences in what has become known as late modernity. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, (2001) argued that late modernity is characterised by processes of individualisation which demand active contributions and management by individuals, a political economy of insecurity (e.g. spread of temporary and insecure employment) and ethics of individual self-fulfilment and achievement leading to an 'compulsion to lead a life of one's own' (p.4). Similarly, Bauman put an emphasis on the increased experiences of uncertainty, insecurity and

unsafety in what he described as 'liquid modernity' (2000, p.161). Such experiences act as 'powerful individualizing forces' (2001, p.24). In this context, the concept of 'epistemological fallacy', developed by Furlong and Cartmel (2007), has been very influential in understanding young people's experiences in relation to processes of individualisation. Furlong and Cartmel's central claim is that we assist to a 'growing disjuncture between objective and subjective dimensions of life' (p.5) which increasingly leads young people to seek individual solutions to structural issues. To put it another way, the concept of epistemological fallacy provides an analytical framework to comprehend young people's experiences as constrained by institutional changes, globalisation processes and social formations while at the same time becoming more and more individualised. In turn, young people understand their experiences on an individual level, taking personal responsibility for their successes and failures. This approach reconciles research which has demonstrated the continuous impacts of social factors such as class, gender and race on young people's life chances with research which has focused on youth subjectivities and agency (see Chapter One).

Furthermore, youth has been described as the vanguard of a new type of capitalism which reorganises relations between private and public, work and play and the structuration of time (Furlong and Kelly, 2005; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, Woodman, 2012a). Sennett (2006) and Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) have outlined more broadly the emergence of a new 'culture' or 'spirit' of capitalism in which practices, understandings and values in work places as well as in others aspects of life have been permeated by flexibility, mobility, management discourses and personal development. Boltanski and Chiapello described these ideological changes as acting on two different transcripts, one emphasising individual actions and the second individual decisions and responsibility:

3

> The first contains an agent capable of actions conducive to profit creation, whereas the second contains an agent equipped with a greater degree of reflexivity, who judges the actions of the first in the name of universal principles (p.22).

These universal principles include general well-being and progress, efficiency, emancipation and freedom (p.13). The new spirit of capitalism characterised by Boltanski and Chiapello, has been discussed by other scholars, often drawing on Foucault's work, as a specific ideology and art of government known as neoliberalism (Walkerdine, 2003; Harvey, 2005; Gane, 2012). Harvey (2005) defined it as:

> A theory of political and economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual and entrepreneurial skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong property rights, free markets and free trade. […] It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in and understand the world. (pp.2-3).

Similarly, to Boltanski and Chiapello, Harvey (2005) advanced that one of the main characteristics of neoliberal ideology is to hide behind a 'benevolent mask of wonderful-sounding words like freedom, liberty, choice and rights' (p.119). In his work on neoliberalism, he outlined how this ideology framed as the advancement of individual freedoms, has developed and prospered in the UK (mirroring developments in other countries), particularly under Margaret Thatcher and then Tony Blair. In this context, neoliberalism needs to be primarily understood and analysed as a political project 'to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore power to economic elites' (p.19, see Harvey, 2005 for a comprehensive overview). Bourdieu (1998b), in a similar way to Harvey, defined neoliberalism as a theory of knowledge, based on 'the utopia of a pure, perfect market' and the cult of the individuals which has been converted into 'a political programme of action' aiming to the destruction of

collectives (pp.95-96). In his more recent work, Bourdieu asserted that neoliberal discourses have increasingly become dominant 'making itself true', serving the economic interests the ruling class and 'adding its own symbolic - force to those power relations' (ibid.) (see also Harvey, 2005 on the constitution of consent). Bourdieu and Harvey's works are very useful to contextualise the development, applications and transformations of neoliberal theory as well as its effects on the social body in different countries. Unfortunately, a detailed engagement with neoliberal theory more broadly is outside the scope of this work.

Although an invaluable contribution to understand the contexts and consequences of neo-liberalism, Bourdieu's work (and to an extent Harvey's) tend to view neoliberalism as a force of destruction and dismantlement, i.e. emphasising on the negativity of power (Laval, 2017). In this context, Foucault's body of work becomes useful to shed light on '"the positivity of power", emphasizing the work of building institutions and disseminating neoliberal norms' (ibid, p.71). Influenced by Foucault 's work on power and governmentality (1980, 1988, 1997, 2008, 2010) as well as research inspired by his work (see for example Kelly and Harrison, 2009; McNay, 2009; Kelly, 2006, 2013), the current thesis aims to examine neoliberalism as an art of government (of others and the self) and how this ideology has produced specific individual practices and understandings of the self by actively and positively mobilising narratives of personal autonomy, entrepreneurship and choice.

Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, a body of research in youth studies has looked at young people's experiences in terms of neoliberal subjectivities, in a context in which they are encouraged to develop an active, independent, creative, flexible and responsible self, mirroring the ethics of enterprise (Kelly, 2006' 2013). Harris (2004) and Ringrose (2007), for example, demonstrated how young people, and young women in particular have been positioned 'successful' and 'can-do' in the neoliberal imaginary. In this discursive context, Harris (2008) outlined how young women are

continuously encouraged (and notably on social network sites) to create and present self-realised, independent and choice maker's selves which in turn model them as active and ideal consumers. This body of work has been central to shed light on how the 'positive' and normative constitutions of young people (e.g. as entrepreneurial, successful or creative) rely upon productive ideas of freedom and choice, and therefore have to be analysed as forms of government upon which neoliberal subjectivities are formed. In other words, young people are not passive or dupes but are willing and actively shaping their lives and selves to respond to imperatives and the demands that are put on them in circumstances, characterised by neoliberalism, that are not of their making.

Young People and Social Network Sites

The Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report (2016) established that in 2015 95% of people aged 16-24 in the UK had a smart phone and used the Internet in average for 31.2 hours a week with 91% of them having at least one social media profile. People in this age group were very likely to have a profile on Facebook (approximately 95%) but also on Instagram (47%), WhatsApp (39%), Twitter (38%), Snapchat (37%) and YouTube (36%) with 80% considering Facebook as being the main one. Finally, 44% of people aged 16-24 with a social media profile visited their profiles more than ten times a day (Ofcom, 2016). Qualitative research has shown that mobile phones as well as social network sites have become pervasive in everyday life (Brown et al., 2002; Ling, 2004; Goggin, 2006; Buckingham, 2007; Bennett and Robards, 2014). In general, young people use social network sites to maintain ties with their peers within their local networks and to perform friendships through commenting, sharing and tagging images (boyd, 2007, 2014; Livingstone, 2008; Ito, M., et al, 2010; boyd and Marwick, 2011).

Empirical research on digital technologies and new media has largely tended to put an emphasis on either the positive benefits for young people (Castells, 1996, 2007, Jenkins, 2004, 2006, Papacharissi, 2011, Jenkins et al., 2016) or on the risks posed by these technologies to young people (Cassell and Cramer, 2007, Buffardi and Campbell 2008, Livingstone, 2008; Driscoll and Greggs, 2008). Scholars have more recently expressed caution regarding these binary perspectives which have led on one hand to simplistic understandings of young people's uses of new technologies as bridging inequalities, empowering and liberating or on another hand to a range of moral panics and regulations of these practices. The current thesis takes up Sukariek and Tannock's (2011) challenge which consists of critically analysing young people's practices without replacing negative stereotypes with positive ones (p.688) (see Chapter Two).

In addition to overcoming binary understandings of young people's digital practices, the current thesis encompasses in its analysis the inscription of these practices in corporate capitalism in which the private corporations owning social network sites amass large amounts of users' personal data and sold this data to third-party advertising or marketing companies. To do so, the current thesis draws on a body of research in media and surveillance studies, often inscribing their works in critical perspectives, which has examined social network sites and digital technologies within power relations, inequalities and commodification (van Dijck, 2009, 2013; Fuchs, 2011, 2012, 2014; Andrejevic, 2011; Allmer, 2015). This body of work has outlined the cultural hegemony of platforms (and thus private corporations) such as Facebook and examined the profit-driven character of social network platforms, some even describing the emergence of 'platform capitalism' (see Srnieck, 2016). The terminology of Web 2.0 (e.g. 'sharing', 'connectivity', 'participation') has been fruitfully analysed in this context as an ideology reinforcing corporate power and neoliberal discourses (Beer and Burrows, 2007; Scholz, 2008; van Dijck and Nieborg,

2009; van Dijck, 2013). The work of Foucault on governmentality and neoliberalism has also been used in research looking at social network sites, and especially focusing on surveillance. For instance, in his work on peer to peer surveillance, risks, and governance, Andrejevic (2005, 2007a) made an important contribution to efforts of connecting and analysing young people's digital practices with broader power relations and neoliberal forms of governmentality. According to him, information gathering strategies deployed by private corporations or governmental organisations have been imported into the personal realm. Through these processes, individuals have been habituated to interactivity as a form of surveillance or as different forms of government of the self and others; all of which encouraged and legitimated by neoliberal discourses focusing on risk management, personal responsibilisation and efficiency. To date this body of work have been largely neglected in youth studies.

Given the centrality of social network sites in young people's lives, the current study argues that these technologies provide an insightful gateway to explore the impacts of social change and processes of globalisation on young people's lives.

Overview of the Thesis

The current thesis aims to challenge binary understandings of young people's engagement with and perceptions of social network sites. To do so, the thesis proposes to examine young people's digital practices as personal decisions informed by practical relations to their social environments and shaped by corporate power and neoliberal discourses.

The key question addressed in the original study was: how do young adults account for their practices of using social network sites in their everyday lives and what meanings do they ascribe to the platforms? The ensuing objectives were:

- To examine how young adults managed social network sites in their everyday lives and how they negotiated the opportunities and anxieties generated by the platforms;

- To analyse how young adults accounted for changes in their uses of social network sites and to what extent they connected these changes to their experiences of growing up and transitions;

- To explore participants' present uses of social network sites and the meanings that they ascribed to these uses and the platforms they employed;

- To look more specifically at the ways in which young adults deployed as well as understood monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites.

This study is based on data collected from in depth qualitative interviews with 32 young adults living in Glasgow, aged 20-25. All of the young adults in the sample were regularly using social network sites, though the platforms they used and their levels of engagement varied. All participants were active on Facebook and a large proportion of them were also regularly using Instagram (n=21) and Twitter (n=20). (see Chapter Three).

Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice and Foucault's work on power/knowledge and governmentality, the thesis argues that young people are active

and knowing social agents who had a practical knowledge and a practical relation to the social world which are mediated by a system of transposable dispositions (habitus) and in turn mediate organically their practices. Their practical knowledge and relations to the social world are inscribed in the historical development of specific discourses (such as neoliberal discourses) as 'truths', actively encouraging corresponding techniques of government of self and others (See Chapter One). Using these theoretical inputs, the thesis aims to demonstrate that although often described as personal preferences and actively managed, young people's engagement with social network sites is substantially shaped by traditional processes of social differentiation, corporate capitalism as well as neoliberal forms of governmentality.

Contributions of the Thesis

Drawing on a body of critical studies of the Internet and digital technologies which has been neglected in youth studies, the thesis makes an original contribution to this field of research by analysing young people's practices within the power structures (e.g. corporate monopoly, neoliberal governmentalities) and social struggles (e.g. differentiation) that co-constitute them. Indeed, by examining the meanings that participants ascribed to their uses of social network sites as well as to the platforms themselves, the thesis demonstrates how young adults actively negotiated and engaged with the platforms while simultaneously making sense of these technologies within neoliberal imperatives and corporate enclosure. The thesis also provides an original analysis of under-looked practices; namely monitoring and profile-checking on social network sites; as a concrete example of the processes described above.

Furthermore, the thesis by adopting a critical perspective, contributes to ongoing discussions in youth research and followed on recent calls in the field to provide renewed approaches and directions to research; among which a new political

economy of youth and critical youth studies (Coté, 2014b, 2016; France and Threadgold, 2015; Kelly and Kamp, 2015). Finally, the thesis is inscribed more broadly to enduring sociological debates about the role of individual agency and structures in shaping young people's choices and experiences.

Outline of the Thesis

The **first chapter** provides an overview of theoretical and empirical debates that have occupied and continue to shape youth research. These debates are inscribed in broader debates about social change and individualisation as well as the role of individual agency and social structures in shaping and responding to these processes. The chapter then reviews a more recent body of work in youth research which has attempted to bridge the historical divisions in the field of youth studies and advocated different (and overlapping) approaches to understand young people's lives; for example by looking at contemporary youth through the lens of 'social generation' (Woodman, 2012b, Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Bennett, 2015), of critical studies (Kelly and Kamp, 2015; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015) or using a political economy perspective (Coté, 2014b, 2016). The chapter, then drawing on empirical research, examines how young people's lives have been reshaped by processes of globalisation, austerity policies and more broadly by neoliberal capitalism. By doing so, the chapter provides important insights to understand young people's experiences and everyday lives in the context in which they take place.

Lastly, Chapter One briefly reviews in turn Bourdieu's theory of practice, focusing particularly on his concept of habitus as well and Foucault's work on power and governmentality. It outlines how their theoretical inputs have been used in youth research and argues that an analytical framework inspired by both bodies of work is particularly useful to make sense of young people's experiences by inscribing them in

their practical relation to the social world and broader power relations.

Chapter Two introduces the existing literature on young people and digital technologies, identifying the range of normative representations associated with the so called 'digital generation'. Moving away from binary understandings of young people's digital practices and from the concept of 'digital generation', Chapter Two reviews theoretical and empirical studies which have demonstrated the complex and mundane character of young people's engagements with social network sites and understood these as embedded in and shaped by social formations and technological affordances.

Chapter Two, then draws on literature in media and surveillance studies to help shedding light on young people's uses and understandings of social network sites. It first outlines the concept of mediation developed by Silverstone (2002) which allows to reinscribe the technological in the social. In order to address the limitations of this concept in understanding mediated practices in broader (and asymmetrical) power relations, the chapter reviews studies which have adopted a critical perspective in their analysis of the Internet and more specifically of social media (van Dijck, 2013; Fuchs, 2014). This body of work provides a much needed analysis which understands digital practices in relation to the ideology of the market and corporate capitalism in which these practices take place. Finally, the chapter critically examines some of the more recent work in surveillance studies to shed light on the underlying culture of monitoring and forms of neoliberal governmentality in which young people's engagement with social network sites are embedded (e.g. self-monitoring, peer monitoring, checking practices).

Chapter Three provide an outline of the methodological underpinnings of the study and its design. It describes the research methods adopted for the study, and details the research process and ethical concerns that arose throughout the research. Finally, this chapter reflects on the process of analysing the data and provides an

overview of the sample.

The next four chapters of the thesis present the findings of the study, drawing on the empirical data collected during the qualitative interviews and the literature highlighted in the previous chapters. **Chapter Four** explores how social network sites were perceived and used by participants as 'tools' to manage, synchronise and coordinate different aspects of their lives and relationships. It examines how young adults negotiated social network sites and the range of opportunities and anxieties that these platforms generated, including fears of missing out or obligations to be available. The chapter argues that social network sites, especially Facebook, have become deeply embedded in the everyday, making it difficult for young adults to give up their uses or to see an alternative.

The last section of Chapter Four examines participants' accounts of social network sites, often described in terms of convenience and connectivity. It critically analyses these accounts in relation to the powerful private corporations which own social network platforms, demonstrating that participants' practices and understandings were embedded in corporate power and interests which significantly shaped their choice and uses.

Chapter Five explores the meanings that participants ascribed to social network sites and how they accounted for changes in uses. It argues that participants' past experiences and attitudes towards social network sites were often spelt out in terms of responsibilisation, individual choice, personal development, corresponding to narratives of growing up and overlapping neoliberal discourses. This was especially visible in participants' accounts of privacy.

Drawing on Foucault's work, Chapter Five then analyses how young adults in the study actively used different social network sites to manage their impressions and present an entrepreneurial and professional self. Lastly, it investigates further how social network sites were perceived and used more proactively by some participants

as tools for training for labour, and effectively transformed as apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.

By exploring participants' judgments and accounts of how other people used social network sites, **Chapter Six** outlines the processes of differentiation that young adults in the study engaged in when discussing their own practices on social network sites. These processes of differentiation appeared in relation to a certain idea of mainstream (e.g. how people generally used the platforms), aesthetic impressions given away, the type of language used or expressions of personal opinions.

Chapter Six then examines how young adults cultivated commonalities on social network sites by customising, sorting and selecting content which was in agreement with their views and/or that they were interested in and by checking compatibility and shared interests with prospective friends and acquaintances. The chapter argues that these practices were not only based on the processes of differentiation described above but also on the architecture and design of the platforms, the corporate and economic interests of private corporations and neoliberal discourses emphasising choice, compatibility and customisation.

Finally, **Chapter Seven** looks at participants' understandings and practices of monitoring and profile-checking on social network sites, practices commonly reported during the interviews. To begin with, the chapter explores participants' attitudes towards governmental surveillance, professional vetting and corporate data profiling in relation to social network sites, illustrating the diffusion and legitimation of a neoliberal culture of monitoring. It then considers specific forms of peer to peer monitoring and profile checking on social network sites (e.g. in the context of flat shares or dating) and demonstrates how these practices have been made legitimate by putting an emphasis on choice, risk management and compatibility, again reflecting broader neoliberal discourses.

In the second part, Chapter Seven examines young adults' understandings of peer

monitoring and profile checking, described by some as Facebook stalking, in the context of social network sites and in particular Facebook. It shows that participants had ambiguous understandings of these practices on social network sites, repeatedly disassociating them from offline stalking (associated with voyeurism and harassment) and/ or reconstructing them in the context of Facebook as a form of entertainment, an outcome of the platform design and/or a normal way of interaction (often using the term 'Facebooking'). Overall, the chapter argues that monitoring and profile-checking practices exemplify in interesting ways the intersections between individual agency and subjectivity, social structures and neoliberal capitalism. Indeed, it demonstrates how these practices have been reinforced and triggered by processes of differentiation (e.g. looking up friends from high school), permeated by values promoted by private companies (such as sharing, openness, fun and connectivity), facilitated by the design and technological affordances of the platforms, and to a certain extent, legitimated by neoliberal discourses.

In order to contextualise the current research, the next chapter reviews the debates that have shaped and continue to take place in the field of youth studies; focusing in particular on research which have examined how young people's lives have been affected by globalisation and neoliberal capitalism. The chapter, then outlines Bourdieu's theory of practice and Foucault's work on power and governmentality, arguing that combining their analytical tools enable researchers to understand young people's practices and understandings in the power relations in which they are embedded.

Chapter One

Complex Lives: Young Adulthood under Neoliberal Capitalism

This chapter reviews the debates that have occupied and continue to shape the field of youth studies. By doing so, the chapter inscribes the current study within broader sociological debates which focus on the relation between individual agency and social structures as well as on the impacts of individualisation and social change on young people's lives. While acknowledging the contributions of these debates to our understandings of the complexity of young people's lives (and most importantly the continuation of the role of traditional formations such as class, gender and race in shaping their lives), the current study aims to look at young people's experiences within the constitutions of subjectivities and the power relations characterising neoliberal capitalism. In order to do so, the current study first outlines empirical studies which have examined the reshaping of young people's lives in the context of neoliberal capitalism. It then briefly sketches out the theory of practice developed by Pierre Bourdieu as well as the work on power, knowledge and governmentality of Michel Foucault. Taken together, these two bodies of work allow us to understand young people's experiences and subjectivities as *practical* expressions of their relations to the social world and at the same time as *actively* and *productively* shaped by power relations and neoliberal forms of governmentalities.

Researching Contemporary Youth in the Context of Social Change

This section first provides an overview of the two approaches; 'youth transitions' and 'youth culture'; which have historically shaped the field of youth studies. It briefly reviews Beck's theory of individualisation which has extensively been used to

understand the impacts of late modernity and social change on young people's lives and establish a middle-ground position in the field (Woodman, 2009). The section then outlines a more recent body of work in youth research which has loosely used and/or advocated for political economy or critical approaches to understand young people's lives (see Coté, 2014b, 2016; Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France, 2016). Finally, the section examines, drawing on empirical research, how young people's lives have been reshaped in the last decades by social change and broader economic and political relations. By doing so, this section sets the context for the current study.

Youth Studies: Historical Divisions and Contemporary Debates

Youth has historically been defined as a life-stage between childhood and adulthood, a period of transition usually thought as from dependence to independence and from education to employment (Evans and Furlong, 1997; Furlong et al., 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). The concept of youth has its roots in psychology and was originally conceptualised as a life-stage characterised by identity work and instability, the most recent example of this body of work can be found in the concept of 'emerging adulthood' developed by Arnett (2004). The concept of 'emerging adulthood' formalised a 'new' stage of life-course, in effect an extension of the period of youth. Arnett's concept has been largely questioned not only as unhelpful to understand young people's experiences but also as reinforcing normative understandings of adulthood (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Furlong, 2009b, Woodman and Wyn, 2014) (see discussion below). More generally, 'youth' has been constructed at the intersection of fields of expertise such as criminology, education, psychology or sociology which in turn have generated specific representations of young people and so-called youth issues (Kelly, 2000). Youth, and the meanings and representations

17

attached to it are therefore an expression of broader relations of power (Bourdieu, 1993b) which produces discourses and often informs policies directed at young people (see Kelly, 2003).   These relations are essential to keep in mind when exploring and trying to understand young people's lives.

The field of youth studies has traditionally been divided in two broad schools; 'youth transitions' and 'youth cultures' (see Hodkinson, 2007 and Furlong, 2009a for an historical overview of the field). The enduring divisions of youth research between transitional and cultural perspectives correspond to broader sociological debates (Woodman, 2009, Furlong, 2009a, Coffey and Farrugia, 2014, Coté, 2014a). Youth transitions have been for a long time understood as relatively linear and leading the majority of the time to the establishment of vocational identities. From the 70s onwards, approaches to youth transitions have changed reflecting socio-economic transformations (e.g. increase in youth unemployment) as well as broader sociological debates, and in particular the enduring discussions about 'structures' versus 'agency' in social sciences (see Evans & Furlong, 1997; Furlong, 2009b). Youth transitions have been successively understood as 'pathways' in the 70's, putting a strong emphasis on the impacts of structural factors on young people's experiences and life chances, as 'trajectories' in the 80's, reflecting on the popularity of structuralist theories at the time and as 'navigations' from the 90's, a metaphor which accentuates individual agency and subjectivity (Furlong, 2009b, pp.343-344). The youth transitions and youth culture perspectives which emerged and were shaped by this context are discussed in turn.

The 'youth transitions' perspective has traditionally looked at young people's experiences in terms of transitions from education to employment (Furlong 2009a). Studies in this tradition, often drew on large-scale quantitative and longitudinal research and put an emphasis on how social factors and structures such as class, gender and ethnicity constrained and shaped young people's life-chances and

opportunities (Roberts, 1995; Evans and Furlong, 1997; Jones, 2002; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Over the last two decades, the focus of 'youth transitions' has been displaced from an attention to transitions from school to work to a broader focus on young people's experiences in the different contexts of their lives, including their experiences of the welfare system, their personal relationships and their leisure and consumption practices (Thomson et al. 2002, Henderson et al, 2006, Thomson, 2007, Roberts, 2009). In doing so, scholars have demonstrated the complexity of young people's experiences and reconceptualised their transitions as non-linear, multidimensional, extended and fragmented (see Coté, 2000; Goodwin and O'Connor, 2005, Furlong et al. 2005; 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; France, 2007, Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). For some scholars in the field, 'transitions' (understood with a broader focus) remain an essential concept to understand how social reproduction operates in young people's lives in contemporary society (Roberts, 2009; France and Roberts, 2015, France, 2016).

This perspective has been criticised for constructing youth in relation to normative understandings of adulthood characterised by traditional 'markers of transitions' such as full-time work, independent living or financial autonomy; markers which do not account for the complexity of young people's life experiences (Wyn and White 1997, Woodman and Bennett, 2015, France and Threadgold, 2016, Wyn et al., 2017; see also Blatterer, 2007 for a critique of the notion of adulthood). This has led some scholars to put into question the usefulness of 'transitions' as an analytical framework to understand young people's experiences (MacDonald and Shildrick 2007, Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Wyn et al, 2012; Wyn et al., 2017).

The body of work in the tradition of youth culture contrasts with the focus on transitions. Empirical studies adopting a youth culture perspective have focused on different forms of youth subcultures (see for example Thornton, 1995 on clubbing and Bennett, 1999, 2002 on popular music), on identities, consumption and lifestyles

(Miles et al. 1998, Miles, 1998, 2000). These studies, which often used qualitative and small-scale research, have been criticised as overplaying individual agency and choice and under-looking social structures in their analysis (MacDonald et al., 2000; Cieslik, 2001, 2003). In addition, critiques argued that the focus of this body of work largely fails to take into account the broader social, political and economic contexts which shaped youth culture (Hollands, 2002), promoting an 'individualistic understanding of the social' (Blackman, 2005, p.9). The Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University has also been significant in the shaping of research about youth cultures. Contrary to other studies focusing on youth cultures, the works presented in *Resistance through Rituals,* edited by Hall and Jefferson (1976) have analysed youth subcultures in relation to class and the way in which cultural hegemony is structurally and historically maintained (p.xxxiii). This body of work has analysed specific youth subcultures (e.g. such as 'mod' or 'rastas') within the political and economic relations of power which shaped young people's experiences and understandings of their environments. The work of the CCCS progressively stopped and lost favour with the emergence of postmodern ideas (Coté, 2014a, France, 2016). Finally, scholars have criticised the youth culture perspective (including the CCCS) for focusing largely on young people who were leading spectacular lives and subsequently neglecting the experiences of the majority of young people. This has been described as 'the missing middle' (Roberts, 2011, Woodman, 2012b, Cieslik and Simpson, 2013, Roberts and MacDonald, 2013).

Over the last decades, debates about individualisation, late modernity and social change as well as the rise and downfall of postmodernist ideas have substantially shaped youth research. The theoretical inputs of Beck (1992, 2000, 2007) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1996, 2001) on individualisation and the development of a risk society have heavily influenced discussions in youth studies (see for instance Cieslik and Pollock, 2002; Brannen and Nilsen, 2002, 2007; Threadgold and Nilan. 2009;

Threadgold, 2011). Ulrich Beck (1992) has defined individualisation as a process in which class has been outrun by the constraints coming from individuals' positions in the labour market, their roles as consumers in an environment made up of the conflicting demands and global uncertainty (p.131). The constraints listed above, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) argued, require 'active management' and 'social reflexion'; which they defined as 'the processing of contradictory information, dialogue, negotiation, compromise' (p.26). Individualisation, therefore, 'not only permit but they also demand an active contribution by individuals' (p.4). These processes are further fuelled by powerful and pervasive discourses about self-fulfilment, choice and individual achievement (ibid). In other words, individuals are required to make personal, active and reflexive decisions, which they define as their own biographies, in order to manage increasingly contradictory social, economic and institutional constraints.

Drawing on Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, scholars in youth studies have highlighted that reflexivity and choice, although seemingly emphasising on individual agency, do not necessarily imply freedom as young people do not control the circumstances under which choice is exercised (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; du Bois Reymond, 2009; Furlong, 2009a, 2015, Farrugia, 2013). To say it another way, young people actively and reflexively act upon, revise and negotiate their biographies in contexts and circumstances that are not of their making. Individualisation, in this context, has led to what Furlong and Cartmel (2007) have described as an 'epistemological fallacy'; a growing disjuncture between the objective and subjective dimensions of life:

> We suggest that life in late modernity revolves around an epistemological fallacy: although social structures, such as class, continue to shape life chances, these structures tend to become increasingly obscure as collectivist traditions weaken and individualist values intensify. As a consequence of these changes, people come to

regard the social world as unpredictable and filled with risks which can
only be negotiated on an individual level (pp.2-3).

In this way, processes of individualisation have brought up a contradiction in which
young people's life-chances remain substantially structured by social factors, while
the subjective understandings of these chances are increasingly read, experienced and
responsibility taken on an individual level. The reading of Beck's theory of
individualisation described above and the concept of epistemological fallacy have
been very influential in youth studies and useful to reconcile the dichotomy between
structures and agency. However, some scholars have suggested that the arguably
caricatured use of Beck's work has become a hindrance to research in youth studies
(Woodman, 2009) and that renewed approaches are now needed (France, 2016).

Beck's work, Woodman (2009) contends, has often been constructed as a foil and
presented as a theory of agency and subsequently used to question the over-emphasis
on agency in youth studies and reassert the importance of social structures in shaping
young people's lives. This allowed scholars to establish and safeguard a middle-
ground position between structure and agency (p.244) (see also Roberts, 2010,
Threadgold, 2011, Woodman and Threadgold, 2015 regarding the use of Beck's
concepts in youth studies). Woodman in his critique suggested that Beck's theory
would still be a useful analytical framework if deployed to understand the macro-level
of the social changes entailed by processes of individualisation, and especially the
'shifting institutional logics that influence the individual biography' (p.245). In other
words, Beck's theory provides useful insights to understand how social inequalities
continue to be reproduced based on social formations such as class, race or gender
and at the same time how new forms of inequality are forged in relation to deeper
institutional changes, increasingly contradictory regulations and new demands put on
young people (Woodman, 2011; Woodman and Wyn, 2014).

In this context, Woodman and Wyn, as well as other scholars in youth studies

(Cote, 2014a; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France, 2016), have urged the development of analytical frameworks to understand the connections between macro and micro levels of analysis in youth research (with or without Beck). To do so, Wyn and Woodman (2006) have drawn on the sociology of generation and attempted to ground young people's experiences within the sets of social, political and institutional changes which characterise different generations (see also Woodman, 2012b, Woodman and Wyn, 2014). Other scholars have advocated the use of Bourdieu's theory of practice to overcome the enduring dichotomy between 'structures vs agency' in the field of youth studies. (Roberts, 2009, Woodman and Wyn, 2014; France and Threadgold, 2015; France, 2016; Wyn et al. 2017) (see discussion further down on Bourdieu). These (relatively) new directions have been fruitful to discuss and shed new light on young people's experiences (Furlong, 2013; Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Coté, 2014a; France, 2016).

The current study draws on this body of work while also wanting to inscribe the analysis more specifically in the political and economic relations of power which shape young people's experiences. More recently, a few studies in youth research has advocated, used or drawn loosely on a political economy perspective (see Coté, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; France, 2016), tradition which has its roots in the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (see discussion above). For example, in their study of the night-time economy in Newcastle, Chatterston and Hollands (2003) have analysed how young adults' leisure practices were shaped by global corporations of the entertainment industry as well as by national and local policies. They demonstrated how young people's cultural practices, both mainstream and alternative, were informed by social as well as economic, corporate and political factors (see also Hollands, 2015). However, Chatterston and Hollands' work has been an exception in a body of youth research which has under-looked or left in the background the political and economic factors which shape young people's lives (Coté, 2014b). This,

according to Coté, puts the field in danger of largely missing the role of economic and political relations of power that shape young people' lives including the role played by neoliberal capitalism, the political positioning of youth in contemporary society and the social construction of this group (p.538). Such approach seems even more important in a context in which private corporations have become a pervasive structural force in shaping young people's practices. Youth subcultures, fashion and lifestyle have been commodified and permeated by private companies and businesses. (Blackman, 2005; Harris, 2008; Coté, 2014a). Even symbols of anti-capitalist movements and of youth resistance to mainstream society have been appropriated by marketers 'in the 'resistance as display and consumption' marketing archetype' (Coté, 2014a, p.207). Winlow and Hall (2009) for example, demonstrated how young people's practices of identity work in northeast England were deeply embedded in a consumer culture. Even though most of young people described their practices as individual decisions, even sometimes in order to adopt 'rebel identities' or subvert consumption, these choices in fact 'sustain and fuel consumerism by restricting agency to a choice between items rather than a choice to consume or not to consume' (ibid. p.97, see also Bauman, 1999). In other words, corporate capitalism shapes young people's lives by creating a wide range of trends that young people can select from and encouraging them to adopt specific lifestyles. However, lifestyles and consumption practices remain mostly read and appropriated by young people as expressions of their individuality and personal choice (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

Drawing on a political economy approach to understand young people's lives in relation to broader forms of power, and in particular corporate power, is not to say that young people are passive or dupes of these forms of power. Evidence has shown that young people are aware of the ways in which unequal opportunities as well as consumption shape their lives (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, Griffin, 2010, France and Haddon 2014, France and Threadgold, 2016). Influenced by the debates described

above, the current study sees young people as actively making choices and negotiating their lives (showing agency and reflexivity). These choices draw on the social dispositions that young people have acquired through their experiences and socialisation (embodiment of social structures) and are simultaneously informed by the political, social and economic contexts (i.e. neoliberal ideology) in which they take place.

The Reshaping of Young People's Lives in the Context of Neoliberal Capitalism

Empirical research has evidenced the continuing role of social formations such as class, gender and race in shaping young people's experiences (Reay et al. 2001, Ball et al. 2002, Webster et al, 2004, MacDonald and Marsh, 2005, Shildrick, and MacDonald, 2006, Henderson et al, 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Roberts, 2007, MacDonald, 2011, Reay, 2012, Coté, 2014a; Wyn et al, 2017). While these formations remain essential in understanding young people's lives, important social, economic and political changes which took place over the last decades have further reshaped their experiences. These transformations will be discussed in the context of education, work, leisure and relationships.

Research has shown that in the last decades an increasing number of young people, especially young women, took part in higher education in the UK. Young people often stay longer in education and as a result enter the labour market later (Furlong et al. 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Furlong, 2009b). Whilst the last decades have seen a greater diversification and range of qualifications available in the UK (Furlong, 2009a), class, race and gender remain determinants in how young people choose their educational pathways and in their attainments (Reay et al. 2001; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; MacDonald 2011; Reay, 2012). In addition, the diversification of options available in combination to the widespread of meritocratic

educational policies have created perceptions of greater opportunities and individual responsibility (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Young people read their experiences of higher education in terms of personal efforts and responsibility, following discourses on meritocracy (Evans, 2002, Reay, 2012) and perceptions that they will obtain assets which will make them equally competitive in the labour market (Wyn et al., 2017, p.8). These perceptions correspond to the transformations of higher education in the UK by neoliberal agendas promoting individual choice, personal development and responsibility (Ball, 2008, Naidoo et al, 2011, Reay, 2012). For instance, research has shown that under neoliberal influence educational institutions and more broadly youth policy and practice in the OECD countries, have adopted frameworks focusing on employability and skills development and promoted vocational trainings and courses as solutions to youth unemployment (France, 2016, pp.82-83, see also Standing, 2011). This has in effect transferred responsibility from the institutional to the individual level.

Furthermore, a number of studies has documented the increase of youth unemployment (Furlong and Kelly, 2005, France, 2016) as well as the rising gap between education attainment and job opportunities in the UK and other OECD countries, resulting in forms of underemployment (MacDonald, 2011, Shildrick et al., 2012, Coté, 2014a, France, 2016). Young people are overall more likely to be employed in precarious employment with limited social benefits and protection, such as part time and casual contracts, and in low skilled occupations and in the retail and hospitality sectors (Furlong and Kelly, 2005, p.222). In this context, young people often mix study and work (Reay et al., 2001; Henderson et al. 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Winlow and Hall, 2009). However, working class students are more likely to undertake paid work to finance their studies while young people from more privileged background can undertake volunteer work or dedicate their time to develop their networks and gain international experience reinforcing social inequalities (Reay

et al, 2001; Lehmann, 2009, Cieslik and Simpson, 2013).

The changing educational patterns and working conditions described above have also affected the temporal structuring of young people's lives by creating increasingly individualised and destandardised schedules (Woodman, 2011, 2012a, 2013). The rise of such schedules have impacted young people's ability to share time with their significant others by rendering difficult to synchronise their timetables with others (Woodman, 2011, 2012a, 2013). As a result, young people increasingly have to actively manage their schedules in order to find periods of shared time with their friends, family members and significant others (ibid). In this context, mobile technologies and new media by allowing young people to spontaneously arrange meetings with friends and maintain social connections can be understood as 'coordinating devices' which help to and even are necessary to resolve the desynchronisation of the everyday and individualisation of schedules. However, these technologies also encourage the blurring of work and non-work time in turn contributing to further desynchronisation (Woodman and Wyn, 2014, p.132).

A large body of research has been dedicated to understand young people's personal relationships in the context of these social changes. Research has indicated that social factors such as gender, ethnicity and class still impact on personal relationships (Griffiths, 1995; Hey, 1997; Adams, and Allan, 1998; Brooks, 2002, 2005; Reynolds, 2007, Thomson, 2011) and that friendships are in practice 'managed' in pragmatic ways (Brooks, 2007, p.702). This body of research has emerged largely as a critical response to arguments put forward by Giddens (1991); and in particular his concept of 'pure relationship'. In his conception of relationships, Giddens has put a great emphasis on choice, reflectivity and mutual benefit. According to him, pure relationships, which characterised modernity, are situations 'where a social relation is entered into for its own sake' (p.58). Scholars, however, have argued that the values stressed on with the concept of pure relationship (e.g. choice, compatibility) have

27

pervaded public discourses and reshaped normative expectations and understandings of intimate relationships and friendships (Jamieson, 1998; Pahl, 2000; Chambers, 2013). This body of work sheds light on the accounts of young adults in the study regarding their friending practices on social network sites (see Chapter Six).

The social trends highlighted above have been exacerbated by the global economic crisis in 2008 (see France, 2016). Evidence has also shown that young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing have declined in the last decades (Kelly, and Pike 2017). Pressures to achieve educational success and self-realisation (West, 2009), competitive labour market and education system as well as uncertainty, austerity and unemployment have resulted to an increase in stress and anxieties experienced by young people (Evans and Furlong, 1997; Henderson et al. 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Wyn, 2009; Furlong, 2013, Duffy, 2017). Neoliberal discrepancy between expectations and social realities have been said to have an important role in this worsening. Indeed, discourses focusing on individual choice, personal development, responsibility and meritocracy have led to a growing disjuncture between subjective perceptions and objective conditions, increasingly putting pressure on individuals (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, Threadgold, 2011). For instance, in their work on young women's perceptions of their transitions from education to work, Wyn et al. (2017) found that, although young women anticipated struggles in combining their professional careers with having a family life, they understood their 'options' in terms of individual choice and opportunities. In other words, young people perceive an increasing amount of opportunities and a greater scope for individual choice in their lives, rendering invisible the role of social factors in shaping these opportunities, which in turn generate feelings of greater personal responsibility to be successful and personal blame in case of failure. These perceptions are in accordance with neoliberal discourses presenting and encouraging to perform the self as an enterprise (see section on Foucault below).

In this context, Woodman and Wyn (2014) have described young people as being 'in the vanguard of the ranks of this new kind of flexible worker' (p.127) while Standing (2011) argued that youth have a significant representation in the 'precariat'. However, this is not to say that precariousness is experienced only by young people or in the same ways by all young people. These experiences are informed by social formations such as class, gender and race (Furlong and Kelly, 2005). Experiences of precariousness have spread to certain sections of middle-class youth, especially educated young people with qualifications in social sciences, humanities and arts subjects (McRobbie, 2016, p.37). In accordance with Standing (2011), McRobbie argued that the careers and prospects of this group are characterised by uncertainty (ibid.) For this population, experiences of precariousness have been significantly impacted by the spread of digital technologies and the Internet which led to new forms of amateur and semi-professional production and the celebration of 'creativity', effectively blurring distinctions between leisure and work (Hesmondhalgh, 2010, Greggs, 2011, McRobbie, 2016). Digital technologies have largely contributed to this trend by allowing individuals to be flexible and always connected, to work from home and during non-work time (Gregg, 2011). Furthermore, in the cultural and creative industries, 'reputation becomes a key commodity' (Conor et al, 2015, p.10) which heavily rely upon informal networking and self-promotion (Coté and Pybus, 2011, Greggs, 2011). Critiques have highlighted that these activities, often undertook with a sense of entrepreneurship and independence, are in effect unpaid work and self-exploitation (Andrejevic, 2008, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010). As a result, workers in the cultural and creative industries which often rely on digitalisation, are exposed to a growing gap between discourses focusing on autonomy, creativity and self-realisation and their work conditions increasingly characterised by insecurity, long hours, casualisation and precariousness (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Conor et al, 2015). These experiences resonate with the population of the current study largely

composed of middle class young people with qualifications in social sciences, humanities and arts subjects and sometimes with ambitions to work in the cultural and creative industries.

Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, the following section aims to offer a more nuanced understanding of the 'dialectical' relationship between individual subjectivities, and the social, economic and political constraints of neoliberal capitalism.

Theoretical Perspectives: Examining Practices and Relations of Power

The current study draws on the works of Bourdieu and Foucault arguing that a combination of both theoretical inputs is useful to understand young people's lives within the power relations and contexts in which they take place. Bourdieu's theory of practice and especially his concept of habitus, sheds light on how young people's experiences are s*ituated* and constructed in *practical* relations to their social environments. In addition, Bourdieu's work provides useful insights on the processes of classification and differentiation which play out in the social world. Lastly, his more recent work examined the emergence of dominant neoliberal discourses and its effects on individual practices, power relations and the moral order (see 1998b, 2000). Bourdieu's short text 'Neo-Liberalism, Utopia of Unlimited Exploitation' (1998b), in this regard, has been influential in the shaping of the current study.

The work of Foucault on power and knowledge adds to Bourdieu's theory of practice. In my view, Foucault provides great insights to understand how young people's habitus and practical relations to their social environments are informed by neoliberal governmentalities and permeated by historical relations of power. Foucault's body of work provides analytical tools to understand young people's experiences as embedded in broader power relations and discourses (regimes of truth)

which *actively* and *productively* shape their engagement with others and their understandings of the self.

Pierre Bourdieu: The Lens of Practice

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977, 1984, 1986, 1990a, 1998a) has been profoundly influential in social sciences broadly and youth studies more specifically and often used to overcome the longstanding dichotomy in social theory between structures and agency (Furlong et al., 2011; Cieslik and Simpson, 2013, Woodman and Wyn, 2014; France, 2016). A large amount of research has been conducted drawing on his analytical tools, especially his concepts of 'habitus', 'field' and 'capital' (see for example Thornton, 1996; Hodkinson, 1999; Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2002; Holland et al., 2007; Threadgold and Nilan, 2009; Threadgold, 2011; Woodman and Wyn,2014; France and Threadgold, 2016; Fraser, 2016; Wyn et al. 2017).

Throughout his career, Bourdieu has developed a theory of practice in which social agents operate and are situated in different 'fields' which compose the social world. These fields can be understood as semi-autonomous spaces regulated by specific rules and power relations. Social agents' practices as well as the extent to which they succeed in the fields they operate, rely upon the distribution and composition of the capitals they possess; that is economic, social and cultural (see Bourdieu, 1986 for a comprehensive view of these three types of capital). The types of capital each person have 'position' them in relation to the social space. In this way, Bourdieu's model is inherently relational. Furthermore, Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic capital' is very important. It sheds light on the relations of domination which characterised each field and the legitimation of this domination. In his work *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu demonstrates at length how power is maintained through the transformation of specific types of cultural capital into symbolic capital; that is a

system of perceived differences which renders legitimate the taste and culture of the dominant middle class while delegitimising taste and culture associated with the dominated class, often disregarded as 'vulgar' and 'worthless'. Symbolic violence operates through the internalisation by the latter of the dominant classifications and meanings as legitimate (p.9). In this way, Bourdieu directs researchers to look at the relations of power underlying the legitimacy of cultural practices and how social agents understand their own practices within these relations. As Skeggs (2015) puts it:

> Orientation to *consuming* rather than the consumption *of* an object or event may be more important for understanding the relations and reproduction of class divisions. The 'how' of consumption is intimately linked to symbolic capital, for the 'how' is the mechanism by which certain cultures are legitimate (p.210, original emphasis)

In other words, Bourdieu's theory aspires to grasp the effects of symbolic power on social agents' understandings and orientations in the social world with are the results of the overall distribution and composition of each individual's capitals as well as of the legitimacy of these capitals in different fields. In this way, Bourdieu's theory adds to Foucault's work by focusing on the relational dimension of power (see discussion on Foucault below).

   In Bourdieu's theory of practice, social agents' practices and understandings of their social environments are mediated by their 'habitus', a key concept in his theory which he defined as follow:

> A systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations (1990a, p.53).

Later, Bourdieu characterises the habitus as embodied and internalised history; an

'active presence of the whole past of which it is the product' (1990a, p.56). In this way, the habitus, Bourdieu explains, needs to be understood as a 'durably installed generative principle regulated improvisations' (p.57). Put another way, the habitus is a set of dispositions, constituted throughout individuals' personal history as well as the result of social, historical and cultural factors (structured structures), which shapes and organises social agents' practices (structuring structures) in the different social fields they inhabit. That is not to say, however, that social agents' practices are entirely structured by their dispositions or impermeable to social change. Bourdieu has often been misinterpreted and charged with accusations of structural determinism (see Faber, 2017 for an overview). This misrepresentation and critique of Bourdieu's work has been used in the field of youth studies, often to establish a middle-ground position (see for instance Evans, 2002). Other critiques have been addressed to Bourdieu's theory, among which the over-emphasis on social reproduction, leaving only marginal space for the possibility of social change and more broadly the under-theorisation of social change in his framework (Farrugia and Woodman, 2015; see Woodman and Threadgold, 2015 for an overview of the function of the critique of Bourdieu's work in youth studies). In fact, Bourdieu's theory of practice transcends the dichotomy between agency and social structures by situating social agents' practices in active and practical relations to their social environments:

> 'Subjects' are active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense, that is, an acquired system of preferences of principles of vision and division (which is usually called taste), and also a system of durable cognitive structures (which are essentially the product of the internalisation of objective structures) and of schemes of action with orient the perception of the situation and the appropriate response. The habitus is this kind of practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation – what is called in sport a 'feel' for the game, which is inscribed in the present state of play. (1998a, p.25)

In others words, the habitus which generated 'regulated improvisations' is simultaneously the expression of social agents' dispositions and of the activation/ interaction of these dispositions in a given context. To put it simply, the same habitus can produce different results as social agents' practices are inscribed in 'the present state of play' and can adjust to it. Bourdieu's theory of practice becomes therefore very useful to understand young people's practices outside the unhelpful dichotomy between structures and agency.

More recently, scholars in youth studies have engaged with Bourdieu's theory in more depth (see Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France and Threadgold, 2015; Wyn et al, 2017). Threadgold (2011), for example put an emphasis on the idea of 'blips' in the habitus; that is moments in which the habitus is out of phase (what Bourdieu called the 'hysteresis' of the habitus (1977, p.83)). In those moments, individuals' habitus can be torn, dislocated from the fields they have to inhabit as they move between fields which lead to experiences of suffering or forms of reflexivity (Woodman and Threadgold, 2015, p.562). Adkins (2003) highlighted a similar understanding of reflexivity as the results of a 'a lack of fit between habitus and field, that is, when there is discord between the previously routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures' (p.26). In this way, movements across fields can lead to reflexivity and change (McNay, 1999). While a sociological discussion about the concept of reflexivity is outside the scope of this thesis (see Farrugia 2013; Farrugia and Woodman, 2015 for a more detailed engagement with the concept of reflexivity), the body of work highlighted demonstrates how reflexivity can be experienced by young people as a misfit between their habitus and the contradictory demands that are put on them. In this context, young people will attempt to adjust their dispositions to match and respond to these demands. Bourdieu (1998b) himself recognised the emergence of such 'destabilized habitus' (p.98) produced by structural violence which he contends convincingly is provoked by a permanent state of insecurity and

neoliberal policies. However, this 'destabilisation' creates specific subjectivities and practical relations which are themselves relatively stable. To discuss this, the next section draws on Foucault's work in order to situate young people's experiences in the collective history and relations of power which have shaped their practical relations to the social world.

Michel Foucault: Power and Neoliberal Governmentality

Michel Foucault has been very influential figure in sociology; the field of youth studies has been no exception (see for instance Kelly, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2013; Harris, 2004; Griffin, 2010, Hope, 2015; Howie, and Campbell, 2016, Kelly and Pike, 2017). Youth scholars have drawn on the work of Foucault to understand young people's experiences within the constitution of specific regimes of truth, power relations and forms of subjectivation (see Anderson, 2015 for a comprehensive overview of the take up of Foucault in youth studies). Hall and Jefferson's (2006), for example, in the introduction to the second edition of their work, *Resistance through Rituals*, called for using Foucault's analytical framework to make sense of young people's experiences in relation to broader public discourses, institutional and social changes induced by late capitalism and consumption:

> We choose consumption, not only because it is pivotal to the whole shift, but because it appears in some form in all the social processes and because it is the site of what Foucault called 'subjectivation' – where people both become 'subjects' of, and relate actively to, changed social processes, and are at the same time 'subjected' to its effects (p.xxxi).

This section first gives a brief overview of Foucault's work and then discusses how his analytical framework can be deployed to understand young people's subjective experiences within the power relations and discourses (regimes of truth) in which they

are inscribed.

Throughout his work, Foucault has been interested in the relationship between technologies of power (which he also referred as 'technologies of domination'), technologies of the self, and the forms of subjectivation which ensue from the specific nature of these technologies and their continuous interactions (1988, p.18). According to Foucault, the main characteristic of power is that it generates 'regimes of truth'; types of discourses that are legitimate at specific times and places and function as truth (1980, p.131). The technologies of the self are inscribed in these regimes of truth that individuals activate or act upon:

> The subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of self, these practices are not nevertheless something that the subject invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group. (1997, p.291).

Foucault (1988) defines technologies of the self as technologies which 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being' (p.18). Technologies of the self are coupled with what Foucault identifies as technologies of power 'which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject' (ibid.). Foucault argues that relations of power are always present and characterised relationships in which 'one person tries to control the conduct of the other' (ibid. p.192). However, this is not to say that social agents are disempowered or deprived of their individuality or agency. In Foucault's theory, the place of the subject has been contentious and had evolved throughout his work. However, Foucault never supported an annihilation of the subject, on the contrary the subject has an active role through processes of subjectivation. The technologies of the self depend on active forms of subjectivation and self-regulation and not a passive compliance. Indeed, Foucault understands power not as having

36

solely 'negative effects' such as repression or exclusion but on the contrary as positive, 'productive and creative' (1977a, p.194). In this way, power produces pleasures, knowledge, discourses and individuality (1980, 1982). The power is exercised by social agents as individuals and as a condition of this individuality:

> The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike and in doing so subdue or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the vis à vis of power, it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. (1980, p.98)

Furthermore, Foucault argues resistance which is often discussed as an opposite effect of power is in fact not contradictory to the exercise of power. Resistance is 'never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (1978, p.95). In other words, Foucault defines power as something that is exercised by individuals as means to establish and express their individuality (in relation to others or themselves) rather than something that is fixed, possessed or only imposed onto individuals. In this way, power can only be 'exercised over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free (1982, p. 221). For Foucault, power is not antithetical of freedom. Similarly, Rose (1989) described technologies of the government as 'technologies of freedom'. Their power, he explained depend on the capacities to align the government of self and others with 'political, social and institutional goals, individual pleasures and desires, and with the happiness and fulfilment of the self' (p.261).

What Foucault first calls 'technologies of power' and then more broadly forms of governmentality are not only deployed by the state but can be found in all social interactions. To describe it Foucault draws on the broad meaning of the word 'government' in the 16th century:

"Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action, more or less considered or calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others. (1982, pp.789-790)

Thus, Foucault advocates a broad theoretical shift from an analysis of 'any would-be general Theory of Power or from explanations in terms of Domination in general […] to the history and analysis of procedures and technologies of governmentality' (2010, p.42).

In his course at the College de France on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault (2008) offered such analysis in his historical examination of neoliberal thought and the emergence of corresponding forms of conducts. Neoliberal governmentality operates to construct and diffuse a social fabric in which 'the basic units would have the form of the enterprise' (Foucault, 2008, p.148). In other words, in this form of government, the enterprise form is diffused within every aspect of the social body, producing specific forms of government of the self and others (techniques and procedures). Furthermore, neoliberalism as art of government is not goal-oriented toward a society of consumption revolving around 'uniformity of the commodity but towards the multiplicity and differentiation of enterprises (p.149). It operates according to a differentiating and competitive logic:

It is not market society that is at stake in this new art of government; it is not a question of reconstructing that kind of society. The society regulated by reference to the market that the neoliberals are thinking about is a society in which the regulatory principle should not be so· much the exchange of commodities as the mechanisms of competition. It is these mechanisms that should have the greatest possible surface

38

and depth and should also occupy the greatest possible volume in society. This means that what is sought is not a society subject to the commodity effect, but a society subject to the dynamic of competition. Not a supermarket society, but an enterprise society (p.146)

Foucault analyses neoliberalism as an ideology based on the notion of enterprise and not on the notion of commodity. This is a very important point which has been discussed by McNay (2009). According to her, the notion of enterprise allows to

understand the commodification of subjective experience not so much through ideas of passive consumerism, standardization and heteronomy, as through ideas of active differentiation, regulated self-responsibility and depoliticized autonomy (p.62).

However, this is not to say that processes of consumption, political and economic interests by private corporations as well as the development of a consumer society (Bauman, 1999) have not shaped young people's experiences and subjectivities. These elements are essential to understand their experiences and subjectivities and have themselves being reshaped around the notion of enterprise and its differentiating and competitive logic.

In the field of youth studies, Peter Kelly (2000, 2003, 2006, 2013) has extensively used Foucault's analytical framework to understand the construction of 'youth' in relation to neoliberal governmentalities. He has shown that youth has been predominantly constructed within the framework of risk, as either being at risk and in need of protection or taking risky behaviours and in need of supervision (Kelly, 2001, 2003; see also Cieslik and Pollock, 2002). This framework of 'Youth at Risk', promoted by a range of institutions and experts has been said to justify an array of policies designed to manage the risks supposedly posed by young people, resulting in effect to increasing forms of control, monitoring and regulation of every aspect of young people's lives (Kelly, 2003; Muncie, 2004; Valentine, 2004; McCahill and

Finn, 2010; France et al, 2012). Furthermore, this construction of youth is often outweighed 'positive' or 'can-do' views on young people (Kelly, 2003, 2006, 2013; Harris, 2004; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2011, 2015). This 'can-do' perspective has also been part of the dominant construction of youth and put an overemphasis on youth's 'power, strength or virtue, or celebrate their innate creativity or revolutionary potential' (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2011, pp.688-689). By implication the 'can-do' versus 'at risks' social discourses generate 'truths' about what young people should aim to be and become as adults:

> Youth at-risk, in its *negativity*, illuminates the *positivity* that is the entrepreneurial Self. That is, the discourses that construct youth at-risk reveal the truths about whom we should, as adults, become (Kelly, 2006, p.18).

The ideals of the entrepreneurial self, the 'can-do' person, connect very clearly to Foucault's work on the development of neoliberal forms of governmentality and his conception of power as productive and generative of discourses of truth. In this way, discourses around youth as well as social expectations regarding adulthood have been permeated by neoliberal governmentality relying on the notion of enterprise and produced forms of 'personhood that sees individuals as being responsible for conducting themselves, in the business of life, as an enterprise, a project, a work in progress' (Kelly, 2006, p.18) and capable of managing twenty-first century flexible capitalism. In other words, neoliberal discourses generate and sustain understandings of the self as entrepreneurial focusing on values and imperatives such as responsibility, individual choice, autonomy, freedom, achievement and reflexivity (Kelly, 2006; Griffin, 2010) which in turn encourage specific forms of government of others (e.g. monitoring, competition) and of the self (e.g. self-monitoring, self-improvement).

Neoliberal governmentalities have also been explored in relation to normative

ideas of youth and femininity (Walkerine, 2003; Harris, 2004; McRobbie, 2007; Ringrose, 2007; Dobson, 2012). Harris, (2004), for instance, described how young women have been the 'vanguard of new subjectivity' in contemporary society revolving around discourses of 'can-do women' and 'girl power' which celebrate women for their resilience, desire, determination and confidence (p.1). The neoliberal ideal of 'the successful girl' (Ringrose, 2007) has been pervasive in the fields of education and employment (see also Wyn et al, 2017) but also citizenship (Harris, 2004) and consumption (McRobbie, 2007). Through these discourses, Harris (2008) explained:

> Young women are produced as ideal consumers and skilled choice-makers who approach work, education and family as a series of personally calculated and flexible options (p. 485)

In this context, young women are pressured to conform and to reinvent themselves (i.e. via technologies of the self) as successful and 'can-do' girls. The impacts of neoliberal discourses have also been explored in relation young women's identity work and information disclosure on social network sites (Ringrose, 2011; Dobson, 2011, 201, 2013) (see Chapter Two).

The body of work discussed above provides an analytical framework to examine young people's subjective understandings and practices within broader socio-political and historical discourses ('regimes of truth') which generate specific forms of 'governmentality'. These discourses constrain but also importantly positively encourage young people to be entrepreneurial, responsible and assert their individuality.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly reviewed the historical and contemporary debates which have shaped the field of youth studies, acknowledging their contributions to our understandings of young people's lives. One of the most notable contribution of the body of work in the field of youth studies has been to evidence the continuous impacts of social formations (e.g. class, race and gender) in reproducing social inequalities and shaping young people's lives. In this context, the current study aims to contribute to knowledge by looking more specially at the power relations and discourses which shape young people's everyday experiences. To do so, the study draws on the theoretical inputs of Bourdieu and his theory of practice as well as the work on power and governmentality of Michel Foucault. The current study argued that combining these two analytical frameworks provide new insights to understand young people's *practical* relations to their social environments and at the same time how the broader power relations and discourses which characterised these environments, *actively* and *productively* shaped young people's experiences and understandings.

The next chapter reviews the existing literature on social network sites and young people, identifying the normative representations and analytical frameworks that have been used in the last decades to understand their digital practices. It then presents the emergent body of work which adopts a critical perspective on technology and social network sites in order to inscribe young people's practices in broader relations of power (and especially corporate power).

Chapter Two

Critical Perspectives on Young People and Digital Technology

The previous chapter reviewed the debates that have shaped and continue to resonate in the field of youth studies. It has argued that combining theoretical inputs from the works of Bourdieu and Foucault allow to respond to the challenges and complexity of researching contemporary youth and to examine young people's practices and subjectivities in the power relations in which they are inscribed.

The current chapter first provides a brief overview of the literature on young people and social network sites, identifying the normative and binary understandings (e.g. online vs offline; discourses on empowerment vs risks) of what has been described as the 'digital generation'. The chapter then moves beyond these dichotomies and outlines a more recent body of work which examines the complexity of young people's digital practices and understands them as embedded in and shaped by social formations and technological affordances (such as peer socialisation, narratives of growing up or networked publics).

Drawing on the literature in the field of media and communication and surveillance, the second section of this chapter reviews the concept of mediation, putting an emphasis on its usefulness to grasp young people's engagement with social network sites as a dialectical process between social formations and technological affordances. The chapter argues that empirical studies of young people's digital practices (and in particular of the 'digital generation') have neglected to examine the broader power relations in which these practices take place. Following Couldry (2008) and Livingstone (2009), this chapter contends that to understand the power relations underlying young people's digital practices, the concept of mediation might not be the most appropriate. The chapter, instead, draws on a body of work which has

adopted a critical perspective to understand the transformations of the World Wide Web (Web 2.0) and more specifically social network sites within the broader context of neoliberal capitalism. The chapter provides a brief overview of this context by analysing the underlying economic interests, ideology and power of private corporations such as Facebook and how these vested interests are intertwined within digital practices. The last section of the chapter outlines some of the more recent work in surveillance studies which sheds light on the underlying culture of monitoring and neoliberal forms of governmentality (see Chapter One) in which young people's digital practices are inscribed (e.g. self-monitoring, peer monitoring, checking practices).

Overall, this chapter asserts that young people's digital practices cannot be understood in isolation of this context and the power relations that characterise and shape it. By reviewing the ongoing discussions regarding young people's engagement with social network sites and adopting a critical perspective on technology, this chapter contextualises the empirical research that will be developed in chapters Four to Seven.

Young People and Social Network Sites: The Good, the Bad and the Complicated

Definition

The current thesis explores the different meanings ascribed by young adults to social network sites and how they use the platforms in their everyday lives. These platforms have often been discussed in different ways by scholars and sometimes interchangeably described as 'social media', 'social networking sites', 'social network sites', 'digital media', 'new information and communication technologies' or 'new media', it is important therefore to offer a preliminary definition. The current research

uses the term 'social network sites' as specified by Ellison and boyd (2013). They defined social network sites as 'networked communication platforms in which participants:

> 1. have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data;
> 2. can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others;
> 3. can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site' (p.157).

The terminology 'social network sites' puts an emphasis on the similarities between the platforms and their technological capacities. However, there are also significant differences in terms of perceptions and engagement with different social network sites. The current study focuses in particular on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as these platforms were the most commonly used by the population studied (see Chapter Three). Facebook can be seen as the archetype of social network sites as described by Ellison and boyd (2013). Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, is a platform specialised in photo-sharing and photo editing. Twitter is used as a microblogging platform through which users interact via 'tweets', posts limited to 140 characters.

A range of research has shown that social network sites play an important part in the contemporary social practices of young people as well as in the construction of their identities and relationships. Social network sites have become ubiquitous and taken for granted in everyday life where participating in one or another social network site has become the norm, even sometimes mandatory in order to be included in peer groups (Ito et al, 2010, Robards, 2012, boyd, 2014). Facebook remains the most popular platform for young people internationally (Lenhart 2015), but there has been a diversification of uses of social network sites with the spread of other platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr. In this context, social network sites need to be understood as an 'integrated structure' in a polymedia environment

'within which each individual medium is defined in relational terms in the context of all other media' (Madianou and Miller, 2012, p.170). In other words, young people's uses of Facebook not only differ from how they may use Instagram or Twitter but their perceptions and uses of each platform are constituted in relation to the perceptions and uses of other platforms.

The So-Called Digital Generation

Social network sites have largely been discussed in the mainstream media outlets, by policy makers and researchers in relation to the so-called 'digital generation' or 'net generation' (see for example Tapscott, 1998; Holloway and Valentine, 2003; for a critique see Buckingham, 2006 or Herring, 2007). The digital generation has been depicted through two oppositional broad binary narratives, one dystopian and the other utopian (Buckingham, 2007; boyd, 2010).

The dystopian perspective over-emphasises the risks, that otherwise exist, within digital practices. For example, this approach focuses on the dangers posed by potential predators, cyber-bullying, exposure to explicit content and inappropriate information disclosure as well as impacts on well-being. This focus has led to a range of moral panics about young people's digital practices (Gregg and Driscoll, 2008; Livingstone, 2008; boyd, 2010; Pascoe, 2011; Jenkins, Ito and boyd, 2016). Through this perspective, young people's online practices are constructed as risky, irresponsible and/or ill-informed, often vilified by a '"stranger danger" rhetoric and "terror talk" (boyd, 2010, p.91). As a result, young people, in the context of their digital practices, are seen as in need of supervision and/or in need for protection from strangers and potential predators, especially young women (Cassell and Cramer, 2007). These narratives have participated to the justification of the control and surveillance of young people (boyd, 2014, p.50).

Another prominent narrative in the 'dystopian perspective', is that young people who belong to the digital generation have little or no sense of privacy. Young people, in this context, are portrayed as self-obsessed and narcissistic (Buffardi and Campbell 2008) as well as having no sense of discretion or shame (Livingstone, 2008, Driscoll and Greggs, 2008). As a result, in the last decades, research on young people and social network sites has largely focused on privacy and information disclosure (see for instance Lewis et al, 2008; Tufecki, 2008; Christofides et al, 2009; De Souza, and Dick, 2009; Madden, 2012). In many of these works, privacy is taken to be an automatic good, often drawing on moral panics described above (for a critique see Marwick et al. 2010, Fuchs, 2012). Studies, however, have shown that young people tend to view privacy in more nuanced ways and according to contexts (boyd, 2006; Livingstone, 2008; Marwick et al, 2010; boyd and Marwick, 2011; Marwick and boyd, 2014, 2014b; Lincoln and Robards, 2014, 2017)). For example, in their study on students' attitudes to Facebook friends, West et al. (2009) demonstrated how young people negotiated the platform as a 'semi-public' space making complex distinctions between different groups of 'friends' and contexts. Drawing on qualitative interviews with British teenagers aged 13-16, Livingstone (2008) drew a similar conclusion. In her study, she found that the ability to control information about whom was seeing what about them was extremely important for young people. In this way, privacy is neither static nor binary (private vs public) but an ongoing process of negotiations of what to conceal and what to reveal to different audiences (see also boyd, 2014). Furthermore, these negotiations are constrained by the social norms of peer groups as well as shaped by the technological affordances and design of the interfaces of each platform (Livingstone, 2008).

Scholars have analysed how such discourses (i.e. focusing on risks) have been translated in e-safety policies designed for children and young people (Barnard-Wills, 2012, Hope, 2015). Hope (2015), for example, outlined four main tendencies in those

guidelines; 'the discursive construction of e-kids, the muting of schoolchildren's voices, the responsibilisation of students and 'diagnostic inflation' through risk discourses' (p.343). These discourses construct young people's behaviours online as risky or at risk which in turn generate specific strategies of governmentality to address these risks (e.g. responsibilisation of young people). Hope's findings resonate strongly with Kelly's (2006) analysis of discourses of Youth at Risk and the Self as an Enterprise (focusing on values such as risk management and responsibility) (See Chapter One).

In the utopian perspective, young people who are understood to belong to the digital generation are often portrayed as technologically empowered and possessing 'an intuitive; spontaneous relationship with digital technology' (Buckingham, 2007, p.13). In this perspective, studies have put a great emphasis on the benefits of new technology for young people (see for example Colin and Burns, 2009) and looked at what was perceived as a 'natural' relationship between the new media and young people, often described in this context as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001). However, empirical evidence has not corroborated these idealistic predictions. These studies and more broadly discourses have been criticised for understanding the impact of new technologies in a deterministic way (Brooks and Hodkinson, 2008) and for largely under-looking the contexts and the banality young people's engagement with digital technologies (Buckingham, 2007; boyd, 2014). Such discourses often drew on broader narratives about the Internet and new technologies of information and communication as tools for empowerment, increased participation or the emergence of global communities (Cheung, 2004; Jenkins, 2006, Castell, 2007) (see section on Web 2.0).

Following and questioning representations of 'tech savvy' youth and 'digital natives', a large amount of research and policies has been dedicated to understand and assess children and young people's digital literacy and uses (see Buckingham et al,

2005, Livingstone and Bovill, 2011, see Selwyn, 2003 for an overview of policy making in this area). Research initially focused attention on inequalities of access to the Internet and new technologies; what has been known as the 'digital divide' (Hargittai, 2003, Selwyn, 2004; Livingstone and Helsper, 2007). However, research quickly came to focus on the different uses of these technologies (see for example Joinson, 2008; Lampe et al, 2008), outlining a 'usage gap' (van Deursen, and van Dijk, 2014) or a 'second-level digital divide' (Hargittai, 2002). Quantitative studies have shown that users with higher levels of education and higher socio-economic backgrounds tended to reproduce the types of capitals they possessed through their uses (DiMaggio et al., 2004; Hargittai, 2003, 2008; Zillien and Hargittai, 2009) and were more likely to undertake 'capital enhancing' or information seeking activities (Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008). A more recent body of work (Ellison et al, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Liu, 2007; Lampe et al, 2007), using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and often drawing on Bourdieu's theory, demonstrated how users of social network sites performed specific identities and types of cultural capital. For example, in her study on the impacts of Internet access and uses in class boundaries and life trajectories, Lee (2008) combined data from a survey in four English schools as well as semi-structured interviews and demonstrated that socio-economic factors still mattered in terms of access and more importantly in terms of types of uses (p.150). Over the last decades, studies demonstrated that social inequalities based on class, gender and race were not radically reconfigured or overcome but reproduced through uses of the Internet and social network sites (Selwyn, 2004; Lee, 2008; van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014).

Overall, these polarizing perspectives of technology (i.e. utopian vs dystopian) have pushed research, policy and discussions on youth's engagement with the Internet and new media to 'an extreme binary: social media is good or social media is bad' (boyd, 2014, p.24). More recently, research has shown than instead young people's

engagement with digital technologies and social network sites in particular are rather 'complicated'.

Young People and Social Network Sites: 'It is Complicated'

Accounts on 'the digital generation' described above, have been influenced by early research on the Internet which analysed social interactions and identity work on personal homepages, chat rooms or multi-users domains such as Second Life (see Turkle, 1995, Papacharissi, 2002, Schroeder, 2002). Early adopters of these spaces were likely to experiment with fictional identities (e.g. avatars or pseudonyms) and media making, or chat online with people that they have not met but with whom they shared interests (e.g. interests based-communities, fandom) (Jenkins et al. 2016). Ito et al. (2010), for example, have focused on practices of 'geeking out' which they described as 'intense commitment or engagement with media or technology' coupled with "high levels of specialized knowledge attached to alternative models of status and credibility and a willingness to bend or break social and technological rules' (pp.65-66). However, geeking out, interests-based communities or fandom practices are not the mainstream (Ito et al, 2010; Jenkins et al, 2016). Since the mid 2000's social network sites such as MySpace, Bebo, Facebook and then Twitter and Instagram have spread to the detriment of the types of sites described above (see van Dijck, 2013 for a history of social media). Social network sites, and especially Facebook through its policy of real name, tend to encourage a non-fictional, non-anonymous approach and are used to connect and maintain ties with peers within local networks (Ito et al. 2010).

A considerable body of research on the Internet and more recently on social network sites has focused on the performance of identities and impression management following pioneer studies (especially the work of Sherry Turkle, 1995,

1996). These studies often drew on the work of Goffman and his sociology of symbolic interactions to understand online identity construction. Papacharissi (2002), for example, used his work on *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959), to make sense of how people present themselves on their personal homepages. She demonstrated how people were presenting and performing a carefully crafted version of themselves in front of different audiences. More recently, Mendelson and Papacharissi (2010) used Goffman to examine students' uses of photo galleries as an instrument of self-presentation while Lewis et al (2008) have used his work to explore online privacy. Rose et al. (2012) have also drawn on concepts of impression management and identity performance to demonstrate how gender stereotypes were reproduced on Facebook profile-pictures. However, these studies (see Hogan, 2010 or Pinch, 2010 for an overview) while opening up an important area of research often relied upon dichotomous understandings of digital practices, separating online from offline, private from public or back stage/ front stage (see for example Lewis et al, 2008). These dichotomies have since been questioned and criticised as unhelpful to understand digital practices which need instead to be comprehended as part of everyday life (Bakardjieva, 2005; Silverstone, 2005; Beer, 2008; Livingstone, 2008; West et al, 2009). Furthermore, some scholars argued that a Goffman analytical framework often fails short to shed light on the power relations in which digital practices are embedded (Beer, 2008; Bakardjieva, and Gaden, 2011). This point, essential to the current study, will be discussed further later in this chapter.

danah boyd, social media researcher at Microsoft Research and visiting professor at New York University[1] is a prominent figure in research focusing on youth, new technologies and social media. Throughout her work, she has examined how American teenagers engaged with social network sites in their everyday lives (boyd, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2014; boyd and Marwick, 2011; Ellison and boyd,

1 See boyd and Crawford, 2012 for critical reflections about public/private research and access to data. For more information about danah boyd see http://www.danah.org/.

51

2013; Marwick and boyd, 2014). To do so, she has used ethnographic methods including online participant-observation and content analysis of teens' social network sites and profiles, offline participant-observation and semi-structured ethnographic interviews (boyd, 2015). As a result of her investigation, boyd (2014) coined the concept of 'networked publics'; these are 'publics that are restructured by networked technologies' (p.8). This concept allows to understand young people's digital practices in relation with the technological affordances which shape them. She described these technological affordances as follow:

- persistence: the durability of online expressions and content;
- visibility: the potential audience who can bear witness;
- spreadability: the ease with which content can be shared; and
- searchability: the ability to find content. (p.11)

While not determining their practices, boyd argued, technological affordances impact in various ways on young people's engagement with social network sites as well as their understandings and negotiations of the audiences of the platforms they use (i.e. 'networked publics'). The affordances of social network sites reshape the environments that young people negotiate by collapsing social contexts, blurring the distinction between public and private and by making parts of the audience invisible (boyd, 2011a). boyd here draws on the concept of 'affordance' developed by Hutchby (2001) who conceived technologies 'as artefacts which may be both shaped by and shaping of the practices humans use in interaction with, around and through them' (p.444). (see discussion below on mediation). Furthermore, boyd suggested and demonstrated that young people's uses of social network site were not homogeneous and depend on the social, economic and cultural contexts in which they are embedded. In this way, boyd's work has been very influential in social media research. While some aspects of boyd's work can be criticised, especially regarding the conceptualisation of online and offline (see Beer, 2008), her work has set

important foundation stones in the field.

Overall, qualitative research has shown that young people use social network sites to maintain relationships in complex and meaningful ways and keep in touch with people they know (Henderson et al, 2002, Ito et al. 2010; Marwick et al. 2010, Ellison and boyd, 2013; for a focus on friendships see boyd, 2010, 2014, Westcott and Owen, 2013; for a focus on romantic relationships see Bowe, 2010 or Gershon, 2010). Information and communication technologies have also been said to play a crucial part in maintaining relationships by enabling the coordination of everyday activities (Ling, 2000, 2004). In this context, social network sites partly enable young people to schedule and coordinate their time where patterns of precarious work, mix of work and study, and flexibility increasingly desynchronise their schedules (Woodman, 2012, 2013, see Chapter One).

Research suggested that young people's identity work on social network sites was closely connected to processes of 'growing up' and normative understandings of adulthood. Drawing on qualitative interviews with young Australians in combination to the analysis of their social network profiles which informed the interviews, Robards (2012) demonstrated how young people's uses as well as the platforms they used were connected to broader narratives of growing up and transitions. In his study, he found that young people often shifted from MySpace; a platform which focuses largely on introspective and performative identity work; to Facebook; a platform which centres on connections and relationships with others (ibid, see also Lincoln and Robards, 2014). Livingstone (2008), in the study described earlier, highlighted similar trends. She emphasised on how younger teenagers would often construct a 'highly-decorated, stylistically-elaborate identity' on social network sites whereas older teenagers would display 'a plain aesthetic that foregrounds their links to others' (pp.407-408). Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that young people were continuously adjusting, editing and revising the information they disclosed on social

network sites, often corresponding to key moments such as starting a new job, a new course or a new intimate relationship (Lincoln and Robards, 2017). These ongoing adjustments as well as processes of learning to manage their digital trace represent key mechanisms through which young people made accessible and visible their narratives of transition and growing up (Robards, 2012). These studies have provided insightful data on young people's digital practices while at the same time contextualising their practices in experiences of growing up, making their analysis compelling. Chapter Five draws on some of the ideas developed in this body of work.

Lastly, the feminist works of Skeggs (1997, 2005) and McRobbie (2004, 2007) have been influential in the ongoing discussion about young people's, and especially young women, engagement with social network sites. For instance, empirical studies have examined how young women can be pressured to conform and reinvest social and cultural gendered norms on social network sites (Dobson, 2011, 2013; Ringrose 2010). In her work on young women's identity performances on MySpace, Dobson (2012) found that young women's profiles tended to display 'affirmative or 'inspirational' – style mottos and self-descriptions. She argued convincingly that these types of self-expressions demonstrated to a certain extent an internalization of neo-liberal discourses of individualisation, including 'a strong focus on self-determination, and self-invention and reinvention through personal merit and gendered consumption' (ibid. p.377). Her findings resonate with the neoliberal ideals of the 'can do woman' (Harris, 2004) and 'the successful girl' (Ringrose, 2007) discussed in Chapter One. In this way, young women's (but also young people more broadly) identity performances and expressions on social network sites need to be analysed using a Foucauldian understanding of power in which neoliberal forms of governmentality and power relations produce specific forms of individuality. This way, values such as entrepreneurship, responsibility and individuality are actively invested by young people and translated in different ways in their everyday uses and understandings of

social network sites (see Chapter Five). Thus, it seems essential to examine the broader discourses and forms of governmentalities in which young people's practices and understandings of the different platforms were inscribed.

The next section, by mobilising the critical literature on technology and surveillance, explores in more depth the role of power structures connected to the ideology of the market and private corporations in shaping young people's practices and understandings of social network sites.

A Critical Perspective on Technology and Social Network Sites

In popular understandings and debates, technology is often understood as a driving force of social change (Buckingham, 2007), often followed by both threatening and hopeful claims (Sturken et al, 2004). The emergence and diffusion of the Internet and new media have been characterised by the same processes with discussions which on one hand have focused on risks, security and supposedly superficiality of mediated communication (Miller, 2000; Baym, 2010; Livingstone et al. 2011) and on the other hand put an over-emphasis on participation, democratisation and users' empowerment (Jenkins, 2006, O'Reilly, 2005, Castells, 2007, Regan and Steeves, 2010; Jenkins et al., 2016). In recent years, social network sites have been understood as important elements in reshaping sociality and intimacy (Wittel, 2001; Turkle, 2011; Chambers, 2013). Wittel (2001), for example, has argued that sociality has progressively come to be based on an exchange of information and 'catching up' rather than on shared experiences. Turkle (2011) goes so far to say that digital technologies have become the 'architect of our intimacies' (p.1). While it is quite clear that digital technologies have impacted in various ways on people's relationships, it is easy to overlook change without looking at the broader historical continuity which has shaped the contexts in which these technologies and changes are taking place (Fuchs, 2012, 2014; van Dijck, 2013).

The discussions highlighted above, in a similar way to debates about the digital generation, reflect two broad perspectives in understanding technology. The first one tends to put a great emphasis on the role of technologies in shaping social interactions, adopting a techno-determinist perspective whereas the second one presents a 'desocialised view of technology' describing technology as what people choose to make of it and essentially value free (Buckingham, 2007, p.11). These two perspectives have been criticised (Fuchs, 2008; van Dijck, 2009; Allmer, 2015) and replaced by new approaches which aim to understand the dialectical relationship between technology and social practices (i.e. mediation) and to account for user agency 'in a media environment where the boundaries between commerce, content and information are currently being redrawn'(van Dijck, 2009, p.42).

The following section first outlines the concept of mediation, which advances a relational understanding of technology and social practices. Drawing on the literature on the political economy of the Internet and surveillance, it then outlines the political and economic structures of power which shape young people's practices and understandings of social network sites while simultaneously expanding marketing opportunities and consumer surveillance.

Social and Technological Mediations

In the last two decades, scholars in the field of media and communication studies have suggested that almost all spheres of life have become mediated (see Livingstone, 2009 and her presidential address at the ICA[2] entitled 'On the Mediation of Everything' for an overview). Following this claim, this section briefly reviews the concept of mediation and its usefulness before addressing its limitations. The concept of mediation has been used, most notably by Silverstone (2002) to describe:

---

2   International Communication Association , see https://www.icahdq.org/

The fundamentally, but unevenly, dialectical process in which institutionalized media of communication (the press, broadcast radio and television, and increasingly the World Wide Web), are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life (p.762).

In other words, mediation aims to grasp the processes in which media of communication transform social practices while at the same time being socially shaped themselves. For example, Chambers (2013) used the concept of mediation in her analysis of intimacy and social media and demonstrated that personal relationships were 'being *mediated*' through social network sites while these platforms were 'being *socialised*'. S*he defined the latter as the ways in which 'these technologies are engaged with and become embedded in our everyday lives' (p.17). In this way, mediation is a fruitful way to understand and analyse the social in relation to the technological and vice versa. The concept of mediation is also useful to understand the phenomenon of 'echo chambers' or 'filter bubble' (see Pariser, 2011). Users of social network sites tend to follow, like or interact with people, pages, posts, etc. which are in agreement with their views and with which they identify, generating spaces which confirm their existing world-views. This phenomenon, accentuated by the algorithms of social network sites which tailor information accordingly to users' tastes and previous actions on the platforms, has been said to reinforce people's identification with specific interests as well as their sense of difference from others (Lievrouw, 2001). In this context, the concept of mediation allows to comprehend echo chambers within a dialectical relationship between the technological and the social, instead of conceiving this phenomenon as primarily the product of technologies and algorithms. The latter play a significant part in selecting the content that users are exposed to or suggesting new contacts, however algorithms do not entirely determine the people users choose to be part of their networks. In this way, Wohn and Bower (2016) argued, algorithms act 'merely a secondary filter, [..] the people in the network itself are the primary filter' (p.11). In their study on young

people's political engagement and social media, Vromen et al. (2015) showed that local networks of friends and sociality were the most important factors in how young people were getting everyday news content (as opposed to traditional news outlets). Young people relied on their friends whom they trusted and knew had similar political views to curate new contents (p.91). This demonstrates how the information accessed by young people was mediated simultaneously by their social circles (e.g. trusted friends) and technological affordances (e.g. content displayed on social network's newsfeeds). boyd (in Jenkins et al., 2016) also discussed the effects of what she called 'bubble communities' putting an emphasis on how social network sites effectively mediate existing privileges and class divisions by exposing young people to certain types of content which in turn become normative for them. For example, she explained how young people with a more privileged background would be socialised to social norms corresponding to the ones of their privileged networks while less privileged young people were exposed to content with anti-educational agendas as a reflection of their own social circles (pp.77-78). Mediation describes in boyd's empirical example how the social is reinforced by the technological which itself has learnt from the social.

In a context in which information and communication technologies are becoming increasingly pervasive in the everyday (Lievrouw, 2001; Brown and Harper, 2002; Henderson et al, 2002; Ling, 2004; Goggin, 2006) and in which, some suggested, media have become inseparable from it so we 'no longer live *with* media, but *in* media' (Deuze et al., 2012), the usefulness of the concept of mediation has been questioned. Silverstone (2002) himself described the ways in which information and communication technologies have become central in contemporary life. As a result, these technologies have created 'a framework for the ordering of the everyday' (p.2) by providing comfort and convenience; in other words, tools which resolve the complexity of everyday life. By 'ordering the world' in specific ways, information and

communication technologies generate impressions that other ways of doing things are not possible (e.g. Facebook as the only way to keep in touch with people). Although touching on power relations with his description of the ordering of the everyday, Silverstone's work on mediation has been criticised for lacking depth and disregarding the macro level in which mediation processes were inscribed. Couldry (2008), for example, suggested that Silverstone's definition did not capture the asymmetric relations of power between the different actors of the mediation process (for example the weight of private corporations) but rather implied a conversation and linearity between them. Livingstone (2009) addressed a similar critique and outlined the importance of grasping how mediation plays out at both micro and macro level. In other words, according to her, mediation occurs through the *microprocesses* of social interactions, the *macrohistorical* shifts in institutional relations of power and the relationship between both levels (p.10, my emphasis). While being useful to examine the microprocesses of mediation, Silverstone's concept does not provide the appropriate scope to analyse the political economy and the power relations in which these processes are grounded (Livingstone, 2009). Likewise, Beer (2008) emphasised the need for future research about social network sites to take into account 'the software and concrete infrastructures, the capitalist organisations, the marketing and advertising rhetoric, the construction of these phenomena in various rhetorical agendas, the role of designers, metadata and algorithms, the role, access and conduct of third parties using social network sites' (p.523). In other words, Beer advocated here for an analysis which would not solely focus on users and their engagements with social network sites but would also provide a political economy of the platforms.

Powerful Intermediaries: Web 2.0 and Corporate Power

Recent transformations of the World Wide Web have commonly been understood as a move away from a system oriented towards information provision (Web 1.0) to the

advancement of a system oriented towards data sharing, user-generated content and community building (Web 2.0). Social network sites are often described as typical of the emergence of the Web 2.0 (see Fuchs, 2011). Web 2.0 has been coined by Tim O'Reilly, founder and CEO of O'Reilly Media company, which described it as:

> the network as platform, spanning all connected devices [...] delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences. (2007, p.17)

In this definition, O'Reilly highlighted the main differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, namely friendliness of use, user-generated content and interoperability (ie connecting all devices). However, a number of scholars have since questioned not only the shift described above but also the terminology used and its underlying motives. Fuchs (2011), for instance, put an emphasis on the social and communicative functions fulfilled by the Internet right from its creation (e.g. e-mail technology created in the 1970s). Not only the dichotomy between 'old' (passive) and 'new' (participatory) characteristics of World Wide Web does not accurately reflect the continuities between Web 1.0 and 2.0 but it also conceals important social and economic power relations, social inequalities and corporate interests (van Dijck, 2009, pp.43-44). For example, the claims of novelty put forward through Web 2.0 discourses were promoted by media companies (such as O'Reilly Media company) to promote and attract investment in the internet economy after the dot-com bubble crash at the beginning of 2000s (Fuchs 2014). Thus, Web 2.0 has to be understood as an ideology that serves market and corporate interests (Fuchs, 2008; van Dijck and Nieborg, 2009), often defined and reinforced by professional elites (Beer and Burrows, 2007; Scholz, 2008), and deeply embedded within the contexts and

especially the start-up scene of San Francisco in which they were created (Marwick, 2013).

Based on critical theory and political economy, a number of studies have situated their analysis of the Internet and new media in relation to power structures and the logic of capital (see for example Cohen, 2008, Fuchs, 2008, 2014; Andrejevic, 2011; van Dijck, 2009, 2013; Allmer, 2015). In *the Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media,* van Dijck (2013) demonstrated how Web 2.0 discourses using terms such as 'connectedness', 'participation' 'sharing' 'friending' and 'liking' have promoted and spread the idea of a 'social' Web while pursuing economic vested interests. More connections, more shares, likes and participation generate more profiling data and rendered it more exploitable and profitable. In other words, private corporations thriving on Web 2.0 discourses about connectedness have commodified relationships as well as users' data and turn data generated by online sociality into a source of profit. Likewise, Fuchs (2014) argued that discourses focusing on sharing, community building and connectedness have been used to mystify and hide the logics of profit behind social network sites. Fuchs (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014), often drawing on Marx, has extensively written about these processes of commodification, urgently reinscribing debates about the information society within the relations of exploitation which characterise it. In these relations, users of social network sites are positioned both as producers and consumers of content (described sometimes as 'prosumers' see Fuchs, 2012). Besides producing and consuming content, users also generate a large amount of data about their browsing and private and public communications (known as metadata). All personal data (user-created and user-generated data) is collected by the private corporations which own social network sites, turned into commodities and sold to third-party advertising companies. The relationship between private corporations and users, Fuchs contends, is exploitative as private corporations make profit from the exchange-value of users' personal data. In

61

this way, users' 'free labour produces surplus value that is appropriated and turned into corporate profit' (2012, p.143). These processes of commodification are inscribed in the neoliberal ideology of the market as Harvey (2005) explained. Indeed, commodification relies on the idea of property rights for things but also social relations which presumes that 'a price can be put on them' (p.165).

Furthermore, social network companies often positioned themselves as technical and neutral 'platforms', or 'platforms' of opportunities to downplay and conceal their money-making ambitions (Gillepsie, 2010). However, the power relations between private corporations and users are clearly asymmetrical in a context in which corporations such as Facebook or Google enforce monopolies (Srnieck, 2016) as well as opt-out privacy and advertising policies. Private corporations which own social network sites are not only interested in amassing a large amount of personal data but also in actively refining the categories (e.g. for example by adding emoticons to the like button on Facebook) that they use to make their platforms efficient tools for collecting valuable and exploitable personal data. For example, in their work on social media, gender and sexuality, Burgess et al (2016) critically examined how social media companies incorporated different types of gender categories into the design of their platforms. Facebook's fluid gender categories (outside the male/female binary) while encouraging changes in social norms are used by the company to feed its business strategy and provide more detailed personal data to third party advertisers (see also Bivens and Haimson, 2016). In other words, although presented as free of charge and/or holding progressive values, the invisible costs of the services provided by social network sites are *in effect* an acceptance and even submission to monitoring, data-mining and targeted advertising (Andrejevic, 2011, p.92). Andrejevic, however, is reluctant to use the terminology of exploitation and emphasises on the complexity of relations of power which structure users' engagement with social network sites:

> If we willingly submit to the conditions set by commercial websites—
> then the common-sense notion of exploitation is no longer in play;
> exploitation entails coercion. The contribution of critical political
> economy is to discern the ways in which relations of power and hence
> forms of coercion structure the terms of so-called free exchange (p.93).

In this context, Andrejevic (2007b) developed the concept of 'digital enclosure' to 'trace the relationship between a material, spatial process—the construction of networked, interactive environments—and the private expropriation of information' (p.293). This concept of 'enclosure' is helpful to shed light on the specific types of data collection, control and exploitation enabled by private corporations which enclose digital practices. Srnicek (2016) exposed a similar convergence between corporate profit-making and surveillance in his analysis of what he called 'platform capitalism'. Platforms which he defined as digital infrastructures acting as intermediaries between different actors (e.g. users, advertisers, service providers, etc.) become an 'efficient way to monopolise, extract, analyse and use data' (p.43) with a natural tendency towards monopolisation. This context is crucial in shaping young people's engagement with social network sites as well as specific understandings of the platforms as spaces for information gathering and self-monitoring, mirroring commercial forms of surveillance (Andrejevic, 2007a).

A Neoliberal Culture of (Self) Surveillance

The literature on surveillance has also proved to be a useful analytical framework to understand social network sites within broader power relations. David Lyon (2007), a leading figure in the field, has defined surveillance as 'the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction' (p.14). In the last decades, scholars have extensively described the growth of a 'surveillance society' alongside the diffusion of ubiquitous surveillance

technologies in everyday life (Lyon, 2001, 2006, Haggerty and Ericson, 2006; Aas et al. 2009). Foucault's work on disciplinary power and the metaphor of the Panopticon (1975) has been very influential within surveillance studies (for an overview see Lyon, 2006), often seen as a paradigmatic and powerful example of the functioning of power in the watcher-watched relationship. The Panopticon is an architectural device for prisons which was designed by the utilitarian Thomas Bentham in the late 18th century. Its design allowed guards located in the central tower of the prison to watch inmates without their knowledge which resulted to the internalisation of a permanent and invisible surveillant gaze by inmates. In Foucault's words, the major effect of the Panopticon was:

> To induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action, that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary (Foucault, 1975, p.201).

The Panopticon has been criticised for putting an over-emphasis on top down hierarchical or institutional forms of surveillance and focusing mostly on the "gaze" of the surveillance (i.e. the watchers) rather than the surveilled (see Haggerty and Ericson, 2006 or Lyon, 2006 for details on the critiques addressed to the Panopticon). However, Foucault (2010) never intended to focus solely on top-down institutional and hierarchical forms of surveillance, on the contrary his work was dedicated to understand power 'not with a capital P or even institutions of power, or the general or institutional forms of domination' (p.4) but the techniques and procedures by which power was exercised in the conduct of the self and others (see discussion in Chapter One). What is more, Foucault (1975) described the Panopticon from the beginning as 'a generalized model of functioning, a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men. It is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form' (p. 205). In other words, Foucault in a Weberian manner, employed the

Panopticon as an idealised theorisation of the functioning of power, rendering his main critique irrelevant. More recently, following the publication and translation of Foucault's lectures on the *Government of Self and Others* (2010), the Panopticon has been more broadly understood within his work on neoliberal governmentality. Gane (2012), for example, used the Panopticon as 'a normative model of governance that recasts the connection between the state and the market' (p.618) and the underlying political economy of these connections. Within this model of governance, surveillance processes need to be understood not only as discipline and control but as producing interactivity and as a mechanism for promoting competition, inscribed in the logics of neoliberal capitalism today. In other words, surveillance has to be comprehended within a critical analysis of its political economy (under neoliberal capitalism) as well as the techniques and procedures by which one govern the self and others. (see discussion in Chapter One).

A large body of research, often inspired by Foucault, has focused on the multiple dimensions of surveillance in contemporary society, not only as top-down but also as an assemblage (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000), as bottom-up (Mann et al, 2003), horizontal (Albrechtslund, 2008, Andrejevic, 2007a, Marwick, 2012, Trottier, 2012) and as personal (Bakardjieva and Gaden, 2011, Whitson, 2013, Lupton, 2016). Drawing on data from her ethnographic studies[3], Marwick (2012) used a Foucauldian approach to examine social (peer-to-peer) surveillance on social network sites. Within peer to peer surveillance, power is decentralised (taking place between individuals), reciprocal (social actors are simultaneously and actively acting as watchers and watched) and 'intrinsic' to every social relation (p.379). In her study, Marwick showed how people in the communities she looked at commonly used social network sites to check on others and monitor themselves. These can be understood as techniques by

---

3 Alice Marwick conducted two ethnography studies; one between 2007-2009 with workers of several technology companies in Sam Francisco and one in 2010 with American teenagers focusing on privacy (see Marwick, 2013, 2012; boyd and Marwick, 2011).

which one sets about to govern the self and others. These techniques, according to Marwick, are inscribed in and reflect upon the broader Web 2.0 ideology, described above. In this context, self-branding is presented as a means to achieve economic and personal fulfilment and often emphasising on individuals' sense of entrepreneurship, their positive attitudes and self-motivation (Marwick, 2013, p.194). Chambers (2013) inscribed more explicitly these techniques within neoliberal forms of governmentality:

> Individuals are expected to cultivate their self-presentations and shape their demeanour according to socially acceptable standards while always articulating the construction and performance of identity as freely chosen. However, at the same time as offering personal choices, these networks require meticulous and conscientious management of the self as modes of governmentality and self-regulation within uncertain and risky public contexts. In this respect social network sites have evolved into significant sites of self-regulation compatible with neo-liberal discourses of agency and choice (pp 168-169).

Neoliberal discourses of agency and choice put an emphasis not only on self-regulation (the conduct of the self) as described above, but also on responsibilisation and risk management. In the context of social network sites which offer technical capacities to edit and carefully construct online identities, users have progressively learnt to bypass 'the deceptive character' of the platforms and grown 'reflexively savvy' (Andrejevic, 2007a). This 'savviness' has been built upon norms and imperatives of risk management and surveillance in order to avoid deception or being seen as dupe. This, according to Andrejevic (2007a), has resulted to the emergence of a culture of monitoring in which 'forms of monitoring that might have once been considered borderline stalking have become commonplace and routine' (p.228). The model at the core of this culture is the enterprise, a model in which relationships have become managed, chances for social and economic success optimised, productivity enhanced, responsibility taken and risks reduced (p.494). The pervasion of this culture

of monitoring can be connected to forms of neoliberal governmentality which Foucault argued operate to create a social fabric in which 'the basic units would have the form of the enterprise' (Foucault, 2008, p.148). This will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

Furthermore, Foucault's conceptualisation of power as producing effects and discourses, sheds light on another aspect of surveillance, namely pleasure (and consequently play and entertainment).

> There is something in surveillance, or more accurately in the gaze of those involved in the act of surveillance, which is no stranger to the pleasure of surveillance, the pleasure of the surveillance of pleasure, and so on. (Foucault, 1980, p.186)

Only a few scholars have looked and understood surveillance as pleasurable (see Albrechtslund and Dubbeld, 2005; Ellerbrok, 2011; Finn, 2012; Beer and Burrows, 2013). Albrechtslund and Dubbeld (2005), for example, outlined how digital technologies enable forms of surveillance which are not only coercive but also playful, enjoyable and entertaining. Play is an important part of how young people engage with digital technologies, creating a complex and overlapping set of power relations between technologies designers, private corporations, social practices and economic interests. For instance, boyd (in Jenkins et al. 2016) described how young people, although restricted in many ways by the platforms' designs and policies, also playfully interacted with some of the platforms' features (e.g. for example by providing eccentric information regarding their locations, names or ages). In their work on popular culture and digital data, Beer and Burrows (2013) put an emphasis on the usefulness of the concept of play to understand data, how it is generated and 'the social life' of data. They examined the generation of digital data as processes of 'prosumption' (i.e. data both produced and consumed by users) inscribed in the consumer society in which play and entertainment have an important part. Play,

according to them, can be a means through which users generate data (e.g. users give away data to private corporations while they play with and consume social network sites) while at the same time data itself can also be a resource used for play and entertainment (e.g. personal or social data used to generate visualisations or quantifications). Following a similar line of inquiry, Whitson (2013) examined the intersections between gamification and surveillance using the example of the quantified self. In this context, she defined gamification as the integration of the playful design and feedback mechanisms from games into applications and platforms. These playful designs encourage users to 'voluntarily expose their personal information, [and] is then used to drive behavioural change' (p.163). According to her, processes of gamification and quantification are rooted in surveillance (i.e. collecting data, self-monitoring) and are constructed as play, using 'incentivisation and pleasure rather than risk and fear' (p.167). Gamification in the context of the quantified self is also often embedded within broader neoliberal forms of governmentalities which put an emphasis on personal fulfilment and improvement while promising fun. In addition, playful features and uses of digital technologies have been shown to participate to the legitimation and spread of controversial and surveillance technologies. For example, Ellerbrok (2011) used the analytical framework of play to explain how previously controversial automated Facial Recognition (FR) technologies have become normalised. She argued convincingly that FR technologies have become legitimate through their associations with social network sites and their photo-tagging environments which have changed the cultural understandings of these technologies; departing from representations of FR as technologies of control used in airport security checks to benign friendly consumer technologies that 'speaks to pleasure, convenience, and personal entertainment' (p530). Play, as the studies highlighted above demonstrated, is a very useful way of conceptualising young people's engagement with social network sites and in particular with surveillance. More so as it

also allows to understand digital monitoring practices in neoliberal capitalism and consumer society in which surveillance 'often shares the features of flexibility and fun seen in entertainment and consumption' (Bauman and Lyon, 2013, p.11).

Conclusion

The chapter had reviewed the literature on young people and new technologies and identified the normative representations and limitations of the so-called 'digital generation'. It has provided an overview of qualitative studies (e.g. boyd, 2006, 2007, 2010,2014; boyd and Marwick, 2011; Livingstone, 2008; Robards, 2012; Lincoln and Robards, 2014, 2017) which have explored and demonstrated the complexity of young people's engagements with social network sites and the co-constitution of the social and technological. The chapter then, drawing on the literature in the field of media and communication and surveillance, argued that the concept of mediation was useful to comprehend young people's engagement with social network sites as an ongoing relation and negotiation between social formations and technological affordances. It then reviewed more recent studies which have adopted a critical perspective on technology and examined the transformations of the World Wide Web (Web 2.0) and more specifically social network sites within the broader context of neoliberal capitalism. This body of work has put an emphasis on the underlying economic interests, market ideology and power of private corporations such as Facebook as well as on the emergence and spread of a culture of monitoring informed by neoliberal forms of governmentality. Overall, this chapter argued that young people's digital practices cannot be understood in isolation of the contexts, discourses and power relations which shape them and in which they are inscribed.

Chapter Three

Researching Young Adults' Uses and Understandings of Social Network Sites

This research is based on empirical data generated through 32 qualitative interviews with young adults aged 20-25, living in Glasgow. These interviews incorporated digital prompts used to stimulate discussion. The current chapter describes the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study and its design as well as the chosen research methods. It then details the research and analysis processes as well as the ethical concerns that arose throughout the research. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the sample.

Methodological Underpinnings

This research moves beyond research describing only young people's uses of social network sites to explore how young adults made sense of these platforms in their everyday lives. In other words, the research was designed to explore young adults' complex understandings and uses of social network sites in the different contexts of their everyday lives. In order to explore and provide in depth insights into the meanings that young people ascribed to social network sites, the research adopts a qualitative research strategy. The focus chosen for the research also reflects specific ontological and epistemological assumptions regarding how the social world can be understood and how knowledge is generated.

The research endorses an ontological constructivist standpoint (Silverman, 1997, 2001) which understands reality as socially constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1966). To put it another way, the social world is perceived, acted upon and experienced subjectively by social agents in relation to specific contexts and social interactions. Accordingly, the research follows an interpretivist epistemological tradition which

focuses on the meanings that people attach to their experiences and how they perceive and interpret their social environments and everyday lives (Mason, 2002). In this tradition, knowledge is generated through the analysis of how people interpret and make sense of their social worlds (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

The focus of the research and the research design have been shaped by specific assumptions about the social world (as described above) which were partly produced by my academic and personal biography, elements which are important to reflect upon (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p. 420). The current study has been influenced by prior interests to the works of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu as well as knowledge accumulated throughout my personal educational trajectory in France and in the UK. Bourdieu (1998) was very influential in the design of the research and its interpretivist and constructivist standpoints. His theory made me reflect critically on social agents' practices as part of a broader system of relations and allowed me to debunk the myths of intentionality and instrumentality derived from the rational actor theory. According to him, sociologists need to abandon 'the theory of action as a product of intentional consciousness, an explicit project, an explicit intention oriented towards an explicit stated goal' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.97). Instead of calculations and intentions, social agents 'have embodied a host of practical schemes of perception and appreciation functioning as instruments of reality construction' (p.80). To say it differently, when my participants accounted for their individual practices and personal experiences, I understood these as practical understandings which reflected the broader contexts that generated them. That is not to say that individual's understandings were only the result of these contexts or that my participants were passive or duped by them. On the contrary, they were 'active and knowing agents' (ibid. p.25) which justified a qualitative research design. By setting up the research to understand the meanings that young people ascribed to social network sites in relation to broader forms of power (e.g. corporate power, neoliberal forms of

governmentality), the study has been shaped by Foucault's work and ensuing critical concerns regarding the relations of power in which young people's practices and understandings were inscribed. These interests which pre-existed the project have shaped the original idea of the research (especially the focus on surveillance) but have also substantially developed throughout the collection of data, the analysis and the writing up of the thesis.

The research strategy adopted for the current research clearly departs from quantitative methods which have often provided descriptive accounts and/or 'measured' young people's practices on social network sites focusing, for example, on the number of social network sites used, the number of friends or followers, or the frequency or types of uses (see research by Cheung, 2004; Liu, 2007; Joinson, 2008; Christofides et al., 2009; Ellison et al., 2006, 2007, 2011b; Lampe et al. 2006, 2007, 2008, Tong et al, 2008; Muise et al. 2009). A large body of work using qualitative approaches to understand young people's engagement with social network sites has emerged. Studies have been conducted, integrating qualitative methods in their design in relation to young people's online identity construction, their interpersonal relations and how they negotiate the platforms in their everyday lives and transitions (see Livingstone, 2002, 2008; boyd, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2014; Ito et al., 2010; Pascoe, 2010; Ringrose, 2010; Robards, 2010, 2012; Dobson, 2011, 2012; Ellison and boyd, 2013; Bennett and Robards, 2014; Lincoln and Robards, 2014; Marwick and boyd, 2014; Vromen et al. 2015; Berriman and Thomson, 2015; Robards and Lincoln, 2016). Ito et al (2010), for example, conducted a three-year ethnographic study in the United States to explore how American teenagers made sense of new media in the context of their everyday lives. boyd (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011a, 2014) conducted similar ethnographic work to explore how young American used social network sites in their everyday lives and how these platforms impacted on their identity construction and sociality. Throughout her fieldwork she used mixed methods

including in depth interviews, online and offline participant observation and content analysis (boyd, 2015). Furthermore, there is a long tradition to use qualitative research in youth studies. This tradition is connected to the historical divisions underlying the field between transition (often using quantitative research) and cultural perspectives (using ethnographic and qualitative interviewing) (see Chapter One). A large number of recent studies in youth sociology have continued to explore young people's subjective experiences, the meanings that they ascribed to their experiences and their negotiations of their everyday lives adopting a qualitative approach, often using ethnography and/or semi-structured interviewing as part of their design (see research by McLeod, 2000; Brannen and Nilsen 2002; Evans, 2002; Brooks 2007; Henderson et al. 2008; McLeod and Wright, 2009; Winlow and Hall, 2009; Thomson, 2007, 2011; Woodman, 2012a, Bachelor et al. 2017).

In Depth Qualitative Interviews

In depth qualitative interviews were used to grasp the meanings that young adults ascribed to social network sites as well as the ways in which they made sense of their experiences and feelings towards the platforms in their everyday lives. By choosing qualitative interviews, the research aimed to 'understand the world from the subjects' points of views, to unfold the meanings of their experiences' (Kvale, 1996: p.1, see also Edwards and Holland, 2013). In other words, qualitative interviewing allows to elicit participants' *own* understandings and perceptions of social network sites as well as emergent and unexpected themes to come up during the fieldwork. In depth interviews have been described as 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984, p.102) designed to leave space for 'the possibility of surprise' (Firebaugh; 2008). Thus, this type of interviewing method left space for young adults to discuss what they perceived as being the most important regarding social network sites. The

research design used semi-structured interviews which allow flexibility and space for participants to answers on their own terms and direct the discussions while at the same time providing a structure (i.e. a list of themes to be covered) to facilitate comparison across interviews. In addition, qualitative interviews were also chosen as an appropriate research method to answer the research questions as they open up greater prospects of disclosure than focus groups (especially given the social and moral stigma attached to monitoring and profile-checking practices). The settings of qualitative interviews also enabled options such as 'talk and show' interviews which were considered during the research design and implemented with the digital component (see discussion below) from the second round on interviews.

In designing the research strategy and given the digital aspect of social network sites, using substantially digital methods (e.g. digital ethnography) was contemplated. However, digital methods raise a range of ethical issues regarding privacy, informed consent (such as issues around covert participation or 'lurking') as well as regarding intrusion and deception (see Richman, 2007, Murthy, 2008 or Morey et al., 2012 for further discussion). Critiques argued that using a research design relying primarily on digital methods isolates the data from the contexts in which it was generated and reinforces a false dichotomy between online and offline spaces (Leander and McKim, 2003, Orgad, 2005). Moreover, digital data collection tends to focus mostly on people's behaviours (e.g. what they post, what platforms they use or with whom they communicate publicly) or metadata which would not provide adequate data to answer the research questions. The current study looks at the meanings that young people ascribed to their practices and experiences with social network sites and therefore requires a more in depth approach relying mostly on qualitative interviewing. Furthermore, young adults in the study used and engaged with social network sites in ways that were not necessarily publicly available (e.g. private messaging, checking profiles). Participants' practices per se on social network sites are not the main focus

of the study. In the light of these limitations, a research design relying mostly on digital methods was disregarded as unsuitable to collect meaningful data in order to answer the research questions.

The empirical study was initially designed using in depth qualitative interviews with young adults (as discussed above). However, in the course of the first series of interviews, it became clear that participants were willing and often eager to demonstrate and illustrate their stories by showing me their social network sites' interfaces or their profiles on their phones. Some participants, wanting to answer as accurately as possible, used their phones to 'check' information before responding to my queries (e.g. number of friends on social network sites or questions designed to prompt anecdotes such as 'when was the last time you added someone on social network sites and can you tell me more about it?'). In this sense, digital technologies (smart phones and social network apps) were often used by participants as an informal way to substantiate and authenticate their interview accounts. After I noticed these behaviours during the first round of interviews, I started to contemplate integrating 'digital prompts' in subsequent interviews. An emerging body of research has used a similar combination of qualitative methods and digital components (see Robards, 2010; Duguay, 2016; Lincoln and Robards, 2017; Robards and Lincoln, 2017 as well as Ito et al. 2010 and boyd, 2014 for a combination of digital methods and ethnographic fieldwork). In his work on negotiating privacy on social network sites, Robards (2010), for example, analysed with permission interviewees' profiles prior to the interviews and used participants' profiles to encourage the discussion during the interviews. In their further work on the sustained use of Facebook among young people, Robards and Lincoln (2017) have invited participants to 'scroll back' through Facebook and take part in the research as 'co-analysts' of their own digital traces. In a similar vein, Duguay (2016), in her study on LGBT young people's experiences of sexual identity disclosure and context collapse on Facebook, asked her participants to

'walkthrough' their Facebook accounts to facilitate discussions about their disclosure decisions (see also Light et al, 2018 for a discussion on the walkthrough method). Drawing on these empirical studies and my research aims, I weighted up the advantages and ethical issues (e.g. privacy, intrusion, confidentiality and informed consent) in adopting this new component and subsequently secured ethical approval.

In order to provoke discussions and generate detailed data, I decided to introduce two types of 'digital prompts' as part of the interviews. The first one which was participants' activity logs on Facebook (see Figure 1.1) was used to encourage participants to discuss their uses of social network sites using specific examples from their recent activities. The second prompt was participants' search histories on Facebook (see Figure 1.2) and was set up much later in the interview to encourage specific discussions on searching and profile-checking practices. Some participants showed me spontaneously their Facebook Feed to substantiate their accounts and to explain a specific point they were making. Digital prompts were used at the initiative of participants in the first part of the interview in what could be retrospectively described as a 'talk and show' type of interview as well as more systematically in the second part of the interview when I encouraged participants to discuss their activity logs and search histories. Both prompts were used with participants' consents and designed only to trigger conversations, subsequently the digital data was not collected for the study. These prompts turned out to be fertile grounds to supplement data and provoke detailed discussions, but raised a number of practical and ethical challenges which will be discussed in further detail below.

The Research Process

The following section described the research process, detailing how the participants were selected and recruited for the study as well as the interview settings.

Access and Recruitment

This study adopted a purposive sampling strategy which required to look for participants who have characteristics that are of interest in relation to the processes studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Subsequently, the sampling for this study focused on factors such as age, education and uses of social network sites in order to address the research questions.

The study originally intended to recruit two different cohorts of young people, the first one with participants aged 16-18 and the second one aged 20-25. The first cohort proved to be difficult to gain access to. I originally planned to recruit participants from this cohort through secondary schools in different areas of Glasgow, linking my research to information and technology courses that pupils were receiving as part of their cursus. However, due to timing constraints as well as struggles to establish relationships with gatekeepers, the initial contacts made with three schools were not fruitful. I decided to narrow down my population to young people aged 20-25 which was in some ways an easier population to gain access to. Moreover, the narrowing of the focus of the study to the second age group corresponded to research themes which interested me in the context of the study. For example, this population was more likely to have greater experiences of using social network sites over time and therefore to discuss how their practices changed and compared their past and current experiences. This age group was also more likely to have used social network sites in the context of transitions from school to university, training or work. These experiences contributed to ground social network sites uses in the broader contexts of young people's lives. In addition, this population was also of specific interest to me as they were more likely to have experienced social discourses and policies framed both by representations of 'youth at risk' (e.g. e-policy courses at school, moral panics in the media) and by representations of 'the entrepreneurial self' (e.g. focus on

employability at universities) (see discussion on Kelly's (2006) work in Chapter Two). Furthermore, by focusing on ordinary young people, the purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of 'ordinary' and 'unspectacular' young people which have been neglected in youth studies (see Roberts and MacDonald, 2013).

Access to young people aged 20-25 was also quite difficult due to the fact that this population is often over-researched. However, it was facilitated by access to the university campuses in Glasgow as well as snowballing techniques which turned to be very effective to recruit participants. Word of mouth turned to be the most efficient way of finding the first participants (James, Jessica, Tommy). I used a snowball sampling to recruit more participants. The downside of snowballing recruitment was that my sample was skewed towards the social characteristics of my gatekeepers, often by recruiting participants from the same social circles which tended to have similar backgrounds and perspectives. In order to recruit participants from a broader range of social backgrounds, I contacted and put posters and leaflets in a variety of youth organisations as well as on their social media pages, including YouthLink Scotland, Princes Trust, YoungScots Young Programmers and Govan Youth. I had also advertised the research on Twitter, in local venues (such as university buildings, cafes, and youth leisure venues) via leaflets and posters (see Appendix 1) which was ineffective. I had planned to contact participants using emails and my public Twitter page (both listed on the different material I used to promote my research). However, the majority of participants were put in touch with me by their friends through Facebook or asked to be contacted via Facebook as it was regarded as the 'easiest way' to be in touch (see discussion below on ethical issues).

Overall, I was in contact with 38 young adults, among whom 34 were interviewed; two did not turn up to the interviews and two did not answer to following up contact. Two interviews were removed from the analysis. One early interview was excluded as the age of the participant was falling outside the age group I decided to focus on while

a second one was disregarded as the interviewee had only recently moved to Glasgow and mostly discussed her experiences of social network sites in relation to India; where she was originally from. I followed the principle of data saturation which led me to make use of data generated from 32 interviews.

There are several limitations to my study resulting from sampling. Using snowballing techniques to recruit participants has been proved to have considerable limitations in term of accessing people with different social backgrounds. As a result, my sample was largely composed by young middle class professionals (see sample). Moreover, participants who took part were likely to have a general interest in social media.

The Interview Guide

Interviews were semi-structured and conducted following a series of broad 'themes' listed in an interview guide (see Appendix 5). The interview guide was designed to leave adequate space and flexibility for participants to answer questions on their own terms and for me to explore individual experiences and pursue the topics that participants opened up (Edwards and Holland, 2013). The main themes covered in the interview guide included:

- Personal backgrounds (used also as an ice breaker strategy)
- Personal uses of social network sites and mobile technologies
- Activities on different platforms
- Previous uses of social network sites/ changes of uses over time
- Perceptions of social network sites
- Social network sites and relationships
- Profile-checking / monitoring practices

The interview guide was designed with open-ended questions and probes focusing on individual experiences and perceptions of social network sites. For example, probes included 'tell me more about things that you write and/or share on social media?', 'what do you think of this platform?' or 'could you tell me how you use social network sites throughout the day, if we take for example yesterday?'. The interview guide also provided more specific probes in order to address the research questions more directly when necessary and to keep consistency between the different interviews. Themes were generated both in relation to the research questions and the readings of the literature relating to young people and social network sites.

Throughout the research fieldwork in general and in the design of the interview guide, I tried to be reflexive to minimise the effects of the imposition by the researcher of her own schemes of perceptions and pre-conceived understandings onto the interviewees. Bourdieu (1998) put an emphasis on the need to be reflexive on one's position as a scholar and how this standpoint affects and shapes each step of the research from the collection of data to interpretation and analysis.

> The scholastic vision risks destroying its object or creating pure artefacts whenever it is applied without critical reflection to practices that are the product of an altogether different vision. Scholars who do not know what defines them as scholars from 'the scholastic point of view' risk putting into the minds of agents *their* scholastic views. (p.130, original emphasis)

The first draft of my interview guide was shaped by the scholastic view that Bourdieu described; which I realised with the benefit of hindsight. My research interests at the start of the study gravitated around surveillance and were informed by the work of Foucault as discussed above. These interests as well as my readings about surveillance influenced the probes as well as the terminology I used (e.g. the use of the word 'surveillance' itself) in the first draft of my interview guide. I quickly realised during the first interviews that none of my participants used the term surveillance or

monitoring to describe their practices of checking on social network sites. They used these terms, on rare occasions and usually to discuss top-down surveillance (i.e. data profiling by private companies). However, by using the word surveillance I was restricting and framing the terms of the discussion as well as imposing my scholastic standpoint using the literature in which monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites have been described as social 'surveillance'. To minimise these effects, I decided to revise the interview guide and mirrored participants' terminology (e.g. 'keep up to date', 'browse', 'scroll through') in order to leave space for them to discuss their practices in their own terms.

Conducting the Interviews

Interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes and were conducted face to face in places in Glasgow which were convenient for participants (mostly cafes). During the preparation of the fieldwork, I tried to be aware of what Elwood and Martin (2000) have called the 'micro-geographies' of the interview site which situate the interview in broader socio-cultural and power contexts that impact both the researcher and the participant (p.649). To minimise these effects, I decided to let participants decide of a place which would be familiar and convenient for them. Furthermore, prior to the interview, I made sure that the location chosen was appropriate in terms of privacy and confidentiality. To do so, I went to the chosen cafe in advance to make sure that it has tables with enough privacy to discuss without being disrupted or listened to by other customers. I also worked out a backup option in case the cafe was fully occupied. Finally, I provided participants with the information sheet prior to the interviews and asked them to read through it (see Appendix 3).

I started each interview by briefly summarising what the interview was about as well as outlining the digital components of it, which was optional. I went through the

information sheet with participants before asking for their signed consents (see Appendix 2). Interviews started with open ended questions to contextualise the discussion and encourage participants to adopt a conversational format (rather than more formal interviewing). I asked general questions about participants (e.g. tell me a bit more about yourself and what you do) and about their leisure activities (e.g. what do you do in your free time/ where do you go when you hang out with your friends / which places do you go to in Glasgow) in order to break the ice and to ground each interview in individual contexts. After this warmup, participants were asked a general and open-ended question about social media to give them opportunities to discuss their perceptions of social network sites and to frame as much as possible the discussion in their terms. The interview then was following the different themes highlighted in the interview guide using open ended prompts such as 'tell me more about...', 'What do you mean by that?' 'Do you have an example of …'. Furthermore, I encouraged participants to provide personal anecdotes whenever they could.

Digital prompts were left to the second half (activity logs) and end (search histories) and used to provoke further discussion. These prompts were introduced in the information sheet that each participant received prior the interview, at the start of the interview and again when the task came up in the interview. Each time, I put an emphasis on the optional character of the activity and the possibility to withdraw from it at any moment of the interview. I guided participants verbally on how to access their activity log on Facebook App (see Figure 1.1). I left time for them to look at their activity log and the information it contained by themselves. I decided that this was the best way for participants to reassert their informed consent or to withdraw from the task if they wished to do so.

Figure 1.1. Facebook Activity Log

I used a similar approach regarding search histories (see Figure 1.2). In order to minimise intrusion and ensure fully informed consent, I encouraged participants to look at their histories by themselves first as I was aware of dominant moral scripts associated with monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites as well as that some participants might not know or realise that this information was recorded on Facebook.

Figure 1.2. Facebook Search History
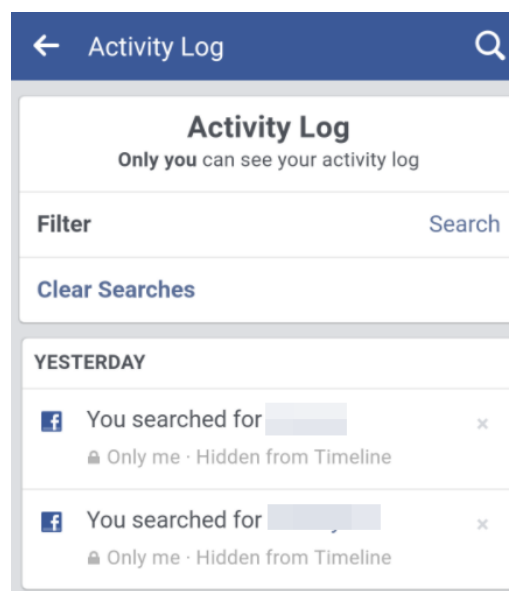
At the end of each interview, I set time aside to discuss the interview with each participant in order to give them a chance to ask questions. Furthermore, I asked participants to fill up a basic form in order to collect background information and ensure consistency in the study (see Appendix 4).

The Relationship Participant-Researcher

Building rapport and engaging with participants was both rewarding and challenging. It made me critically reflect on my own position as a researcher, a young adult, a woman and a person who grew up outside the United Kingdom, as well as on my interactions with the participants and personal identification with them. This illustrates what Rice (2010) has discussed as the 'relational effect of social interaction' (p.70). A large amount of scholars has elaborated on how meanings and understandings are situated in the context of the interview and co-produced in the interaction between the interviewee and the researcher (see for example Kvale, 1996, Silverman, 2001, Mason, 2002 Edwards and Holland, 2013). Holstein and Gubrium (1997) argued that it is helpful to understand interviews as 'active' in order to reflect on the contexts and factors that shape the ways in which knowledge is generated. Moreover, the building of trust and a relationship between the researcher and participants varied from one interview to another and in relation to factors such as age (see Hodkinson, 2005), class (see Rice, 2010) and gender (see Cotterill, 1992, Padfield and Procter, 1996, Oakley, 1998).

Interviews in this study were permeated by dynamics of power which framed the discussion, information disclosure as well as participants and my own engagement. I could be perceived simultaneously by participants as an insider and outsider as we shared commonalities and differences (Song and Parker, 1995). Similarities ranged from gender, perceived age, status (e.g. student), class (e.g. middle class environment)

and shared interests (e.g. discussions about leisure places in Glasgow that were familiar to both of us, similar political interests). Differences focused on the same factors; gender, status (e.g. emphasis on my student status in contrast to participants who had integrated the labour market), perceived age (i.e. for some participants I was seen from the generation above theirs), class and shared interests (e.g. lack of common cultural experiences). As a user of social network sites, I shared a range of experiences on these platforms with my participants. These factors and shared experiences impacted on the relationship between the participants and I, especially regarding trust, mutual understanding and openness to conversation (Edwards and Hollands, 2013). Some participants, for example, were willing to demonstrate their literacy and knowledge of how social network sites worked (e.g. privacy settings) to respond to their perceptions of my standpoint as a researcher. As being older than participants, I could be associated with 'adult' and common representations of digital youth as discussed in chapter 2. This created expectations of the types of answers participants felt they needed to provide as well as impacted on the presentations they made of their uses. For instance, Natalie (20) recalled an anecdote about her youngest brother being asked to delete his Facebook by her parents. She introduced this 'story' as very 'interesting' and told me beforehand that I 'will love this'. This clearly illustrates Natalie's assumptions of what I was expected to get from the interview and what was a worthwhile story *for me*. Participants also asked me prior to interviews about the project and most importantly about why I was interested in this topic. By doing so, participants rationalised my position as a researcher, my perceptions and experiences of social network sites and subsequently the answers I was after.

Ethical Considerations

This section reflects on the ethical issues and dilemmas that arose from the design of the research project to the writing up. The project was approved through the College Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects at the University of Glasgow. Ongoing practical and ethical concerns were discussed with my supervisors throughout the fieldwork, analysis and writing up of the study. Several ethical issues regarding informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy and potential harm to participants were identified during the design of the research strategy as well as throughout the different phases of the research.

Informed consent was sought before the interviews took place using an information sheet written in plain language (see Appendix 3) which was sent to prospective participants. At the beginning of each interview I provided participants with a printed copy and outlined verbally the main points detailed on the sheet. I put an emphasis on the fact that they could withdraw their consent to do the research at any time, refuse to answer any specific questions and only share what they were happy to. I reiterated that the information that they would provide was strictly confidential as well as explained how data would be anonymised using pseudonyms before asking them verbal permission to record the interview. I then summarised briefly the purposes and proceedings, including the digital prompts, of the interview. Finally, I gave participants a chance to ask questions as well as to opt-out before handling them the informed consent form (see Appendix 2). Participants were informed about digital prompts in the information sheet, at the start of the interview as well as prior to the task and were given the possibility to withdraw each time. To maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity, I did not collect young adults' digital data and anonymised verbal utterances (e.g. participants used names of people or places that they have looked up when discussing their digital data) in the interviews transcripts.

Following Guillemin and Gilliam (2004)'s distinction between 'procedural ethics' (i.e. obtaining ethical approval for the study) and 'ethics in practice' which they described as 'the everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research' (p.263), I critically reflected on the 'practical' ethical issues which raised throughout the fieldwork. Guillemin and Gilliam described reflexivity as 'a continuous process of critical scrutiny and interpretation, not just in relation to the research methods and the data but also to the researcher, participants and the research context' (p.275, see also Roulston, 2010) Similarly, Mason (2002, p.7) has put a strong emphasis on the need for an active reflexivity from the researcher in qualitative research. Being reflexive helped me to negotiate the ethical dilemmas that arose from the fieldwork and during the implementation of the digital components of the interviews.

Ethical considerations and reflection arose first during the recruitment of participants in which snowballing recruitment, the widespread of the use of Facebook among my participants and the mix of private and public often triggered dilemmas. Participants who undertook the study tended to put me in touch with prospective interviewees using Facebook. In such cases, I sent a private direct message to the prospective interviewee with the details of the study as well as the name of the person who recommended me. As a result, some participants requested me as Friend on Facebook prior to the interview. I did not initiate friend requests when contacting prospective participants but accepted their requests if sought by participants. However, I decided to systematically unfollow my participants so that their activities and updates would be hidden from my Facebook feed. I made this decision as I did not think it was ethical to follow their updates and potentially using them to feed my data without their full informed consent. To put it another way, I took the view that a friend request although opening up access to information does not grant consent to use it (see Richman, 2007 for further discussion about lurking). Robards (2013) has discussed the methodological and ethical issues arising from friending participants

and managing the researcher-participant relationships on social network sites. He argued that these issues are part of the research process and require ongoing ethical reflection to protect both the researcher who make her pre-existing social network profiles (which potentially contains private information) available to participants and vice versa. In his research, Robards decided to use his personal Facebook profile but restricted the information on it to basic details about himself including his profile pictures, few selected photos and limited information about his interests, employment and education (p. 228). Robards contemplated the possibility of creating a made-up profile for the purpose of the research but decided against it as it would have 'compromised a deeper level of rapport with participants' who would have accessed to a mostly empty profile while sharing their own (p.229). I adopted a similar view when faced with the challenges of friending participants and being put in touch or contacted by them via Facebook. Throughout the research, I used my pre-existing personal Facebook profile but reviewed carefully the information available on it and my privacy settings prior to the beginning of the fieldwork. Information available on my Facebook page included my real name, basic information about my location, employment and education as well as limited access to pictures. I also changed my profile picture to a picture which clearly identified me. This allowed me to be credible to my participants as a genuine person and researcher but also to give them the opportunity to have access to my page on Facebook if they wanted too. At the end of the fieldwork, I did not un-friend my participants in order to give them opportunities to get in touch with me if they wished to do so. In concrete terms, it means that they can still see the details I gave them access to at the beginning of the fieldwork while their personal updates remain hidden from my news feed (i.e. I have unfollowed their updates from the very start). The use of social network sites in the recruitment phase as well as throughout the fieldwork was challenging and I tried to critically reflect on the dilemmas in order to make decisions which corresponded to research and ethical

standards. It was also a practical experience of negotiating the mix of leisure and work and more broadly of 'doing ethics' in social research which turned out to be messier than anticipated.

The additional digital components of the interviews also brought a set of ethical issues and dilemmas. Prior the incorporation of the digital component in my design and throughout the fieldwork, I had concerns regarding the use of digital prompts to encourage discussions, and especially participants' search histories. My concerns were twofold; firstly, I was aware of the possible intrusive character of the task for participants and ensuing potential privacy issues. Secondly, I was concerned of the risks of damaging participants' self-esteem as well as breaching the trust in the relationship between participants and myself. In order to deal with these concerns, I first referred to and made use of existing guidelines (see Association of Internet Research, 2012) as well as of the emerging literature available regarding digital methods to extract practical advice regarding ethical conduct in these settings (see for example Baym, 2005; Murthy, 2008; Zimmer, 2010; Morey et al, 2012; Robards, 2013; Robards and Lincoln, 2017). In addition, this 'grey zone' was reinforced by the fact that the uses of activity logs, let alone search histories, have not been discussed in the research context. Most studies used participants' social network profiles or timelines as digital prompts and/or as material for analysis. I tried to reflect on broader ethical dilemmas which have been raised in the literature on digital methods (e.g. lurking, privacy, intrusion) and anticipate how these could appear and be reshaped in the specific context of this study; i.e. using participants' Facebook activity logs and search histories. Ethical concerns about privacy and intrusion as well as informed consents were acute as a result of digital component of the research design. These issues have been addressed in the literature and guidelines. I was aware that the information displayed on participant's activity logs and search histories could potentially provoke social discomfort or embarrassment due to normative (often

negative) perceptions of profile-checking and monitoring practices. Embarrassment also resulted from what Bourdieu (1998) described as a result of a 'gap between the objective truth, repressed rather than ignored, and the lived truth of practices' (p.114). In other words, there was sometimes an ' apparent' contradiction in between what participants had just said ('I don't use Facebook to look up people') and what their search history displayed, provoking embarrassment. Digital prompts were perceived by some participants as 'true' or 'objective' depictions of their activities, contradicting directly their accounts. Aaron (20), for example, appeared slightly embarrassed when he discussed with me his activity log which showed that he had requested and friended someone the day before. In his earlier account during his interview, he explained that he never sends friend requests. As a researcher, I also struggled to negotiate the position I was in by asking participants to discuss their activity logs and search histories and potentially being perceived as 'checking' on them and on the 'veracity' of what they previously said. In doing so, I felt that I was creating an unintended and unwelcomed situation of individual scrutiny as well as embarrassment as my field notes show:

> Embarrassment when I asked Luke about his search history. I need to figure out a better way to introduce the task without appearing judgmental. (Fieldwork diary entry 10.03.15)

I made this note as I felt that the digital component during the interview with Luke (21) closed down the discussion instead of encouraging him to disclosure his feelings. With other participants, the search history was a very good prompt to encourage discussion about detailed examples. This was closely connected to the building up of trust between the participants and myself as well as the other factors which impacted on this relationship (see discussion below). Furthermore, embarrassment was sometimes triggered as some participants have looked up my Facebook profile prior coming to the interview which meant that my profile was appearing on their search

histories (this will be further discussed in Chapter Seven). While being an interesting finding per se, my first aim was to avoid embarrassment and neutralise potential impacts on self-esteem resulting from it. To minimise these effects, I continuously reflected on the terminology I used to talk about profile-checking and searching practices to avoid coming across as judgmental towards them.

In addition, the possibility existed that some participants might not know that that their searches were systematically recorded on Facebook. To cope with this risk, I explained clearly to participants the type of information which would appear on their histories before asking for their consents. I then guided them verbally of how to access to their search histories and gave them again the possibility to withdraw their consents once they saw its content (see the research process). Moreover, I constantly adjusted the introduction to digital prompts (both activity logs and search histories) in the second part of the interview in terms of space and time, adapting it to the pace of each participant and letting them deciding if they wanted to share this information with me. Finally, I left time for questions and informal discussion at the end of each interview in order to come back to these issues when I felt the interview raised embarrassment or if participants expressed the desire to do so.

Data Analysis

This section describes in detail the process of data analysis. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim which was a tedious and time-consuming task. My interviews were conducted throughout three distinctive periods due to time dedicated to transcription and first analysis as well as the readjustment of the design of the research after the first series of interviews. Following the general principles of grounded theory, I started transcribing the interviews during the fieldwork and at the same time started an initial analysis. I started my data analysis by reading, rereading and re-listening (usually extracts) the interviews several times, making notes each

time in order to situate them in their contexts. In doing so, I made notes in the margins of the transcripts and highlighted important excerpts for different themes.

I used a thematic analysis and developed a set of 'emergent' themes from the data. Emergent themes included: 'changes of uses', 'pressure to use social network sites and anxieties', 'time', 'comparison of uses', 'self-presentation and editing', 'compatibility', 'implicit rules and tactics', 'checking practices', 'surveillance', 'friendship', 'audience management', 'convenience', 'discussing politics' and 'mix work and leisure'. I also came across expected themes which reflected previous research on social network sites such as 'impression management', 'identity construction' (Ellison et al. 2006, boyd, 2007, Mawick et al. 2010, Papacharissi, 2011). I coded manually, using colours, different themes on each transcript as well as in a separate folder to make comparisons. I then clustered the emergent themes into seven broad categories which I used for the data analysis. These broad categories were as follow:

- Convenience, control and compromise
- Learning social network sites norms
- Media savvy and professional uses
- Social sorting
- Comparison with others: discourses and practices
- Surveillance (other than peer to peer)
- Peer to peer surveillance and profile- checking practices

In addition, I systematically ran key words' searches in the digital versions of the transcripts. Key words were set to match emergent themes. For instance, I ran searches for key words 'surveillance' 'check', 'look', 'watch', 'snoop', 'spy', 'search', 'facebooking', 'stalk' and 'monitor' in connection to the broad theme 'peer to peer surveillance and profile- checking practices'. I ran searches for words such as 'pal',

'mate', 'girl,' 'boy', 'best friend', 'drama' (following boyd, 2008, Ito et al. 2010, Marwick and boyd, 2014, Robards and Lincoln, 2016) in connection to broad themes of growing up, class and gender. I also used this technique to check some of my findings. For example, I search systematically for key words such as 'share', 'connect', 'communicate', 'be together' in order to make sure I had substantial evidence to my argument about the overall positive perceptions of social network sites by participants.

In order to confirm my interpretations of the data I also returned to the transcripts (both digital and paper versions) at the different stages of the analysis and writing up. I also used the different entries of my fieldwork and research diaries in order to situate the data in the context in which it has produced as well as part of the relationship participants- researcher (see discussion earlier on). I had written short summaries of my fieldwork diary at the top of each transcript alongside the anonymised socio-economical information of each interviewee. This allowed me to ground the data analysis in the situation of each interview as well as to do what Mason (2002) has described as a 'reflexive' reading of the data which seek to explore researchers' 'role and perspective in the process of generation and interpretation of data' (p.149, see also Devine and Heath, 1999). During the interpretation of the data as well as the writing up of the findings, I tried to go back several times to my fieldwork notes and the transcripts of the interviews in order to reflect on my interpretations of the data and the power relations and factors which shaped them.

Sample

The empirical data was collected through 32 qualitative interviews with young people aged 20-25 among which 19 women and 13 men (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Age and Gender of the Interview Sample

Age	Men (n= 13)	Women (n=19)	Total (n=32)
20 years	2	3	5
21 years	2	2	4
22 years	3	7	10
23 years	1	4	5
24 years	3	1	4
25 years	2	2	4

Participants were predominantly from the United Kingdom (20), eight young adults originally from the E.U. and four from countries outside the E.U. The significant proportion of European and International students has had an impact on the research, especially as social network sites were used to communicate with relatives living far away.

The majority of participants (n= 28) were undertaking or had completed an undergraduate course at the time of the interview. Participants' subjects of study covered a variety of areas including business and management, arts and humanities, sciences and engineering, economics and medical sciences. Among participants, 12 were studying at the time of the interview, 10 were combining study and work, eight were working (among them three were on casual contracts), one was unemployed and one was in training (see Table 1.2). Among participants working a large portion were employed through precarious, zero hours or part time contracts.

All participants were living in Glasgow at the time of the interview and have been living there for a significant amount of time prior to the interview (over a year at the least). They were living either in the parental home or sharing accommodation with one or several people. This was a common living arrangement which reflected the life stage of participants (Brooks, 2007). The vast majority of the participants in this study lived in the West End or the City Centre, both relatively privileged parts of the city

which represent the geographical urban middle-class part of these geographical lines. Participants' discussions, however, reflected some of the changes regarding the youth labour market as well as the changes that broadly affected young people in the United Kingdom (see Furlong and Kelly, 2005). Scotland has a high level of youth unemployment; 15.1% of 16-24 years old for April 2015 to March 2016[4]. Meanwhile youth employment in Scotland is more and more characterised by insecure work conditions such as zero hours' contracts, casual and short term, part time, low paid work (Cook, 2013). Scotland and Glasgow in particular have high levels of inequality in employment on geographical lines which is reflected on youth unemployment's distribution (Cook, 2013). Additionally, the research took place at the time and in the aftermath of the Scottish Independence referendum (18th of September 2014) which was often discussed throughout the interviews in relation to social network sites. Overall, it can be assumed from participants' educational backgrounds, their parents' occupations, their leisure activities as well as their living arrangements that the sample was largely composed by relatively privileged young people.

All participants were using social network sites with various levels of engagement. At the time of the fieldwork (2014 to 2015), all participants used Facebook and a majority also used Instagram (n=21) and/or Twitter (n=20) (see Figure 2). A large amount of participants reported having previously used Bebo and/or MySpace. The platforms LinkedIn, YouTube and Tumblr were also mentioned during the interviews, but were seen as more specific than Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. LinkedIn was clearly associated with professional prospecting whereas Tumblr and YouTube were perceived as community-based platforms. Most participants used regularly instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger to communicate with their friends. Snapchat was also quite

---

4   Data retrieved from the Scottish Government Labour Market Brief - July 2016. Available at:
    http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00503576.pdf

popular among participants and often used for chatting and sending pictures to their friends. As a result, most young adults in the study navigated a variety of social network sites and instant messaging apps on a daily basis. Drawing on the concept of 'polymedia' (Madianou and Miller, 2012b) the current study explores not only the array of social network sites that participants used, but how they engaged with the different platforms. The study's focus is mostly on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as these were the platforms used regularly by participants and discussed at length throughout the interviews. References to other platforms are made when relevant.

Figure 2. Social Network Sites Used by Participants.
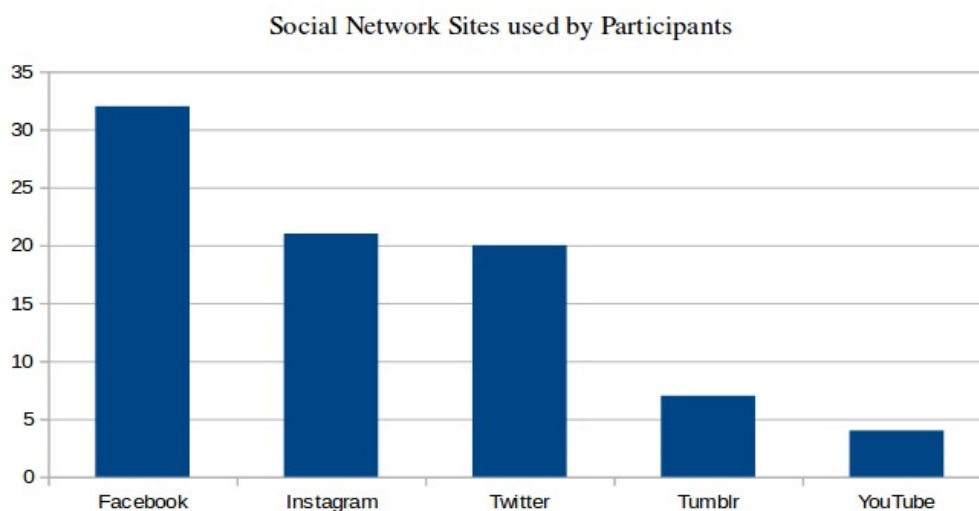
Below, I have detailed the life-stories of Natalie, Benjamin and David which are fairly representative of the trajectories of participants in the broader sample.

Natalie was a 20-year-old young woman from Northern Ireland. She has moved to Glasgow two years ago to start an undergraduate degree in Medicine at the University of Glasgow. She lived in the north of Glasgow because the rents were cheaper than in other parts of the city. Aside from her studies she was volunteering for time to time for the Soup Kitchen and occasionally for a British charity organisation. She also

combining work and study and took some waitressing shifts in the Exhibition Centre in the south part of the city.. In her free time, she would cycle, hike and hang out with her friends in each other flats, watching movies and cooking together. Natalie has been using social network sites for six years starting with Bebo and Tumblr in high school because 'all' her friends were using these platforms. She moved to Facebook when her friends adopted the platform. She has been using a smart phone for two years. Her uses of social network sites could be described as *traditional.* She used social network sites to chat and keep in touch with friends, most of the time privately and to arrange meetings. Although she had Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram, she reported using mainly Facebook.

Benjamin, aged 25, was finishing his Master Degree in Humanities at the time of the interview. He was originally from Germany and moved to the West End of Glasgow to undertake his degree. In his spare time, he was hanging out with his friends and organising/ going to parties with other students. Benjamin has been using social network sites for the last six years and has used a smart phone for the last two years. He described his uses of social network sites as 'mainly on his phone'. Alongside keeping in touch with his relatives and friends back home, Benjamin would use social network sites to get practical information about events, read the news and share links and newspapers' articles. Although having a public presence through the sharing of links, Benjamin would keep his profile private (opting in privacy settings) and free from 'too personal' information. He used Facebook to start debates and raise awareness on different topics, usually related to politics. He reported using Instagram with his close friends only (about 20 people) and did not connect his Intagram profile with his Facebook account. He also created a Twitter account because 'everyone is using it for politics' but was not active on the platform. His uses and perceptions of social network sites could be described as *publicly engaged*.

David was a 24-year-old young man originally from Glasgow. He had just finished his Master Degree in Arts and Media at the University of West Scotland at the time of the interview and was looking for a job in the creative industries. Meanwhile, he was undertaking freelance jobs as a film maker or photographer and casual work in the service industry. He shared his accommodation with other young professionals in the city centre of Glasgow. He reported enjoying the cultural activities provided by the city such as live music, exhibitions and other cultural places. David was an early adopter of social network sites and started his social media career with YouTube. He had been active on social media for more than 10 years. At the time of the interview, he was active and posted publicly on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. He used social network sites for work and leisure and was communicating with his friends, organising meetings, promoting his work, networking, getting feedback on his personal or professional works and obtaining freelance contracts through the platforms. He was putting forward the ethos of the entrepreneurial self, but was resistant to describe his uses in terms of self-promotion or strategy. Finally, he was highly reflexive on his uses of social network sites and was diverting the 'mainstream' uses of the platforms by using tongue in cheek language, being absurd or using irony. His uses of social network sites could be described as *personally- publicly engaged*.

Table 1.2 Sample Overview

Name[5] & Age	Nationality	Education	Subject	Occupation	Father Occupation[6]	Mother Occupation
Aaron 20	UK	Undergraduate	Business, Economics & Management	Student	Property, housing and estate managers	Property, housing and estate managers

---

5   Young adults in the sample are referenced by a pseudonym.
6   Parental Occupations have been defined according to the Office of National Statistics Social and Economic Classifications.

Alex 24	UK	Honours[7]	Arts & Media	Casual Worker / Free-lance	N/A.	Food Preparation and Hospitality Trades
Alice 22	UK	Undergraduate	Arts & Media	Student	Programmers and software development professionals	Nurses
Amy 22	UK	Honours	Architecture	Student	Gardeners and landscape gardeners	Primary and nursery education teaching professionals
Annie 21	UK	F.E. College[8]	Medical & Life Sciences	Worker (Auxiliary Nurse)	Senior Officers in Protective Services	Nursing auxiliaries and assistants
Benjamin 25	EU	Postgraduate	Humanities	Student	Solicitors	Solicitors
Charlotte 23	UK	Honours	Arts & Media	Casual Worker	Customer service managers and supervisors	Health services and public health managers and directors
Chloe 22	UK	Undergraduate	Humanities	Student	Production managers and directors in construction	Counsellors
Claire 23	EU	Undergraduate	Sciences & Engineering	Student / Part time worker	Construction project managers and related professionals	Senior care workers
Connor 22	EU	Undergraduate	Business, Economics & Management	Student	Management consultants and business analysts	Management consultants and business analysts
David 24	UK	Postgraduate	Arts & Media	Student / Free-lance	Chartered and certified accountants	Estimators and assessors
Dylan	UK	Postgraduate	Sciences &	Student	Management	Artists

---

7   In Scotland, undergraduate degrees with Honours last for four years and usually provide a deeper level of specialisation.

8   Further Education Colleges provide an array of vocational qualifications.

			Engineering		consultants and business analysts	
23			Engineering		consultants and business analysts	
Eleanor 22	EU	Undergraduate	Humanities	Student/Casual Worker	Electronics engineers	Personal assistants and other secretaries
Emily 22	UK	Honours	Arts & Media	Student	Graphic designers	Graphic designers
Emma 22	EU	Undergraduate	Sciences & Engineering	Student / Part time worker	IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	Medical practitioners
Eva 25	INT	Postgraduate	Humanities	Student	Electrical and electronics technicians	Sports and leisure assistants
Fiona 20	UK	F.E. College	Arts & Media	Student	Higher education teaching professionals	Childminders and related occupations
Hugo 25	INT	Undergraduate	Humanities	Student/ Part Time Worker	National government administrative occupations	Chartered and certified accountants
James 22	UK	Honours	Arts & Media	Casual Worker	Engineering Professionals	Educational support assistants
Jessica 23	UK	Postgraduate	Humanities	Student/Part time Worker	Higher education teaching professionals	Nurses
John 24	UK	Undergraduate	Business, Economics & Management	Worker (Insurance Company)	Programmers and software development professionals	Estate agents and auctioneers
Lucy 24	EU	Honours	Business, Economics & Management	Student	Ship and hovercraft officers	Secondary education teaching professionals
Luke 21	UK	Undergraduate	Business, Economics & Management	Student/ Part time worker (Insurance Advisor)	Sales accounts and business development managers	Medical secretaries

Matthew 20	UK	Undergraduate	Arts & Media	Student/Free-lance	Construction and building trades	Residential, day and domiciliary care managers and proprietors
Molly 20	EU	F.E. College	Arts & Media	Worker (Waitress)	Electricians and electrical fitters	N/A.
Nancy 22	EU	Postgraduate	Sciences & Engineering	Student	National government administrative occupations	Officers of non-governmental organisations
Natalie 20	UK	Undergraduate	Medical & Life Sciences	Student / Casual Worker	Police officers (sergeant and below)	Unemployed
Nathan 22	UK	Postgraduate	Sciences & Engineering	Unemployed	Marketing and sales directors	Chartered and certified accountants
Olivia 23	INT	Undergraduate	Arts & Media	Worker (Office Assistant)	Sales accounts and business development managers	Unemployed
Poppy 21	UK	F.E. College	Medical & Life Sciences	Trainee (Dental Nurse)	Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale	Nurses
Sarah 25	UK	Postgraduate	Sciences & Engineering	Worker (Junior IT consultant)	Police officers	Secondary education teaching professionals
Tommy 21	INT	Undergraduate	Business, Economics & Management	Student/ Casual Worker	Public services associate professionals	Secondary education teaching professionals

The following chapters present the findings of the analysis, drawing on young adults' accounts as well as the theoretical inputs and empirical research described in the previous chapters.

Chapter Four

Mediated Lives: Young Adults' Negotiations of Social Network Sites

Using empirical data collected from interviews with 32 young adults, the next four chapters explore how participants used social network sites in their everyday lives, the meanings that they ascribed to the platforms as well as how their uses and understandings were entrenched in corporate powers and neoliberal discourses.

The current chapter analyses participants' self-reported practices on social network sites. It first examines how participants used the different platforms to maintain and develop relationships including those with close friends, family members and significant others as well as in their larger networks. It then demonstrates how participants negotiated and managed these relationships in relation to the technological affordances of social network sites, such as the increased visibility of information or speed of communication and in relation to the reshaping of social expectations generated by new technological capacities and uses. Participants' accounts reveal how these reconfigurations have affected their relationships in ambiguous ways, allowing them to maintain and develop relationships while at the same time increasing peer scrutiny and accountability. Furthermore, the chapter looks at how the negotiations of mediated interactions created a range of anxieties and stresses for participants, including fears of missing out or obligations to be available. Despite these stresses and anxieties, most of young adults in the study continued to use social network sites, and especially Facebook, as they were perceived the platforms as essential and even necessary to manage different aspects of their everyday lives.

The second part of the chapter examines how participants perceived social network sites, especially Facebook, and constructed their understandings of the

platforms in terms of convenience and connectivity. Social network sites were broadly understood by participants as 'tools' which allowed them to connect with people, and portrayed as 'useful', in many cases even indispensable, to practically arrange meetings with friends as well as to routinely manage their time. Participants' accounts shed light on how the platforms have become deeply embedded in the everyday, making it difficult to give up their uses or to see an alternative. The last section of this chapter critically analyses participants' self-reported uses and understandings of social network sites in relation to the powerful private corporations which own the platforms. It argues that participants' practices were embedded in broader corporate powers and interests which significantly shaped their choices and uses.

Mediated Interactions: Using and Negotiating Social Network Sites

Young adults in the study reported using social network sites to maintain or develop relationships with existing friends and people from their local environments. These findings correlate a substantial body of research which evidences how social network sites are embedded in local networks and everyday relationships (Buckingham, 2008; boyd and Ellison, 2008; Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield, 2008; Livingstone, 2009; Ito et al., 2010; boyd, 2011a, 2014). Indeed, research in the last two decades has departed from early internet uses' research (Rheingold, 1993; Turkle, 1995) which tended to separate online from offline and shown that young people mainly use social media to hang out and catch up with friends, maintain and build relationships with people they already know. More recently, Chambers (2013) underlined how 'personal relationships are being *mediated'* through social network sites while at the same time these platforms 'are being *socialised'* (p.17, original emphasis). Adding to this body of work, the current empirical study offers qualitative insights in how young adults' managed and negotiated their relationships using social network sites and

subsequently shows how the dialectical relationship between technological affordances and social practices played out in their everyday lives. In other words, the ways in which participants engaged with social network sites in the context of personal relationships reflect the social practices and norms of the contexts in which young adults used the platforms and in turn were shaped by the technological affordances and values of the platforms.

This part first examines how participants used social network sites to maintain and develop their different relationships. It then looks at how participants negotiated these mediated interactions in relation to the technological affordances, social expectations and often anxieties generated by social network sites.

Maintaining and Developing Relationships

Young adults in the study, reported being in regular contact on social network sites with a small number of people, mainly close friends and family members. They described actively maintaining and developing these relationships through social network sites, either privately by messages and/or publicly through sharing links, commenting, posting pictures, and liking friends' contents. These will be examined in turn.

The majority of participants reported interacting on a daily basis with their friends, using individual and group chats via the messaging function of Facebook, known as Facebook Messenger or/ and via WhatsApp. Dylan and Chloe 's accounts were typical of how participants reported routinely interacting with their friends.

> Researcher: what social media platforms do you use in your everyday life?
>
> Facebook is like kind of the big one. I mean I mostly use it more for conversations so like with my friends so I guess ... I guess Facebook

just kind of replaces as a kind of instant messenger, although I guess WhatsApp is quickly replacing it as well. It is easy to talk to people ... I've got my top group there, so I can set groups together of my friends, so I have like six of my uni friends in a group together so we can all talk together in a big group or I just have like individual people like … basically all my friends... and if I talk with people I wouldn't necessarily interact with my news feed (Dylan, 23)

Researcher: Would you say that you are quite active on social media in general?

Privately I am always using Messenger to chat with people and stuff, like all the time I am on Messenger. I don't really do anything else so probably publicly I don't look that active but then privately with my friends I am active. (Chloe, 22)

The large majority of participants used primarily social network sites to communicate privately with their friends (individually or in group chats). According to Nathan (22) Facebook has increasingly become a 'messaging tool' rather than 'a social feed'. He described how a large number of his friends interacted only via Messenger or used WhatsApp. The reasons, Nathan gave to make sense of this recent trends were multiple; including the persistence of data (e.g. past posts available on Facebook), the accumulation of audiences from different contexts and the building up of social expectations. As Nathan put it, Facebook is annoying as it is 'tied to a bunch of other things'. In contrast Nathan described WhatsApp as 'very simple' as one only needs a mobile number to start using it. The majority of participants reported using messaging applications over posting publicly on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter when chatting with their friends. In this context, they often put an emphasis on the practical aspects of messaging applications, such as the capacities to create chat groups as well as the privacy that these applications gave them. This will be discussed further in relation to narratives of growing up in the next chapter.

In combination to these continuous everyday interactions via private messages, some participants also reported, more or less regularly, commenting, liking or sharing

posts from their close friends on social network sites. Dylan (23), for example, reported 'only commenting' on content from 'good friends'; people with whom he had regular contact with in his everyday life. Aaron described similar practices:

> I'd be more inclined, for example, if my friend Hugo uploads a song to maybe like his song, or maybe comment on it. Where it is someone who I am not so close to, even if I like the song, I wouldn't like it or comment. Photos as well, the exact same. If I was to upload a photo, chances are that they will be with people that I am really close to. (Aaron, 20)

Liking, sharing and commenting on friends' activities on social network sites were perceived by some participants as part of 'doing' friendship, a way to show support and by some a public validation of these friendships. Chloe (22), in this context, explained that she was more likely to comment or like 'things from friends'. However, she reported looking at and reading a variety of content on her newsfeed but would only 'like the ones that needed to be liked'. Similarly, Olivia saw liking posts published by her close friends as part of the ritual of doing friendship:

> A lot of my friends will text me and they will be like; "Could you please like this thing that I've posted because nobody liked it". Like one of my friends in particular, she likes writing these funny statuses but then if nobody likes it she will feel really self-conscious so it's like kind of my job to kind of like it first. (laughs) (Olivia, 23)

Interestingly, Olivia's account shows how practices of friendships on social network sites are inscribed both in private (behind the scene) and public. Indeed, some of Olivia's friends would ask her privately to like or comment on their public posts, reinforcing the implicit rule to publicly validate these friendships. The accounts highlighted above demonstrate how friendships were simultaneously mediated through social network sites in public as well as in private (through the use of

Facebook Messenger). The negotiations of relationships in relation to the public interfaces as well as the technological affordances of social network sites will be discussed later in this chapter. In addition, participants' self-reported practices of doing friendship on social network sites were often connected to broader narratives of growing up which will be examined in Chapter Five.

Social network sites were used by participants not only for everyday interactions with friends and significant others but also to keep contact with acquaintances, friends and family over geographical distance. Olivia (23), who settled in Scotland four years ago, described how she would 'do the rounds' on Facebook to maintain contact and allow friendships that she developed in her hometown to thrive 'while over here'. Similarly, Eva (25), originally from the United States, explained how Facebook allowed her to maintain contact with her friends and cope with geographical distance and time change:

> Now that I am here with the time change it is really confusing so it is a nice way of staying in contact with my friends, you know when somebody comments on what you say they can do it on their schedules they don't have to be there presently at that moment. (Eva, 25)

In a similar way, Benjamin (25), originally from Germany, explained how Facebook which he described primarily as a 'tool for communication', allowed him to spontaneously chat with his friends from home when they were online without having to plan it and without costs. Likewise, Alice (22), originally from Scotland, started using Facebook as a way to keep in touch with members of her extended family who were living in Canada. As the accounts above have highlighted, social network sites as well as messaging applications were perceived in the context of transnational friendships or families, as tools facilitating the maintenance of relationships over time and space. Even though using social network sites to communicate with family and friends in different geographical locations were reported more extensively by

international participants, these practices were repeatedly discussed across the sample. Natalie (20), for example used Facebook Messenger to chat with her friends and to 'have a laugh' with them even when she was not able to see them regularly due to geographical distance (e.g. some of her friends were living in different cities) but also due to her schedule mixing work and study. Similarly, James (22) explained that there is a lot of people in his social circle with whom he would not keep in touch with 'if it was not for Facebook'. The reasons undermining these friendships were according to him his busy schedule as a freelance and/or geographical distance (see discussion later in this chapter on synchronisation).

Overall, young adults in the study reported using social network sites and their messaging functions to keep in contact, more or less actively, with close friends and family living abroad or in different cities. At the same time, participants described using the platforms to passively follow on their News Feeds the updates about the lives of acquaintances, extended family or past friends. These practices were often described as 'catching up', keeping 'up to date' with others' lives or seeing what people were 'up to'. In this context, social network sites were used in a more passive way to maintain a loose awareness of the lives of other people as Jessica explained:

> It is a really good way to keep in contact with people I may not have kept in contact with otherwise. It is the real nice thing to be allowed to do that. Even if we don't speak all the time but you can see their pictures or statuses or whatever and you kind of vaguely know what they are up to which is quite nice. (Jessica, 23)

These practices of keeping up with others' lives using social network sites were commonly reported by participants to see what loose ties such as high school friends, acquaintances and friends and friends were up to. These practices were often conducted as one way (i.e. without the knowledge of the people). In this way, participants explained how they would gather information about people in their

networks by scrolling social network sites' newsfeeds which displayed people's updates, photos and statuses. Ito et al (2010) have described these practices as forms of 'ambient' co-presence, i.e. a mixture of awareness and information gathering about others' lives which is rendered possible on the public interfaces of social network sites (see discussion in Chapter Seven).

Technological affordances of social network sites have been said to transform relationships and ways of doing intimacy. In his work about the emergence of a 'network sociality', Wittel (2001), for example, argued that sociality in contemporary society is more and more often based on an exchange of information and on 'catching up' rather than on shared experiences (p.67). Wittel described this type of sociality as deeply embedded in broader processes such as individualisation and the assimilation of work and play and ultimately exacerbated by information and communication technologies (see Chapter Two). Participants' accounts of their uses of social network sites evidence to a certain extent the existence of this type of sociality, based on catching up and information gathering. However, it was not the only or even the main way in which young adults were interacting with people on social network sites. Indeed, young people's accounts demonstrate a more complex picture in which participants used the platforms to develop and maintain different types of personal relationships and to negotiate time and space. In this way, social network sites appeared to simultaneously facilitate forms of sociality that could be defined as 'networked' and to be used as tools to deepen and maintain friendships in environments marked by individualisation and globalisation (see discussion Chapter One).

Negotiating Mediated Relationships

Social network sites were used by participants to maintain, develop and manage their relationships. They were repeatedly described as 'useful' and 'an easy way' to keep contact with their networks and to routinely chat with their friends and significant others. However, participants' accounts also provide insights on some of the difficulties in negotiating in practice different types of relationships on social network sites. The design as well as the technological affordances of the platforms create specific conditions in which these relationships are mediated. On social network sites, audiences are not necessarily visible and separations between different social contexts are blurred and collapse. Moreover, research has shown how social network sites render information more visible, persistent, searchable and replicable (boyd, 2011a, see discussion in Chapter Two). Throughout the interviews, participants described how they negotiated their relationships in relation to the technological affordances of the platforms, the social expectations created by these affordances and the development of tacit rules regarding the uses of different social network sites and audience management.

Facebook was accounted for by participants as a platform with a very diverse audience made up of contacts met in a variety of places and contexts, including friends from school, friends from higher education, work colleagues, family members, acquaintances and travel companions. Matthew, for example, described his contacts on Facebook as 'everyone':

> Like everyone in my life, I have them on Facebook almost, so that includes people I knew as a little Christian boy, and like family and stuff, acquaintances and people I went in church with and it includes my school teachers and people I worked with. And also like friends and people who I don't know well, it is such a huge forum of people. (Matthew, 20)

Similarly, Natalie (20) depicted her friend list on Facebook as a mix of audiences included people from secondary school, university as well as from the different places she worked at. In this context, Natalie decided to use other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to hang out with her close friends. According to her, the audiences on these platforms were 'more selective' and made up of 'closer friends'. Likewise, Alice started to use Twitter and Snapchat more regularly to interact with her close friends because 'all her family' as well as her previous bosses and managers were on her Facebook. For some participants, Instagram or Twitter were used to hang out with their friends far from the surveillance of their family and acquaintances, often because they restricted their audiences to their close friends (Instagram) or more practically because their family members did not know how to use Twitter or Instagram. Emily (22) used Twitter more actively than Facebook to avoid the stress of being judged by her Facebook network:

> I share links more on Twitter, so like links to an article or something like that. Like on Twitter because you sort of sending out that without sending it to anyone specific. Kind of make you less stressed that you don't have to think of 'ow these people are going to think', you just send it out there; it does not sort of go to a specific audience, it sort of goes to the random general public. (Emily, 22)

Emily did not necessarily used Twitter with closer friends but as a way of avoiding an audience on Facebook that she described as more 'specific', i.e. connected to the different contexts of her life. Overall, participants were well aware of the different audiences that they had on Facebook. Some participants were differentiating their uses on different social network sites as a way of managing diverse audiences. Participants were also using the messaging function of Facebook to hang out with their friends (see discussion above).

Social interactions on social network sites have been analysed in relation to Goffman's work and his concept of audience segregation and impression management

(see for example Rettie, 2009; Marwick and boyd, 2011; Bullingham and Vasconcelos, 2013). Participants' accounts illustrated how these processes impacted on the everyday conduct of their friendships as participants were managing some of their interactions with their friends on the public interface of social network sites. Tommy (21), for example, recalled how one of his friends asked him to be untagged from pictures that Tommy posted on Facebook as his parents could see them. This management of others' posts on one's own personal profile could lead to tensions between friends, as perceptions of what was 'appropriate' to post on social network sites, and especially Facebook varied from one individual to another. For instance, Charlotte (23) recounted how she had an argument with one of her friend following a post that she wrote on his Facebook timeline. The post, supposed to be a joke, was detailing a night-out including some alcohol related situations in which her friend took part. Her friend angrily messaged her (privately) asking her to delete it as the post was public and his family and work colleagues could see it. Charlotte's account, similar to other stories shared by participants, illustrates some of the difficulties encountered in mediating different types of relationships and different audiences on Facebook. These negotiations were further complicated as participants and their friends sometimes did not share the same sense of what was seen as appropriate to post on social network sites (see boyd, 2011a, 2014).

Relationships, in relation to family or work as highlighted in the accounts above were mediated on social network sites by public visibility and its counterpart scrutiny. This was also the case in the context of peers and friends. Participants reported how visibility and scrutiny on social network sites created tensions in friendships. Charlotte also experienced these tensions and recollected how she got upset after she saw on her newsfeed that a group of her friends was going out and that they did not invite her to come along. Likewise, Nancy (22) described similar tensions generated by social network sites:

Researcher: would you avoid posting certain things on social media?

Yeah maybe sometimes pictures... yeah sometimes to avoid people saying, I don't know, yeah to avoid misunderstandings sometimes … like say you go to some place and you haven't told someone else and then you post a picture and then they are like 'why did you not tell me about it?' bla bla bla or things like that. You have to explain like making excuses to everyone when you didn't have to do that when you didn't have social media, because you have to justify yourself and then if you don't answer quickly, they can think like you know. (Nancy, 22)

As a result of peer scrutiny and increased accountability, Nancy prevented herself from publishing pictures on Facebook in situations in which she anticipated resentment from her friends. Nancy therefore posted content with a specific imagined audience in mind (mostly significant others and people from her workplace), often drawing on her past experiences of tensions. John (24)'s account shed more light on how visibility and scrutiny on social network sites played out in the context of friendships:

Researcher: how do you interact with your friends on social media?

I find it quite interesting actually that question because I feel that I have some friends, they want the friendship validated through social media, like a good friend of mine who moved away to Australia and I am now very good friend with this girl she was previously friend with, so that me and the other girl we always going out like drinking and having fun and then the girl in Australia like when we met up she told me that she was upset because it publicly appeared that me and this new girl were the best friends. Although I and she stayed really good friends, kept in contact through emails, although we keep in contact personally, she wants to make sure that there is a public image of us staying in contact as well, which is a bit weird I think. And then it depends really on the relationship that you've got really but I've got some friends that kind of, say somebody who wants to be your friend more than you want to be their friends, so they use it to kind of keep on, keep the time on you a bit. So I had one friend who was doing that all the time because she likes everything I posted so I knew she was

always watching what I was doing and then if I would say that I couldn't bother going out and she finds out I was going out with someone else, she would like it but in kind of a passive aggressive way. (John, 24)

In this rich excerpt, John revealed how through practical experiences he has learned to manage relationships on social network sites in relation to the technological affordances of the platforms and social expectations generated or reinforced in the process of mediation. To start with he acknowledged that some of his friends were jealous of his public expression of friendships with others people or wanted a different degree of 'public validation' of friendships on social network sites which he needed to negotiate in order to avoid tensions. In this excerpt, John also provided an example of how scrutiny of one's activities on social network sites by friends is integrated within the design and affordances offered by the platforms and is reinterpreted in the context of the friendship. John described how one of his friends would constantly follow, like and comment on his social network activities in order to passively send signs of her presence to him. As a result, John felt that every move he made on social network sites was carefully scrutinised and interpreted by some of his friends. John also reported scrutinising and interpreting the behaviour of his friends on Facebook; illustrating how peer scrutiny worked in dialogical ways. Interpreting other's activities as having a covert meaning, (e.g. liking someone's post to express dissatisfaction) was part of the mediation of relationships through social network sites in which meanings were not only attached to the feature of the platform (e.g. liking) but also to the specific context and peer expectations of friendships. Furthermore, later in the interview, he described another impact of peer scrutiny on social network sites; the obligation to maintain it and be regularly active on it as otherwise people would 'wonder why' he was not active. At the same time, he appeared to actively follow his friends' lives on social network sites in order to stay informed with what they are doing 'publicly socially', revealing similar practices that the ones he attributed

114

to his friends. Nathan's account of social network sites provides another example of the mediation of relationships and the reshaping of the meanings of specific features of the platforms (e.g. sending smiley). Indeed, Nathan (22) explained some of the rules about the 'reading' and the 'writing' of content on Facebook. He described how content 'could be offensive if read right' taking the example of sending 'a smiling face' intentionally in the wrong place as a way of suggesting discontent. In the accounts highlighted above, the meanings and readings of participants' activities or their friends' activities and content on social network sites were shaped by technological affordances, their existing friendships (themselves shaped by social formations such as class and gender, see Pahl, 2000) as well as the contexts in which these interactions took place.

Furthermore, young adults in the study had learned an array of 'tactics' to negotiate different relationships on social network sites in light of the social expectations and technological affordances discussed above. One of the most common examples was the use of the preview function in Facebook Messenger. In 2012, Facebook introduced 'read' receipts, a feature that shows whether or not the recipient of one's message has 'seen' it (WhatsApp had introduced a similar feature). This feature, although quite often praised by young adults in the study for its convenience and safety, also created significant tensions in the management of their personal relationships. These tensions were triggered by what participants described as an increased need to answer messages 'straightaway' in order to avoid 'offending' friends and contacts or being seen as 'ignoring' them. Moreover, participants reported themselves checking routinely read receipts in their communication and feeling upset or annoyed when someone was identified as having read the message without responding to it. As a result of these tensions, a large number of young adults in the study revealed how they used message previews as means of bypassing read receipts and regaining control over their time and relationships (i.e. not being pressured to

answer straightaway and not being seen as ignoring the sender). The preview function allowed them to see who has sent the message as well as to read the first lines of it without marking it as 'read', as David and Natalie's accounts explain:

> On Messenger you are aware like 'ok they've seen that' 'why haven't they replied?', that is because you are expecting it right? But like how many times you've done it as well? Like all the time, like I am too busy so what you're doing is that you sort of look at it and you don't want to open the message, just leave it there and be like 'okay I don't want them to think that I have seen it and that I don't reply so I won't open it (David, 24)

> If you see something from someone and you can see like the first half of the message, you kind of know what it is about, you can say to yourself 'I don't have time for this right now' so you just ignore it until you got time but it also means that if you read something you are going to reply like I'll try not to read something until I know what I am going to reply to it because I know that if they've seen it, they are waiting... but it kind of works both sides, it is nice ... like it is nice because you can actually keep a conversation going because you can know when they've seen it but if they ignore it then it hurts, it hurts if you are being ignored (laughs). (Natalie, 20)

Likewise, Emma (22) revealed how she would not click on messages as her 'usual strategy' to buy her 'more time'. As for Amy (22), she also described how she would 'purposely' not click on messages and unfold the preview so they would not be marked as read. She considered these practices as 'horrible' but ultimately necessary as according to her 'the *second* you click on the message they know that you have seen it and then you have to reply'. Nathan (22) explained that 'everyone knows the technique' of the preview. According to him, it is 'a skill that you develop' through practical experiences of managing relationships on social network sites. This tactic was sometimes perceived by some participants as cheeky and not playing by the rules, (i.e. not abiding by imperatives of spontaneity and connectedness) but the vast majority of participants reported doing it. Furthermore, as this tactic became common

practice, young adults also reported that they had started to crosscheck information corroborating the recorded time of people's last connection on the platforms (e.g. Facebook or WhatsApp) with the time in which they sent the message, as a means to verify whether the person that they have sent a message to was genuinely 'disconnected'.

Furthermore, the everyday tactics described above have been developed by participants in order to regain control of their time and their uses of social network sites. These tactics can be understood, following De Certeau (1984) as calculated actions operating 'in isolated actions, blow by blow', taking advantage of "opportunities" and depending on them (pp.36-37). In other words, these tactics were not inscribed in a broader strategy to resist the negative impacts that social network sites had on their relationships. Following this logic, the tactics deployed by participants were not disconnected from the power structures in which they took place. Some of these tactics can be understood as resistance in a Foucauldian sense, where resistance is not 'in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (1978, p.95) but coexists within the structure of power which engendered it (ibid.). Participants' accounts revealed how relations of power were integrated in these tactics which often were described in terms of control and self-discipline (this will be discussed later in this chapter).

The development of such tactics reveals a broader picture than the sole negotiation of social network sites in the context of relationships. It illustrates how these negotiations were taking place in contexts marked out by significant changes in the temporal structure of young people's social environments such as acceleration and fragmentation (Rosa, 2003, Shove, 2009). Time was a salient element in how participants experienced social network sites. The platforms were simultaneously accounted for as means to manage time as well as contributors of stress and anxieties often connected to participants and their friends' experiences of time.

Throughout the interviews, young adults described anxieties and stresses ensuing from the negotiations of social network sites in their everyday lives, often in connection to time. For example, participants described spending a large amount of time per day on the platforms, facilitated by the use of mobile technologies. In this context, some participants put an emphasis on how they felt pressured to be available to other people as well as to check regularly the platforms. Emma (22), for instance, explained that Facebook created an 'obligation to be available' to people and a pressure to answer quickly to messages (see discussion above). Benjamin (25) reported similar pressures:

> I am using WhatsApp as well as Facebook and it is just a bit annoying because sometimes I just don't know what to reply, it is just I don't know and I don't want ... I don't want to answer you know, it is just my choice but people really, they get really angry sometimes which I think it is a bit weird. Come on if I text you in an hour it is fine' (Benjamin, 25)

In this extract, Benjamin revealed his struggle to reconcile his own desire to engage in discussions on the time of his choice and the social expectations of being available and answering instantly created by the platforms. Nancy (22) expressed similar feelings in the extract below:

> Being always connected is something that sometimes I don't like because sometimes you just want to disappear from everybody and not answer to anyone, just disappear. (Nancy, 22)

Nancy felt pressurised to 'answer to everyone' to avoid offending her peers. Beside these pressures, participants were putting an emphasis on the positive aspect of social network sites in terms of time management as well as enabling them to socialise with

their friends. Emily (22), for example, explained that Facebook was really useful to get updates about 'what was going on' and what her friends were up to. At the same time, she deleted the application from her phone to regain control of her time and expressed a strong desire to have a break from 'social media'.

> Researcher: why have you stopped using the Facebook app on your phone?
>
> Because you can't switch off. It is a constant update of what is going on which is useful and at the same time a bit like ... why? I would like trying to switch it off because I'd like to be able to do it in my own time and it kind of reflects on you […] I just want a break, I don't want social media any more, I kind of have enough of it and like it is nice of sort of not thinking about it. (Emily, 22)

Emily's account exemplifies the double-sided relationship that a lot of young adults in the study had developed with social network sites. The platforms were used to navigate the everyday in a flexible way, including to get instantaneously the latest updates about events or to organise spontaneous meetings while at the same time resented for these aspects as these were time-consuming and stressful and ultimately creating degrees of disruption in the conduct of the everyday.

The 'flexible' aspects of social network sites were exacerbated by participants' uses of social network sites through their smart phones. Indeed, participants repeatedly reported checking social network sites on the go using their smart phones. Often, participants were checking their phones when they had a free moment, such as when they were waiting in the transport, as Alice and Annie's experiences illustrate:

> Since I've got a smart phone I use it more, like everyone I think, I don't think anyone having a smart phone doesn't use social media more. I definitely yeah like bus journeys, when I am walking I am always on my phone, even if I have seen the posts I am just constantly on. (Alice, 22)

> I use it [social media] for... even just I don't know like a boredom thing
> like standing up at a stop, waiting for a bus and sit with my phone, just
> for like ten minutes, reading things. (Annie, 21)

Annie, ultimately described her practices as 'wasting time'. Similarly, quite a few participants depicted the negatives of social network sites as time consuming and contributing to procrastination and distraction. For example, Nancy accounted for social network sites in these terms:

> Sometimes you have to work and you spend a lot of time just I don't
> know watching the newsfeed or things like that, and I feel like that I
> am just wasting my time on something that is not useful at all. (Nancy,
> 22)

However, participants also liked the entertaining aspects of social network sites and used it purposefully to fill up the time during down-time, to cope with boredom or as Lucy (24) put it 'to unwind'. As Benjamin explained it was often perceived by participants as a matter of balance and self- control:

> Sometimes it is nice to procrastinate on Facebook as long as it doesn't
> lead to be on Facebook for hours and then you have something on
> YouTube and then of all of a sudden you are "ow! it has been two
> hours, what happened?". Sometimes it is very distracting and you lose
> focus on what you're actually doing right now (Benjamin, 25)

Social network sites, most participants felt, were positively impacting on as well as disturbing their everyday lives. The extent of these impacts depended on how the platforms were used by people. Ideas of self-control, restraint and ultimately self-responsibility were often implied in participants' accounts regarding the negotiations of anxieties and stresses triggered by social network sites.

In addition, 'being always on' was creating expectations in terms of peer validation and life-satisfaction. Social network sites were understood by most

participants as very personal platforms in which they broadcasted their lives in a positive light, which created in turn anxieties to receive peer validation. David (24) described how he felt 'annoyed' and bad about himself if he did not get likes and comments on his posts. In the same way, Olivia (23) explained how she easily felt 'pressured' to receive peer validation on social network sites, outlining that not getting likes or comments on the platforms as a result of 'not trying' was better than trying and not getting anything. As a result, David and Olivia reduced their posting on Facebook by fear of not getting public validation. Furthermore, participants often explained that the constant exposure to others 'lives on social network sites, especially images, made them feel more dissatisfied with their own lives and envious of others. Emma (22), for instance, felt that Facebook and Instagram make her 'look into people's lives too much' which tended to make her 'sad' because she cannot go on holidays or meet friends as often as she would like to. Benjamin (25) explained how the feed on Facebook could reinforce his negative feelings of loneliness and depression:

> Like every positive side to me on Facebook there is also like a negative side. It depends sometimes on my mood, you know what I mean, say if I am a bit depressed and I see nice photos it makes me a bit even more sad, I am like 'ow they're doing such nice things. (Benjamin, 25)

As Benjamin and Emma's accounts demonstrate social network sites were also used to compare often negatively one's life to others. Nathan (22) described how being exposed to peers' content on Facebook and Instagram made him feel that he is not 'doing anything' with his life and emphasised that he does not have time and/or money to do the things that other people appeared to be doing. Research has started to explore the impacts of social network sites, and especially Instagram on users' wellbeing and depressive symptoms (see for example Lup et al, 2015). The data of the current study reveals a complex picture in how participants understood and consumed

social network sites. Nathan (22), although reporting negative impacts of the platforms on how he felt, was very aware of the exacerbating aspects of social network sites which he described as platforms to broadcast one's 'achievements' and activities 'in a positive light'. He admitted, however, that even knowing how the platforms worked, 'your head makes it as everybody is on holidays'. Even though, like Nathan, the majority of participants understood social network sites as platforms used to promote the positive aspects of one's life, focusing mostly on appearances, they still reported being affected in practice by a constant exposure to the lives of others, depicted in overly positive lights. According to Sarah (25), social network sites made her 'forget' that what people post on it was not the full picture and as a result judged her own life according to unrealistic criteria:

> It kind of makes you feel more ... what is the word? More judgemental of your own life sometime because you're seeing how people are choosing to portray their own lives online, especially with something like Instagram it is really, really nice edited photos of people on holidays and stuff like that and you'd be like 'God my life is rubbish', I am not doing like exciting things, but you can always forget that it is just a little tiny bit of their lives, like there will be probably a lot of other stuff going in the background which are really bad but you don't know about it because they have not shown it, so in that way it is a wee bit isolating. (Sarah, 25)

Findings, highlighted above reveal a complex picture between participants' understandings of social network sites as entrenched in appearances and withdrew from reality, and their feelings resulting to a constant exposure to an environment centred on normative aesthetics and lifestyles.

Sarah's account also shed light on how her uses of social network sites was entrenched in a broader culture of consumption focusing on appearance, validation and competition. Research has shown how young people's practices and lifestyle choices are entrenched in a culture of consumption (Miles et al, 1998, Blackman,

2005, Best, 2009). Hall and Jefferson (2006) argued that young people's practices need to be understood in broader parameters of change in late capitalism which they outlined as follow:

> the new market societies that have emerged in the developed world; the associated commercialisation of culture; the shift in production from material goods to cultural commodities; the development of mass consumption; the augmented role of cultural industries and new technologies; and globalization. (pp. xx- xxi)

The broader dynamics highlighted by Hall and Jefferson are essential in understanding young people's relationships with social network sites. The next part looks at participants' uses and understandings of social network sites in the contemporary context, marked by consumption and individualisation in which their practices took place.

Social Network Sites: Tools Embedded in the Everyday

This part examines how social network sites were embedded in participants' everyday lives and argues that their understandings of social network sites as tools to manage their lives reflect broader changes and processes of individualisation taking place in young people's lives (see discussion in Chapter One). Participants' understandings and practices were embedded in circumstances of 'conflicting demands' which required an 'active management' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, p.26) and navigating within constraints 'as a consumer with the standardisation and controls they contain' (Beck, 1992, p.131). In other words, participants were negotiating their uses of social network sites as their own choice in connection to a specific lifestyle while simultaneously compromising with stresses and anxieties brought by the platforms in an environment characterised by almost mandatory participation (i.e.

'everyone' is on Facebook). This part first analyses how participants understood their uses of social network sites in terms of connectivity, convenience and synchronisation. It then situates participants' uses and understandings of social network sites in the broader power structures that underpin them.

Connectivity, Convenience and Synchronisation

Throughout the interviews, participants underlined some of the positive aspects of social network sites. The platforms, and especially Facebook, in this context were often discussed as ways to connect and bring people together. Annie (21), for example, explained how social network sites 'keep everyone connected' while Alice (22) described social media as 'a very good positive thing which make people together'. Dylan (23) put an emphasis on how Facebook increased 'connectivity with friends and family' and Charlotte (23) felt that the 'way how it connects people was really important'. In a similar way, Alex (24) outlined the positive aspects of social network sites as 'sharing, and making people feel more connected' while Nancy (22) felt that in 'the world that we live in', social media was really important to 'connect us with what is happening'. Hugo (25) even directly reused Facebook motto to describe the positive aspects of the platform:

> Researcher: Do you like social media?
>
> Yeah, it is definitely useful … that is the good part of it. I really like it because it connects the world like it says or something like that. (Hugo, 25)

The accounts above demonstrate a pervasion of the idea of connectivity, which was often expressed by participants through the terminology mobilised by the private corporations which own the platforms (e.g. until very recently, Facebook's motto was:

'making the world more open and connected'). In her work on the culture of connectivity, van Dijck (2013) argued that connectedness as a social value is often used by private corporations to generate connectivity, a process that she defines as rendering social connections 'technologically manageable and economically exploitable' (p.1). In other words, the focus on connectedness conceals the corporate interests which primarily drive the platforms, that is extracting value from users behavioural and profiling data. This has been discussed in the literature as immaterial free labour (Terranova, 2004; Scholz, 2008; Cote and Pybus, 2011).

Both connectivity and ideas of global community were present in participants' general understandings of social network sites, concealing and downplaying the economic interests of the private corporations such as Facebook. This provides some evidence of the pervasion of discourses associated with Web 2.0 which put an emphasis on notions such as 'connectedness', 'participation' and 'sharing' (see Chapter Two). Participants discussed connectedness as desirable and positive, however their understandings quite often remained general (as shown above). The majority of participants elaborated more specifically on the convenience of social network sites in the management and synchronisation of their everyday lives and relationships.

Young adults in the study reported using social network sites, not only to maintain and develop their relationships (often in relation to a broad idea of connectedness) but also to manage different aspects of their everyday lives. Discussions about the organisational characteristics and uses of social network sites were prominent throughout all interviews. Participants pointed out speed, convenience, flexibility and ease as the advantages of social network sites. These aspects included organising meetings with friends, finding out the details of work shifts, getting information about places and times for events or sharing resources about course work. Facebook, for example, was repeatedly portrayed as an 'useful' and 'convenient' tool to organise events and to arrange spontaneous meetings with friends. Natalie (20) recounted how

she used social network sites in a similar way the day prior to her interview:

> Yesterday, I was on Facebook just using the Messenger so to like organise different trips with people or organise events that I was going to. So I used Facebook Messenger with few friends because we are going to do a BBQ tomorrow so we were talking about that on it and then I got invited to a couple of events on Facebook as well from a group that I am in so I was like responding to those and checking the details of those as well. (Natalie, 20)

Likewise, Chloe (22) described Facebook as how she 'plans' her life and gets 'things done, gets things sorted, where things are and how things are going to run'. For example, she would use it to find out places and times of events, to organise and coordinate events with the dancing society she was involved with as well as to plan social time with her friends. In the same context, Dylan (23) described how Facebook, especially the event function, was 'really good' to organise nights out whereas James (22) recalled how Facebook allowed him to organise his birthday at the last minute:

> We just made like a Facebook event and ask about 20 people ... it was just about three days before but I just think without Facebook we wouldn't have been able to do that. So quick and easily. (James, 22)

Some participants used Facebook events as reminders or to get practical information. For instance, Emma (22) would use the function 'maybe' of most of the events she was invited to on Facebook in order to be reminded of them through Facebook. In the same vein, Benjamin (25) used Facebook Events in order to get updates about places and times of the different events that he was planning to go to. The organisation-related functions such as the events and group chats were often described as the most positive and useful aspects of Facebook as Hugo's account illustrates:

> It is really useful, I really like that part of Facebook like you can create events or make group chats, it is really easier to like manage people

and stuff so that is a really good thing. (Hugo, 25)

As well as convenient 'tools' to navigate their everyday lives, social network sites, and especially Facebook and WhatsApp, were used to synchronise timetable and arrange meetings with friends and significant others as Nancy explained:

> It is something useful for me to contact people and when I am somewhere I can say like 'can we meet there' or whatever. (Nancy, 22)

Likewise, Matthew (20) described Facebook and Messenger as a practical tool which he used mainly to 'get to a place or meeting someone'. Eva (25) put a similar emphasis on the convenience and practical aspects of Messenger outlining how it was 'a lot easier' to create group chats with friends she was hanging out with and to organise spontaneous meetings and nights- out without getting caught by the tedious 'texting back and forth'. Overall, young adults in the study used Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp to coordinate their schedules with their friends and plan shared time together.

The uses of Facebook and WhatsApp to coordinate time with friends and significant others resonate strongly with Woodman's (2013, 2012a) work on the desynchronisation of young people's everyday lives. In his work, Woodman argued that increasingly temporal and flexible patterns of work and study (e.g. mix of study and work, geographical mobility, casual work, associable or zero hour's contracts) impact negatively on young people's lives. These patterns challenge young people to synchronise their schedules in order to share time with significant others and/or build new relations. In the current study, participants expressed similar challenges and often pointed to social network sites as a means to overcome them by coordinating time and space in the context of significant others.

Social network sites were also used as a synchronisation tool in the context of study and especially group works in order to arrange meeting and share information

about course work with other students. As Lucy (24) explained, Facebook is something that 'is expected of you' at university as a lot of interactions amongst students concerning the course take place on the platform. This reflects the age and the life stage of participants. Jessica and Luke, for example, described how the platform was part of their daily university routines:

> It is like 'ow I'll put it on Facebook' so you will have to check. So you've go on Facebook to get time of lectures, so you kind of rely on that. (Jessica,23)

> I suppose with uni and things when you got group works and things to do, like you are able to make groups and it is good to keep contact with people on your course (Luke, 21)

Amy reported using Facebook mostly with university peers to coordinate group works as well as to share a constant stream of information about their course.

> The only one I really use is Facebook yeah... And it is terrible how much I use it and I wish I'd use it less but with things like this project at university we did you have to check the page of our group work, so it means like that the first thing in the morning you are like: did anyone post something? Do I have a meeting today? I'd better check it and then it means when you check it, you look at everything else, ow I hate this … I kind of don't want it any more, I want to go back but again it is mainly for school like the amount of posts our group do for like very impromptu meetings like 'we meet today' or' can we meet here instead', and I know if I had my other phone, I wouldn't know these things and then I'd be like, I'll turn up at wrong times or something. (Amy, 22)

As indicated in her account, Amy expressed a dependency on Facebook and mobile technology for getting essential and practical information about her daily activities at university which were not structured around a fixed timetable. In this context, social network sites gave Amy means to organise her schedule in a flexible way, mostly

made up of last minute meetings as well as to get the latest updates about these meetings. Amy, in similar ways to some of participants' accounts discussed previously, expressed feelings of frustration towards Facebook as she felt it was taking over her life. Similarly, to Amy's account, most participants had ambiguous and contradictory views on social network sites and their impacts on their lives. These contradictions and tensions hint that attitudes are evolving and that aspects that could have been considered as pervasive are now open to negotiation and compromise. The use of social network sites in the context of work is a good example of this.

Sometimes, Facebook was used directly in the context of work illustrating a blur between work and leisure (see Gregg, 2011). Natalie (20), for instance, described how her work shifts were organised through the platform. She described this practice as a double-edged sword. Indeed, while it made it easier for her to have a shift at the last minute, it also made it easier for her boss to cancel a shift or put additional pressure to take one. Nancy (22) who was volunteering for a charity organisation also reported these practices. She felt compelled to accept her colleagues and her boss on Facebook and to communicate with them through it:

> I also hate when they [her colleagues] ask me to do these things through Facebook.... like if they are asking you like 'you have to do a report of what you've done during this month', I think you have to tell me that on emails and not on WhatsApp or Facebook. And also because on WhatsApp sometimes I cannot answer at every moment and they see it and say like 'Ow you were connected and you didn't answer me, bla bla bla'. (Nancy, 22)

Her colleagues used WhatsApp and Messenger to make her more accountable towards them. These accounts provide evidence not only of the blur between leisure and work but also some of the impacts of social network sites in this context including increased social control, monitoring and self-discipline. This will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Participants' accounts shed light on how social network sites have become integrated in the routine of their everyday lives. In this context, social network sites, and in particular were perceived as necessary and even a *prerequisite* to the conduct of the everyday in a more and more individualised and desynchronised world while at the same time reinforcing these processes. What is at play here has been described by van Dicjk (2013). She argued that private corporations such as Facebook have coded and rendered 'people's activities formal, manageable, and manipulable, enabling platforms to engineer the sociality in people's everyday routines' (p.12). In other words, the integration of social network sites as the main ways of organising the everyday, often generating convenience, ease and speed, also creates a dependency on private corporations which own the platforms and exploit users-data for monetary gains.

Throughout the interview material, social network sites were not primarily described by participants in terms of entertainment but rather in pragmatic terms as organisational and synchronisation 'tools' which made in many ways their lives easier. However, these 'tools' also made their lives more stressful.

A Choice of Little Choice?

As the previous part demonstrated, social network sites and Facebook especially, have become deeply embedded in different aspects of young adults' lives and were perceived as a requirement to manage one's life. Most participants were unable to envision their daily lives without the platforms. Moreover, using social network sites was perceived as mandatory to be included in social activities and peer groups. In this way, a lot of participants felt compelled to use social network sites, and especially Facebook to continue carrying on with the things that they were doing as part of their everyday lives. Emily (22), for instance, explained how Facebook was the main platform that she used because 'most of her friends' and 'most of the things going on'

were on it. She expressed several times during the interview a desire to use it less and even to deactivate her account but felt that it would make her life considerably harder. Facebook was often described as unavoidable because 'everyone' was on it. The platform has a monopolistic position in the market of social network sites which made the use of the platform almost mandatory, creating an asymmetrical relation of power between private corporations and users which manifests itself under the form of a 'lock in effect' (see discussion in Chapter Two).

Not being registered on Facebook was often synonymous of missing out and being excluded from social groups. Often participants used stories of friends who did not use Facebook to underline how, without the platform, people were not easily contactable or not invited to events as Emily and Hugo's accounts illustrate:

> Someone in our group will organise an event on Facebook and like my friend, she did not have Facebook for a while and she was like I miss out so many things because everything is done on Facebook, so people say 'so are you coming?' and you like 'to what?' and if you don't have Facebook you don't really know what is going on. (Emily, 22)

> I have a friend who doesn't have Facebook still now and he is at uni and I don't know how he manages to do it, it is like crazy but... it is really hard to contact him, it would be easier if he would have Facebook because you could just invite him to events, whenever he is like online you can see it. (Hugo, 25)

Most participants could not contemplate giving up Facebook entirely. As Hugo put it, they perceived it as 'crazy'. At the same time, some participants expressed admiration towards people who were not using the platform. Annie (21) for example, expressed such feeling:

> I think there is a pressure to be on social media, err… because if you're not you are kind of out of touch with the world, I have one or two friends that don't have anything at all, and everybody else is just 'how

can you not have it?', or you know we want, we've got this great photo
and we want to tag you … so they are missing out but I quite like that
it is not in their days, it is not in their routine (Annie, 21)

The object of Annie's admiration was the capacity of these people to conduct their everyday lives without the platform, something that she felt she could not do. Overall, participants commonly reported subscribing, using and staying on Facebook because friends were hanging out on it, as a means to keep in touch with them and to get informed about social events. Participants often were unable to envision their lives without social network sites, in particular Facebook and as a result were bond to the platforms. In other words, corporations which own the platforms use young people's desires for connection as a means of control and as fuel for their profit-making.

The majority of participants also used it as a contact book, reinforcing its monopoly. It was seen by participants as a normalised way to exchange contact with people. As Annie (21) explained 'Facebook is easier than a number' as 'you can lose numbers or take it wrong' whereas 'it is easier to have them as friends'. Connor (22) also used it as a contact database:

I also use it as a contact list because most of the people I know are on
Facebook, so it is ready available because all my contacts are there. I
guess some contacts that I have are phones, others skype or WhatsApp,
on Facebook I can manage them all, like 90 % of my contacts are on
Facebook. (Connor, 22)

Facebook was not only perceived as the most convenient way to keep in touch with new contacts but also as a space in which one had accumulated contacts which would be impossible or difficult to keep without the platform or reconnect with outside Facebook. As a result, the engagement of participants on Facebook over the years made it almost impossible for them to stop using it. More than contacts, social network sites also retained participants' data. Making use of these capacities, some participants reported using Facebook and Instagram as archives for their pictures and

data.

> Creating an album and it is way easier than storing them on your computer and that they won't be lost. (Emma, 22)

> I don't have a photo album you know, the only thing I have is the one online, like a Facebook will ever crash and go, something like memories will always be there. (Annie, 21)

Like Annie and Emma, participants depended on Facebook to store and keep their pictures, the tags and information attached to these pictures as well as other memories (e.g. posts on their walls, links, albums). In return, Facebook makes profit from this data and creates a dependency on the services it offers (by acting as a 'free' storage space), preventing users to leave the platform.

Some participants, however, took time away from social network sites and deactivated their accounts knowing that they could go use them again if they wanted to and find their data intact. Alex (24), for instance, reported deactivating his account on Facebook several times as he was spending too much time on it, explaining that he 'could always go back to it'. Others were trying to restrain their uses, for example, by deleting the Facebook application from their phones and keeping only Facebook Messenger. In this context, participants put an emphasis on how they regained control over social network sites by limiting their uses. Lucy (24) also tried to restrict her uses of the platforms at certain times of the day:

> I shut my notifications off to have some quiet time […] and I always like at a certain point at night I just turn my Wi-Fi down because I don't want to... it doesn't really allow you to relax if you have things like blinking on all the time (Lucy, 24)

Similarly, Charlotte (23), explained how she was trying to 'control' the time she spent on her phone:

I try to control it … I am really trying like not to go on it you know like as much as possible, just kind of feel a bit more liberated without it. (Charlotte, 23)

Both accounts reveal levels of anxiety and stress (e.g. 'to relax', 'to feel liberated'), showing that in many ways, Charlotte and Lucy felt compelled to use the platforms. However, these strategies of limitation, relatively common amongst participants, were seen and experienced as individual ways of controlling social network sites, showing self-control and were often presented as part of growing up and self-responsibility (see Chapter Five).

A few participants reported that they had previously deactivated their accounts while a significant number reported wanting to do so or to take time away from social network sites. Tellingly, however, none of the participants had totally abandoned Facebook, Twitter or Instagram if they had previously engaged regularly with them. Often, they reported reactivating their accounts to message friends who were using it or because it made their lives easier as Molly (20)'s account illustrates:

I deleted my account a couple of times err … I still have to you know keep reactivating it because so many people use it and it is just so hard to get in touch with someone, because they won't have any other profiles on the net so you can't find them at all, they will just have their Facebook thing and they will expect everyone to communicate with them on Facebook, because everyone is on it so I had to reactivate my account a couple of times you know, and messenger is actually pretty handy. (Molly, 20)

Similarly, Sarah explained that she would prefer to delete her Facebook account but felt compelled to keep it in order to stay in contact with people:

I wanted to delete Facebook for a long time, and I've always been why do I still use it? Why am I still on it? But because it is my only way of really staying in contact with certain people, and it is the most convenient for that thing, that is the reason why I keep it but I don't

really enjoy it as a platform, I mean it is only for the messaging that I
keep it for. (Sarah, 25)

In Sarah's as well as the majority of participants' accounts of their uses of social
network sites, convenience as well as the perceived requirement of using the
platforms to manage the everyday were overpowering the anxieties and stresses
encountered in using them. Participants' individual decisions to use or stay on social
network sites were embedded in an environment in which a few platforms (and
especially Facebook) had a monopoly. The private corporations which own the main
social network platforms retained and made profit of users' personal data, invest in
marketing to target their users, shape the design and architecture of platforms
(convenience, speed, built-in apps) to suit their private interests and insure that users
do not leave (facilitating a dependency of use and a 'lock in effect') (see discussion in
Chapter Two). All these corporate strategies significantly shaped young people'
choice and engagement with social network sites. In other words, even though
participants were making individual decisions to use social network sites in certain
ways or to limit their uses, these decisions were still located in a broader relation of
power shaped by corporate interests.

Conclusion

The chapter has examined the ways in which participants used social network sites to
maintain and develop relationships. It showed that these relationships were negotiated
in relation to the technological affordances of social network sites and the reshaping
of social expectations in light of these capacities. The chapter has then outlined the
anxieties and stresses that the negotiations of mediated interactions generated in
participants' lives. Most participants, however, still highlighted the usefulness and
positive aspects of social network sites. The platforms were understood by the

majority of young adults as 'tools' to connect with people and repeatedly described as 'useful', in many cases even indispensable, to manage the everyday. The data demonstrated how participants sometimes wanted to give up social network sites but often struggled to do so or to envision an alternative as the platforms were deeply embedded in their lives. The lack of vision of alternatives as well as participants' continuous compromises with social network sites, this chapter has argued, reflect the broader corporate and economic structures which significantly shaped their choice and uses.

The next chapter sheds light on how participants presented their uses of social network sites in relation to their narratives of growing up. It examines how their uses of the platforms were connected to broader forms of neoliberal governmentality in which social network sites were perceived as tools for managing impressions and training for labour.

Chapter Five

Social Network Sites: Growing up and Training for Labour

The previous chapter examined young adults' practices and negotiations of social network sites in their everyday lives. Participants described the platforms as 'useful tools' to manage their everyday lives and maintain their relationships and at the same time generating an important amount of stress and anxiety. Social network sites, in particular Facebook, were deeply embedded in participants' lives, making it difficult for them to give up the platforms or to envision an alternative. The chapter argued that despite participants' emphasis on personal choice or on the positive aspects of social network sites, their lack of vision of alternatives as well as their dependency in effect on the platforms revealed how broader corporate and economic structures significantly shaped their choice and uses.

The current chapter explores how participants understood and presented their uses of social network sites within narratives of growing up and overlapping neoliberal discourses. It first examines how participants accounted for the changes that occurred in their uses of the platforms. Indeed, most participants put an emphasis on how they significantly changed their practices on social network sites over time, including the platforms that they used, their attitudes on adding new contacts, their privacy settings as well as the types and frequency of activities on the different platforms. Often these changes were described within narratives of growing up and individual responsibility.

It then explores how participants' uses and understandings of social network sites were embedded within broader forms of neoliberal governmentality corresponding to understandings of the self as 'entrepreneurial, active, decisive independent and responsible' (Kelly, 2013, p.73). These notions resonated strongly with both participants' understandings and engagement with the platforms. Drawing on

Foucault's work, the second part of the current chapter examines how participants used the platforms to manage their impressions and present a desirable and professional self. The last section investigates how social network sites were perceived and used more proactively by some participants as tools for training for labour, and effectively transformed as apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.

Becoming Responsible with Social Network Sites

Young adults in the study put an emphasis on how their uses of social network sites changed over time, often recounting these changes within broader narratives of growing up. Participants accounted for changes in how they engaged with the platforms they used, how they negotiated the public and private interfaces of social network sites, how they approached friending practices as well as how they understood privacy. Throughout the interviews, they often compared their past uses of social network sites, and platforms such as Bebo or MySpace, with their current practices. Former uses were repeatedly described in terms of identity work and popularity whereas their current practices were characterised by responsibility and restraint. This part first examines how participants accounted for the changes in their practices as part of broader processes of growing up. It then investigates participants' understandings of privacy which showcased more specifically their narratives of growing up and individual responsibility.

Changing Practices and Narratives of Growing up

Participants described how their practices of engaging with social network sites changed over time. Participants accounted for their uses of social network sites through a move away from practices perceived as immature such as engaging in

conspicuous identity work, posting about their feelings or adding too many people to practices demonstrating responsibility. These shifts were often discussed in terms of growing up.

Chloe's (22) personal experience with social network sites is fairly typical of most participants' trajectories with the platforms. Chloe first started using Bebo when she was in secondary school and would constantly 'post on people's walls' and 'never use private messages'. She shifted to Facebook when it became more popular in her peer group and progressively 'became more private' in her posting. She started using private messages instead of the public interface of Facebook to chat with her friends. On Bebo, she reported spending a lot of time updating her page and changing her personal information whereas she did not fill with such details the 'About Me' 's section of Facebook and did not provide information at all about her hobbies or her favourite music and movies. She perceived these changes in how she engaged with social network sites, and especially her attitude to privacy as part of growing up:

> After a few years it's become more and more kind of private I guess as
> I've grown up. (Chloe, 22)

A large majority of participants reported using Bebo and MySpace when they were younger. The platforms were very popular in the UK for this age group at the time[9]. Participants often got into social network sites through one of these two platforms before switching to Facebook. For example, Natalie recalled how she was using Bebo before moving to Facebook:

> I had Bebo (laughs), it was ages ago. That was fun, it was like give
> your love to a friend and draw pictures on their walls and things... I
> was quite young when I got Bebo, I probably wasn't old enough to
> have it but … yeah before Facebook it was Bebo. (Natalie, 20)

---

9   According to Ofcom (2009) 65% of young adults aged 16-24 used Facebook, 55% MySpace and 51% Bebo in 2009. Users aged 16-19 were more likely to use Bebo than young adults aged 20-24.

Bebo was often used by participants during secondary school and associated with the types of peer socialisation experienced in this context. Nathan (22) who used Bebo explained that the platform was 'essentially a popularity contest' in which people had to 'give hearts' and 'rank friends' which according to him reflected the atmosphere of gossips and drama which were taking place in the 'playground'. Drama in the current study was often used by participants to describe their past practices on social network sites as a way of asserting their narratives of growing up.

Young adults in the study repeatedly described Bebo and MySpace in terms of identity work. Types of identity work were marked through practices of hyper-personalisation of one's social network profile or page, as described earlier by Chloe, as well as autobiographical types of content and writing. Eva (25), for instance, reflected on how she used MySpace as a 'diary':

> I was 15 or 16 years old and MySpace was like your diary you know. I just think back to some of the things I would say like go on about... and like why would anyone ever want to know that? Like not really uncomfortable or embarrassing things but just like you know like expressions of teenagers that are not interesting at all [....] As I left high school and went on to university, Facebook just became a way to connect with classmates and stuffs and people who moved away. That was a little bit less deep than MySpace because as I said MySpace was really my diary. (Eva, 25)

Eva described her move from MySpace to Facebook as well as the changes in how she engaged with both platforms in terms of growing up. She stopped using MySpace when she started university and in this context used Facebook to connect with people rather than to express her feelings (e.g. 'less deep'). Eva in her account clearly understood her move from MySpace to Facebook as a reflection of her personal experience of growing up. Similarly, Amy (22) described Bebo as a platform on which 'everyone posted about themselves', depicting the platform as a self-centred

space. Later in the interview, she explained that she did not have to delete embarrassing content from her Facebook timeline as she was 'old enough' when she moved to Facebook and used it 'only for messaging people'. Overall, participants' accounts of their uses of Bebo and MySpace were entrenched in their narratives of growing up. Bebo was often used by participants throughout secondary education and discarded the year prior or at the start of their higher education. This specific trajectory, typical of the sample of the study, allowed participants to present Bebo as an integral part of their experiences of growing up. Similarly, in his research on young Australian's uses of social network sites, Robards (2012) found that his participants' accounts of their moves from MySpace (more popular in Australia than Bebo) to Facebook were entrenched within narratives of growing and discourses of transitions (p.387). He also situated this shift of platforms as a move away from ostentatious forms of identity work to constructions of the self in interaction with others (p.385). To put it another way, doing less overt identity work, adopting a plainer profile (e.g. deleting pictures, posting little content) and using social network sites to connect with people instead, was a way of signalling a more mature approach to social network sites and a notion of identity which reflected adult norms (see also Livingstone, 2008, Lincoln and Robards, 2014).

Changes of uses on Facebook were also described by a large amount of participants through a shift from public to private interactions (e.g. using the messaging function of Facebook). Nancy (22), for instance, accounted for changes in her uses of Facebook over time in these terms:

> I am more selective in the things that I post now than when I was younger, like I didn't care and I put everything. And I think that I use more private messages than before, before it was more posting links to people, commenting more on the walls, now it is more in private messages. (Nancy, 22)

In her account, Nancy compared her past uses of Facebook to the ways in which she was currently engaging with the platform. In doing so, she put an emphasis on how she started using Facebook in more responsible ways (e.g. 'I didn't care', ' I put everything', 'now it is more in private messages'). Shifts from a public to a private profile as well as displacements from the public interfaces of the platforms to private messaging were repeatedly discussed by participants, reflecting a broader trend (Ofcom, 2016). Again, participants accounted for this shift as part of their experiences of growing up. However, not all participants reported moving away from the public interfaces of social network sites. Emma (22), for example, explained how she recently started to engage in more public ways on Facebook:

> Well initially I just used it for messaging and I would sometimes post a song or something. Now I would more ... I am more likely to comment on someone's opinion or post something myself occasionally. So I am still not an active user but I would sometimes do that, not simply messaging people. (Emma ,22)

Although her trajectory of engagement with social network sites was different from other participants, Emma used the same narratives of growing up to make sense of these changes. Indeed, she described this new attitude, and especially her attitude towards commenting on people's opinions, as a result of maturity and confidence.

The focus on popularity and addiction, which was found in a large number of interviews, was another way to mark differences between past and current practices, and present the former as part of growing up. Annie (21), for example, described her past uses of Facebook as 'addictive':

> I used to use Facebook like a lot, I mean it is really addictive, you'd wake up in the morning and you check your phone, you'd be laughing if you'd do it now… I think maybe just as you get older as well like your personality, you change and things like that just become less important, I have enough thoughts in my head I need to worry about.

(Annie, 21)

Annie made sense of the changes in the ways she used Facebook as the result of taking part in an adult-centred world in which social network sites do not have a central part. Similarly, Charlotte (23) explained how during secondary school she used and understood Facebook in very different ways. Reflecting back upon this, she put an emphasis on how Facebook 'was more about the popularity' at this time. She used this context to outline how she changed her attitude towards adding new contact, getting likes or spending time on social network sites:

> When I was younger I would be more likely to be adding people because it was more about the popularity when I was at school. It is kind of you know, you want to see that you've got friends and stuff like now obviously it is not like that at all... when I think about that it was very much like 'look at me I have friended this person', that is exactly what it must be I think for like people of that age, you know... You spent a lot of time on it as well and it is like you're almost in denial. That is what I did, I have wasted a lot of time on it in the past which is unhealthy I would say. You have to cut it off. (Charlotte, 23)

She described her past uses in terms of popularity and addiction which she comprehended as part of growing up and what 'people do' and 'care about' at this age. Taking the example of her sixteen years old brother who was carefully crafting his profile on Facebook, Charlotte put an emphasis in how he was very 'impressionable' with social network sites and altogether at 'a completely different stage' with it, illustrating how uses of social network sites were for her tight up with growing up. Later in her interview, Charlotte underlined how she regained control over her uses of social network sites by cutting off the time she spent on social network sites and setting up 'reasonable' boundaries with the platforms. This process of controlling one's uses was evidence of maturity with social network sites. Taking the example of one of his friend who he described as addicted to Facebook and did not put enough time to

study, Aaron (20) explained that it was ultimately 'down to self-control' to prevent oneself to be addicted. Likewise, Alex (24) described during his interview how he was addicted to social network sites when he was younger, reflecting on it in similar terms:

> Researcher: what do you think are the negative impacts or positive impacts of social media for you?
>
> […] I didn't like the fact that it did take over my life, you know like I was just like constantly on it and I was in denial... I would go on it constantly and will keep clicking on it and putting statuses; keep writing statuses and see if somebody liked it. I got really sensitive about my likes you know I would generally be upset if I wouldn't get likes, it is stupid but that was how I felt, (Alex, 24)

Alex highlighted how he eventually succeeded to control the time he spent on Facebook which took him to deactivate his account several times. According to him, the behaviours that he described above were part of his experiences of growing up and becoming more mature with his personal engagement with social network sites. Overall, he perceived the behaviours he described as 'a phase that you have to go through as a young person'. The idea of being in denial, present both in Charlotte and Alex's accounts also highlights experiences of growing up in which one becomes more aware and reflective about one's behaviour. These narratives, often discussing past practices in terms of addiction, emotional or dramatic behaviours, were also inscribed in broader processes of differentiation and normative representations about youth. In their ethnographic work about youth conflict on social network sites, Marwick and boyd (2014), for example, demonstrated how 'drama' was used by young people to distance themselves from practices conceptualised by adults as bullying or aggression as well as ways of reinforcing conventional gendered norms (p.1187) (see Chapter Six for further discussion).

In a similar way that Alex, Charlotte and Annie discussed addiction, Nathan and Molly adopted a reflective and adult-centred viewpoint on bullying and trolling and

144

made sense of these experiences as part of growing up. Nathan (22) described bullying on social network sites, which he had personal experiences of, as something connected as to maturity and age:

> There is a sort of ... like cyber bullying aspect of it... I feel a bit like if you are offended by someone via a keyboard, just close your computer but then you know I am obviously … at an age than I have been going on social media for 10 years now (Nathan, 22)

In his account, Nathan also suggested that negotiating these experiences, although difficult for a young person is down to 'self-control'. Likewise, Molly (20) accounted for her experiences of trolling and bullying on YouTube and Tumblr in terms of growing up:

> Researcher: do you have experiences of getting into one of these situations?
>
> Ow so many times... It is like you never learn and at some point I just went like 'okay I will just no comment from this day on' and I haven't and I have been happy since […] There is also a wave of anonymous hatred [on YouTube/ Tumblr] like people received just random things, sometimes you know they don't even have a reason they just send hatred and some people are more fragile, they cannot deal with it and they get overwhelmed by it. I think it just comes with their immaturity to a certain level, they are still kids, they don't know how evils people can be so, at this point, me as an adult I will just literally laugh at all the messages, even if they pointed out my insecurities, I'll delete them and I walk away but young people, kids, I don't think they can do. (Molly, 20)

In using terms such as 'you never learn', 'immaturity', 'kids', 'adult', Molly adopted an 'adult perspective' regarding her past experience and reflected more broadly on the negative aspects of social network sites for younger people. Only Nathan and Molly reported having had direct experiences of trolling and bullying. This can arguably be understood as part of how participants presented their uses from an adult-centred

145

perspective and in terms of growing up. In doing so, participants were more likely to label practices of bullying as 'drama' which can be easily dismissed as being part of their past uses (Marwick and boyd, 2014).

Lastly, young adults in the study repeatedly discussed their changing attitudes towards friending (i.e. adding people to social network sites) within narratives of growing up. These narratives were visible in participants' rejection of popularity and their emphasis instead on the different motives that were underpinning their practices. For example, some participants underlined how they 'rarely' sent requests themselves and if they did so it was a purposeful and rational decision such as starting a friendship, building a network of contacts or developing a circle of interests. In addition, participants were eager to demonstrate a sense of responsibility over the people that they added on social network sites. When discussing friending practices, some participants put a great emphasis on the fact that they added only people that they knew or connected to their local and offline networks. Interestingly, Natalie (20) and James (22) both explained that they would add only people whom they would greet on the street. This narrative was a way of stressing both the legitimacy of their contacts (i.e. they were not strangers or random people) and their practices as responsible.

Participants' accounts of their friending practices reflected more broadly what Chambers (2013) has described as 'a new discourse on intimacy putting an emphasis on individual agency, choice and personal compatibility' as well as on individual efforts to 'proactively manage the parameters of their continuously fluctuating intimate landscape' (Chambers, 2013, pp.43-44). Both elements; choice and management, emerged during the interviews. These elements correspond to broader neoliberal discourses and are inscribed in the technological affordances and design of social network sites which allow users to choose, assess compatibility with prospective friends and proactively manage relationships (e.g. friending, unfriending,

following) (see also discussion in Chapter Six).

Overall, the accounts highlighted above shed light on how participants understood and presented their past and current uses of social network sites as part of broader processes of growing up. Former uses were repeatedly described as youthful (e.g. quest for popularity, identity work) whereas current practices by contrast, were characterised by responsibility and restraint. Participants' understandings of privacy were inscribed in the same logic.

Privacy: The Responsible Thing to Do

Privacy was mostly discussed by participants in relation to information disclosure (and not necessarily in terms of privacy settings or specific platform). Indeed, young adults in the study often negotiated privacy and information disclosure on a case basis, according to the platform used and the specific information disclosed as Matthew's (20) account illustrates:

> I choose what I want to share so if I have taken a photo of something that I think it will be also relevant on Facebook, because they are levels of interactions on different platforms where they are people on Instagram that I don't have on Facebook so I'll take less personal stuff on Instagram. (Matthew, 20)

Matthew made choices about the pictures he wished to share on Facebook or on Instagram based on the perceived audiences of the different platforms. Most participants reported making such choices as well as making broader decisions on whether or not they wanted to disclose specific information. James (22) for example, explained that there will be personal things, such as his relationship status that he will simply not post on Facebook. Likewise, Olivia (23) described that she controlled and knew 'exactly what people could see'. Participants in the current study were

understanding privacy in relational terms and made decisions to control what information specific people, especially family members and work colleagues had access to. Participants often discussed privacy in practice as part of negotiating mediated relationships (see Chapter Four). This is in accordance with Livingstone (2008) who argued that young people make continuous decisions about specific information they disclose on social network sites and what to keep off the sites in relation to the context, the platforms and the perceived audience of the different platforms. This, according to her, suggests a relational understanding of privacy which is not 'tied to the disclosure of certain types of information' but rather is 'centred on having control over who knows what about you' (p.404).

Furthermore, throughout the interviews, participants were eager to show that they were in control and 'responsible' in relation to the information they disclosed on social network sites. For example, John (24) explained how he learned as a result of his personal experiences to manage privacy on social network sites, in turn showing little empathy for people who have not:

> It is all going to be there somewhere so don't post anything you are not comfortable with because there is always access to it. So I've learnt that and I'll never post anything I am not comfortable with. But some people don't realise that because they think if they delete it, it is gone and they don't realise that everybody could have taken a screen shot on Facebook. (John, 24)

In the excerpt above, John suggested that it is onto individuals to learn the risks that social network sites entail regarding information disclosure to unintended audiences and to manage privacy accordingly. In addition, John pointed to other risks such as identity theft and broad misuses of data. Following this reasoning, John stressed that in this context one needed to set up 'good privacy settings' and 'be careful' with information disclosure, putting the ultimate responsibility onto people who did not abide by those rules. Sarah (25) also discussed risks on social network sites in relation

to privacy:

> Why would anyone keep their Facebook public? Just because absolutely anyone could look at it and people can actually take your photos from it [...] I tend to keep Facebook private because it is so easy to search... If you know the name of a person you can search it. And if their pages are not private then you can pretty much take anything from it. (Sarah, 25)

Sarah put an emphasis on the irresponsibility and lack of insight of people who keep their profiles public on Facebook, also suggesting individual responsibility. Sarah and John were using Facebook in different ways, John reported being very active on the platform, having loose privacy settings (because he was controlling information disclosure prior to publication) and a large network of friends. By contrast, Sarah reported avoiding interacting with the public interface of Facebook, had tighter privacy settings and a restricted friend list. Despite differences in their practices, both shared understandings that it was people's responsibility to manage their privacy and information disclosure in order to prevent third-party or people in their social circles to use their information in malevolent ways (e.g. taking screenshots, identity theft).

Throughout the interviews, some participants discussed more general risks of using social network sites in relation to privacy. Emily (22), for example, put an emphasis on risks connected with strangers having access to her information:

> It is kind of scary when you think about the all thing about people can know exactly where you are and all of that, that all surveillance thing. It does give you the creeps when you start thinking about it, like random people who you don't know, knowing so much about you... but I think as long as you have good privacy settings, you tend to be okay from that. (Emily, 22)

Hugo (25) expressed similar concerns regarding predatory strangers on social network sites.

> You have these stories, maybe it is true, maybe it is not but you

definitely hear crazy stories about Facebook, like what I told you about my friend adding like a friend of friend on Facebook and trying to chat, like that sort of kind of thing… (Hugo, 25)

Emily and Hugo's accounts are permeated by some of the moral panics which have constituted public discourses about young people's digital practices in the last decade, often putting an emphasis on the risks posed by strangers on social network sites. These 'stories', often drawing on anecdotal evidence or hearsay appeared in few interviews. The majority of the time, the 'moral' of these stories was that one has to protect oneself through appropriate privacy settings and behaviours. Such accounts illustrate the pervasion of the 'stranger danger' rhetoric (boyd, 2010) as well as how the management of risks on social network sites was understood as an individual responsibility.

Risks on social network sites were also connected to location sharing, the object of another moral panic in the media. A few participants used stories of people who shared their locations on Facebook while on holidays indicating to potential burglars that their houses were empty. In a similar way that with the stranger danger rhetoric, these stories were often discussed in anecdotal terms as Natalie's account illustrates:

Researcher: do you share your location?

Natalie: no I don't, I turned that off.

Researcher: why not?

I don't know like … They say that you shouldn't do it [sharing your location] because like friends can see that you are posting from there and they know that the house is empty, like it is a security issue. (Natalie, 20)

In this extract, Natalie clearly alludes to abstract notions of security and risks. She also highlighted some advisory guidance that she received (e.g. 'they say that you

shouldn't do it'). Other participants alluded to external advice or common-sense knowledge to assess their practices in terms of privacy. This was observable in sentences such as 'people say' or 'they say' or 'most people'. These accounts reproduced commonsense discourses about location sharing that arguably young adults have heard from teachers and adults in general. Alex (24), for instance, justified his own practices on social network sites in relation to this common-sense knowledge, concluding that 'it is fine' as he did not disclose 'sensitive information':

> I filled up my name and the high school on Facebook and some like you know interests, like films and books … I did have the universities where I studied, my relationship status, and I think I still got my current location in somewhere, I just put it up, that is some random place, I did it because I didn't want anyone to know where I live and that was for a laugh as well. I don't have like my phone number, my address or my card details or stuffs like that so it is fine. (Alex, 24)

Interestingly, Alex also purposefully disclosed false information on his profile, departing even so slightly from Facebook real-person policy (see also Chapter Seven and discussion on play). However, Alex was the only one among participants to report such deviation. Other participants either had accurate information or left some sections empty. This demonstrates the power that Facebook holds when collecting personal data as most participants were truthful with disclosing their names, workplaces, universities that studied at and places where they lived.

Overall, the accounts highlighted above revealed how risks in relation to social network sites, and privacy in particular, were understood on an individual level. Participants described or perceived it as their own responsibility to manage these risks, by adjusting their privacy settings and/or by anticipating these situations. These abstract notions of risks in relation to privacy can be found in courses of e-safety (Barnard-Wills, 2012, Hope, 2015). This arguably reinforced particular forms of neoliberal governmentality through what Hope (2015) as described as a 'diagnostic

151

inflation' and risk discourses (see discussion in Chapter Two). Fiona, for example, described how she received advices regarding Internet uses by parents, teachers and adults in general. She felt that there was a 'big fuss' when she was at school about online safety and the dangers of the Internet:

> My generation was the one who grew up when the all Internet was becoming a regularly used thing but also still new to a lot of people so I think a lot of people have been taught by people 'never talked to anybody on the net'. Obviously most of people like kind of happily disregarded it (laughs).
>
> Researcher: Did you get courses at school or things like that?
>
> Yeah... you get like talks and stuffs. I think it was almost over done a lot of time because like the fact that you can reach so many people, is a big risk but it is the same on the street. I kind of understand it but at the same time I think it was over-exaggerated when I was younger. (Fiona, 20)

Fiona here explained how risks were framed through an adult perspective, putting an emphasis on risks connected to strangers and privacy. These risks as well as risks regarding online bullying, trolling, and exposure to inappropriate content were emphasised in e-safety trainings that participants received as part of their school curriculum. However, this framework has been said to be blind to the complexity and ordinariness of young adults' practices, formulating them increasingly as 'in need of protection from risks' or in 'need of supervision' (see Muncie, 2004) and restricting debates to a dichotomy of 'good' (i.e. 'responsible) versus 'bad' (i.e. 'risky') practices (Buckingham, 2007).

Furthermore, when participants got older, they were likely to receive advice during their university cursus about privacy in relation to their professional images online and practices of professional vetting. Olivia (23), for example, explained how her teachers would tell them that they had to be careful with information disclosure as

prospective employers were likely to look their social network profiles. Similarly, Sarah (25) recalled teachers 'were constantly' telling them about privacy and to 'make sure that they did not have any photos that would be misused, that make you look bad or make you look unprofessional'. These advices were translated in practice by some participants. Luke (21), for example, explained that he made 'a point of not putting anything embarrassing' on Facebook as prospective employers could look his profile up. Making sense of his pre-emptive behaviour, he explained that 'some people think they should not have to think that way, but for me it is the way it is'. For Luke, making sure that nothing on social network sites could potentially impact on his professional prospects was seen as pragmatic and obvious. Matthew (20) described his profiles on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as 'completely public' adding that he would 'put privacy settings on' before applying for jobs in order to avoid 'being misinterpreted by employers'. Similarly, Natalie (20) explained that when she will have to apply for jobs, she will go through the information available on her Facebook's profile and put everything on private. She described it as a tactical move to avoid 'giving anyone any ammunition'. This pre-emptive attitude towards professional vetting was found in a large amount of interviews (see further discussion in Chapter Seven).

In this context, privacy was seen as the responsible course of action; the right thing to do. Lucy (24), for instance, explained how she noticed that 'some people' did not use their real names on Facebook. She felt that it was probably ' the right thing to do'. She added:

> I probably should be more concerned about the privacy thing than I am but I don't know I just think it is the way the world works at the moment and I don't really think too much about it actually. But yeah I probably should. (Lucy, 24)

Lucy's account sheds light on some discrepancies, which also appeared in other participants' accounts, between abstract understandings of privacy as the right and responsible thing to do and pragmatic and everyday uses of the platforms in which professional vetting and broader concerns regarding privacy remained at bay. Hugo (25) shown a similar pragmatic attitude regarding privacy on social network sites:

> I think there are some issues about privacy on Facebook anyway, some issues that they have so you know... There is always something that will happen and you have hackers and they can do anything they want to your profile or whatever. (Hugo, 25)

Hugo who earlier put an emphasis on the risks of social network sites in relation to dangers posed by strangers adopted a more pragmatic attitude regarding the privacy offered by corporations such as Facebook, effectively exempting them from their responsibility. Most of participants discussed privacy in relation to risks posed by potential predators online or risks raised by their own information disclosure in the context of professional vetting. Young adults were taught to be anxious and fearful about these risks. However, the fact that their privacy was sometimes compromised by private corporations (e.g. hacking of personal databases) and continuously breached by them through their systematic collecting of users' personal data remained hidden in the background and taken for granted. This has been discussed by Barnes (2006) as a privacy paradox (see further discussion in chapter Seven).

In addition, only a handful of participants demonstrated a detailed understanding of the privacy settings of the different social network sites that they used. The majority of participants were unsure about their privacy settings. Most participants described their privacy settings of their profiles as 'friends only' or 'basic' but were unclear regarding the access to their pictures or their posts (e.g. for instance between public, friends only or friends of friends for Facebook). John (24) revealed in his interview that he did not 'really understand' the privacy settings and was struggling to

set his Facebook profile so he had to confirm prior publication the different posts and pictures that people wanted to publish on his timeline. Luke (21) was not sure about his privacy settings on Facebook and gave a very vague description of them as on 'medium level'. Similarly, Alice (22) described her settings as 'reasonably private', however she was 'not sure'. Other participants talked about 'average' privacy set-ups, often relying on the preset settings of the platforms. A few participants also reported being put off by the lengthy terms of uses of social network sites as well as weary of continuous changes in the privacy settings, usually without prior or clear warning from the companies owning the platforms. Benjamin (25), for instance, expressed his frustration about Facebook's privacy policies saying 'who can keep track of them?' and 'who is going to read that anyway?'. Sarah (25) expressed a similar frustration regarding privacy settings on Facebook:

> You got your settings and they are so many elements to it that you don't know which one you're meant to be looking at. It is a bit misleading sometimes … it is really frustrating when they keep changing things, you kind of get used to it and then they change it again, it is just really frustrating. And it changes without you realising that it had changed. (Sarah, 25)

The accounts highlighted above demonstrate the unequal balance of power between individual and corporations which control and design the platforms' privacy settings. Privacy settings are often lengthy and written in expert language (Meiselwitz, 2013). In this context, most users accept terms of uses regarding privacy when they sign up without reading or fully understanding them (ibid.). As a result, some participants in the current study were misguided or unaware of the information that they disclosed on social network sites. For example, Dylan (23) checked his Facebook profile during the interview and realised that his mobile number as well as all the places he liked were visible which he was clearly not aware of and would not have consented to. Likewise,

Alice (22)'s account illustrates how the lack of understanding of Facebook's terms and conditions, the opt-out privacy policy (by contrast to opt-in) as well as the difficulty to customise the privacy settings on the platform impacted on her information disclosure.

> Researcher: are you aware of the privacy settings on Facebook?
>
> I've changed it like recently because about like a year ago my number was available and I didn't realise it until I got a new phone and all my Facebook contacts got into it and I was like ''what??!? How did I get all these numbers?''. And then I realised that probably people had my number through Facebook. I was more like ''hum I don't really want people to have it''… yeah I don't know so I've changed a lot of my privacy settings then. (Alice, 22)

Alice found out about the fact that her mobile number was publicly available by accident and only then adjusted her settings to what she felt was more appropriate. The power that Dylan or Alice had in choosing how to engage with Facebook and what information to disclosure was clearly restricted within the powerful decisions of the corporations that own the platforms. Despite this, Alice and Dylan like most participants, displayed strong views that it was their individual responsibility to manage their privacy on social network sites stating that misuses and privacy breaches on the platforms. Alice even described such incidents as 'people's own faults' despite her own struggles to understand or keep up-to-date with obscure and ever-changing privacy settings on the platforms. Managing one's privacy on social network sites, although perceived as a personal responsibility, was in reality entrenched in corporate power which shaped users' engagements with the platforms.

Overall, this part has examined how participants understood and accounted for their uses of social network sites within narratives of growing up, often inscribed in overlapping neoliberal discourses, and as their individual responsibility. The majority of young adults in the study understood and used social network sites in various ways

as tools for 'training for labour', described by Standing (2011) as ' work that does not have exchange value but which is necessary or advisable' (p.206). Training for labour, according to Standing, can take the forms of demonstrating employability, self-promotion, networking or information gathering about business industries or opportunities. Participants' self-reported practices on social network sites often revealed such 'training for labour' including impression management, networking or demonstrating skills. The following part examines how the uses of social network sites as tools for training for labour are inscribed in broader neoliberal discourses and corresponding forms of governmentalities.

Training for Labour with Social Network Sites

This part, drawing on Foucault's work analyses social network sites as part of broader historical processes and development of neoliberal discourses and at the same time as apparatus for corresponding governmentality. Young adults in the study understood and used social network sites as technologies of governmentality (of the self and of others) inscribed in broader processes of individualisation and neoliberal discourses (e.g. individual responsibility, personal development, training for labour, entrepreneurship). In other words, participants' practices and understandings were situated in power relations in which specific discourses functioned as 'truths' and in turn transcended and generated these practices and understandings. Foucault (1982) explained:

> I tried to pose the question of norms of behaviour first of all in terms of
> power, and of power that one exercises, and to analyse this power as a
> field of procedures of government. (1982, p.4)

According to Foucault the functioning of power is not only exercised in a negative

157

way through censorship or repression but also produces 'rituals of truth' (1975, p.194). To put it another way, power produces knowledge which shapes individuals' self-knowledge and understandings of the social world. In this dialectical relationship, social agents constitute themselves 'in an active fashion' as part of discursive and power relations which are 'proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' (1997, p.291) (see Chapter Two). As the part above demonstrated, young adults in the study often accounted for their uses of social network sites in terms of growing up and individual responsibility. Often these accounts were building upon what Kelly (2006) described as the pervasion of understandings of the self as an enterprise which put an emphasis on the type of personhood young people should adopt to become adults (p.18). He defined this type of personhood as 'being responsible for conducting themselves, in the business of life, as an enterprise, a project, a work in progress' (ibid.). According to him, understandings of the self as enterprise have permeated the construction of 'youth' and led to a range of initiatives which seek to mould young people in 'the 'ideal' subject of Liberal governmentalities'; that is a 'person who has developed the capacities of self-reflection, self-regulation and self-government'(p.176). These forms of governmentalities can be found in the appraisal of personal attributes such as initiative, responsibility, entrepreneurship, independence or creativity. These understandings are crucial in the context of youth transition as they present the self, not in a negative way (in terms of disciplinary) but instead as proactive, autonomous and empowered. Moreover, values such as participation, initiative or entrepreneurship have also more specifically permeated understandings of social network sites and been promoted by a number of private corporations through ideological discourses about Web 2.0. (see Chapter Two). This part examines participants' practices and understandings of social network sites in this context.

The Professional Self: Managing Online Impressions

Young adults in the study often described how they actively managed the impressions they were giving away on different social network sites, and in particular on Facebook. Impression management and identity performances on social network sites have been extensively analysed using the work of Erving Goffman (see Chapter Two). While Goffman's analytical framework sheds light on participants' practices, the concept of neoliberal governmentality developed by Foucault (1988) and subsequent works on the self as enterprise, allow to grasp participants' practices in relation to the power structures in which they took place (see Chapter One).

The majority of participants were developing strategies to manage their impressions on the different social network sites they used, often in the context of work or prospective work. Luke (21), for example, reported being concerned about the impressions his Facebook profile could make on prospective employers. In order to manage them, Luke was from time to time checking his profile to assess how people who did not know him personally would perceive it:

> I do often look at my own profile just to kind of think how would they perceive me by looking at it so I suppose it is kind of not censored but it is definitely, err... I don't know the word that I am looking for..., it definitely pushes ... maybe a kind of shinier version of myself so I don't ... from that perspective I don't mind if people look at it, because I know that it is ok (Luke, 21).

Luke adjusted his profile to control his image by 'censoring' content such as comments or pictures in order to appear professional. Likewise, Eva (25) who had previous colleagues and bosses in her Facebook contact list, was carefully crafting her posts on the platform to give the right impression to her audiences:

I don't build an image of myself that is really irresponsible because like I said you know employers are going to be looking at that. So I want it to be able to reflect on myself as a person who has interests and can have a sense of humour but also is not being irresponsible or making everything about my life really public. (Eva, 25)

Eva's concerns, like the majority of participants were mostly centred her image as a professional and responsible individual. She felt that she had to demonstrate these personal qualities through social network sites. Social network sites and Facebook especially were perceived as personal and at the same time as spaces to demonstrate one's professional assets. This sheds light on the blurring of boundaries between work and leisure, a feature which repeatedly appeared in participants' accounts (Greggs, 2011).

Participants usually managed their impressions on social network sites by deleting, editing or untagging pictures and posts. For example, Benjamin (25) explained how he would make sure to be untagged from pictures that were 'giving the wrong impression' (e.g. pictures from a night-out). To do so, he was asking people to untag him, keeping track of it until the person removed the tag or when possible was removing it himself. Similarly, Eleanor (22) reported deleting pictures of her added by friends when she felt they were not appropriate for Facebook. In addition, a large amount of participants deleted content that they posted when they started using social network sites, often pictures of night-outs and that they described as 'embarrassing' or 'silly'. These practices that have been referred in the literature as 'whitewalling' (boyd, 2014, Marwick, 2005) or 'cleaning' the wall. Natalie (20), for example, reported deleting a lot of the content and pictures that she posted on social network sites the same summer I met her:

I purposely deleted a lot of stuff that I posted in the early years of Facebook because it was really embarrassing and I was like 'no I don't want that', like that is not funny and it is just silly. I deleted a lot.

160

Researcher: When did you do that?

Quite recently actually yeah like probably a day in the summer when I was scrolling Facebook I got rid of everything (Natalie, 20)

Natalie (20) was about to start her Master Degree and was looking for part-time work when she decided to tidy her profile. Anticipation of a change of settings often originated participants' decisions to tidy, revise or update their profiles on social network sites and in particular on Facebook. In this way, participants used profile editing as 'strategies of reconversion', strategies employed by individuals 'with a view to safeguarding or improving their position in social space' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.135). Social agents' location in the social space is according to Bourdieu defined by the types and values of capitals they possess. Thus, participants by editing their profiles tried to 'fit in' and maintain their social position when moving from one social environment to another, for instance from secondary school to university or from training to employment. Aaron's (20) account below, clearly demonstrates this strategy of reconversion:

I've updated my profile, I think as far as 'about me' goes... there is Glasgow, the university I am studying at and what is it that I am studying, apart from that nothing else. I definitely removed a lot of things … I thought well I am entering a new stage of my life, I don't want to be bringing in the past, I don't need it, so I cleared everything. (Aaron, 20)

James (22) reported such practices in a similar way:

About six months ago actually I went through my Facebook and you know you got the time-line thing you can choose years, and so I chose like the first year I've joined it and obviously I was like 17 at the time and I am 22 now so I was looking to it and I was like I can't believe I've posted that and I've said that or this kind of things. So yeah I've deleted quite a lot of things. (James, 22)

James deleted content on his profile because this content did not fit the current impression he wanted to make on social network sites. James, who wanted to work in the music industry was carefully crafting his profile to appear professional and competent in the music field. Similarly, John reflected on the impressions he gave away on his Facebook profile and how these could affect the ways people perceived him:

> I had to cut down like posts like saying I go to partying and things because when I was younger like at uni I'd always post when I was out drinking but them like it sort of accidentally conveyed this image that I was drinking all the time. I know that people think that I drink a lot more that what I do, so I've kind of cut down things that reinforce the image of alcohol for that reason. But it is too late, because you've established the facts on social media people just pick on it. But then you put it out there so there is only yourself to blame really… Like it is funny at first but then it can, if you continue to do it for years on them, it may close doors with people (John, 24)

John was actively trying to change the impressions his past behaviours on Facebook had caused. His understanding of impression management on social network sites was clearly connected to individual responsibility. According to him, it was the responsibility of people who posted content on Facebook to manage how this content may come across in the short as well as long term. This was a view shared by a majority of participants. Individual responsibility as well as proactivity (e.g. such as tidying one's profile in anticipation of a change of situation) often appeared in participants' understandings and practices of impression management.

A few participants, however, reported not to manage their impressions online or not to care too much about it. These accounts were often contradictory. Aaron (20), for instance, presented himself as careless about information available on his profile but also reported cleaning his wall and repeatedly deleting information posted on his profile because it was 'totally irrelevant'. Poppy (21) put an emphasis on how she never untagged herself from pictures on Facebook and allowed friends to tag her

without confirmation. She described herself as 'easy-going' with pictures and posts on Facebook. However, Poppy also reported using a nickname for her profile which only allowed her friends to find her. Dylan (23) also described himself as laid-back with the information available on his profile stating that he never deleted anything from it or that he never looked back at his timeline. However, at the end of his interview, Dylan recalled stories which involved both deleting content and going back to his wall. In this way, some participants did not *want t*o appear to craft their profiles. Arguably, this could be explained as it was contradictory to participants' presentations of their uses as spontaneous and authentic. Moreover, not being seen to engage in active self-presentation such as altering one's image was per se a form of presentation and management.

The accounts highlighted throughout this part have demonstrated how the majority of participants wanted to present a professional image of themselves on social network sites and developed strategies to do so. The age of the population the study focused on partly explained this focus on professional identities. Indeed, throughout the interviews, the majority of participants expressed concerns about finding a stable job in a very competitive labour market or about the direction of their professional careers. Moreover, participants' concerns reflect the specificity of the sample of the study, not only in terms of age and life-stage, but also social backgrounds (middle-class). According to Brown and Greggs (2012), concerns revolving the widespread use of professional vetting in the labour market are often constructed around 'privacy concerns and other middle-class anxieties' (p.361). They argued that while impression management is important in order to get white collar jobs, it is often 'less significant for the wider demographic of Facebook users who may not hold the same desires or have access to the same cultural capital that underpins them' (p362). Participants in the current study often aspired to professional jobs requiring cultural and social capital which they were partly consolidating or demonstrating on social network sites.

This in turn sheds light on how participants responded the social environments (fields) in which their practices took place, showing what Bourdieu (1998) described as 'an ontological complicity between the habitus and the field' (p.80).

Overall, the management of impressions on social network sites was taken for granted by participants, understood as a necessity in relation to the contemporary labour markets that they were aspiring to as well as a normal thing to do, often justified by broader neoliberal discourses.

Apparatus of Governmentality: Doing Social Media

The previous part has demonstrated how the majority of participants managed their impressions on social network sites, often trying to craft a 'professional self'. This part shows on some young adults in the study took a step further and described implicitly or explicitly their uses of social network sites as training for labour or even labour. Indeed, some participants reported using social network sites in more proactive or strategic ways such as for networking or to find freelance work or develop career opportunities. These uses were embedded in a context where boundaries between work and leisure have been blurred, often exacerbated by the development of information and communication technologies itself (Gregg, 2009). Gregg (2009) argued that this has generated a range of online labour activities such as the development and maintenance of a professional image on social network sites as well as to actively look for projects, to create opportunities for oneself and to build up new networks. The mix of leisure and work in combination to social network sites allows further individualisation as well as the exercise of power in a Foucauldian sense as subjection and control, and at the same time as pleasure, individual choice and subjectivation.

A few participants used and reported experiences of professional networking on Facebook and Twitter. Emma (22), for example, who was working part-time in a lab

164

and studying civil engineering explained how she accepted friend requests from people outside the UK who worked in civil engineering. She was using her real name on Facebook and had her name listed on the official page of the university she worked at allowing people to search her on social network sites. Connor (22) who studied business had a similar understanding of social network sites and described how he used Facebook to get information about people who could help him to advance his career. Later on in his interview, he explained how he used Facebook as a tool to get relevant information and build a professional network:

> I started using Facebook for following ... like again some professional sites, like specific things in the finance news, I have the habit of checking my Facebook regularly so I decided to enrich it my news feed with something that is finance related. (Connor, 22)

By following professional pages as well as friending people in the industry he was aspired to work in, Connor wanted to maximise his chances of getting a job in the future. Aaron (20) also explained how he would use Facebook to add people who he felt could help him to advance in his career in accountancy and business management. However, he explained that he would first of all 'enjoy the conversation' with these people, putting an emphasis on how his uses of social network sites were not purely strategic. Although commonly done in practice, most participants distanced themselves with these practices perceived as too strategic. Chloe (22), for example, explained how she would like specific posts and updates from a page run by an organisation she hoped to work for. She put an emphasis on how it is not directly networking' and ultimately 'did not use it that way'. Chloe, however, felt that being visible on social network sites and engaging with the public page of potential companies was necessary in order to get a job in the future.

In addition, some participants used social network sites, to different extent, to demonstrate their skills and create opportunities for themselves. Chloe, for instance,

used Facebook and Twitter to promote events organised by the dancing society in which she was actively taking part. She was enjoying such activities and saw it as part of her leisure. Similarly, James (22) and Dylan (23) used Facebook to promote their gigs while Jessica (23) mobilised her personal profile to promote events organised by the European society at the university she studied in which she was acting as secretary. Often participants felt that social network sites, and in particular Facebook were appropriate and sometimes unavoidable spaces to promote events for leisure, volunteering and work while at the same time demonstrated publicly skills and/or interests. Natalie (20) even talked about 'doing social media'. She explained how she made her Twitter account at a young age without 'planning on using it for social media'. By this, she meant that she was not planning at the time to 'use' the platform purposely to build up a network and create opportunities. The use of 'social media' in this way has recently been promoted by universities and colleges which encourage students to evidence employability through extracurricular and volunteering activities (e.g. participation in societies, sport clubs, volunteering for a charity, etc.). These perceptions match the transformations of higher education in the UK by neoliberal agendas which have promoted personal development, employability and meritocracy (see Chapter One). In addition to guidance implemented by universities in career talks, participants' uses were entrenched in corporate power through the design of the platforms and the exploitation of users' networks. Tommy (21), for example, who ran for a charitable cause explained how Facebook was the only way to get 'friends to sponsor you'. Tommy used Facebook as it was the 'easier' set-up to participate and fund the charitable cause, highlighting how private corporations who own the platforms shape interactions and create value from them (see discussion on convenience in Chapter Four).

The accounts above revealed understandings of the self as enterprise and corresponding practices on social network sites. For participants with aspirations in

the cultural and creative industries, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr or YouTube were clearly perceived as means to develop and demonstrate a creative or 'media savvy' image as well as more broadly to attract attention to their personal works. In this context, participants' engagement with social network sites was permeated with broader narratives of entrepreneurship based on values of innovation, creativity and success. Molly (20), for example, wanted to make a career in illustration and used Tumblr and Instagram to publish her drawings to a wider audience. Likewise, Alex (24), who was taking freelance work in graphic design reported showcasing regularly his work on Facebook, Tumblr and Instagram. He also reported using the platforms to get in touch with potential clients or be contacted for work. Likewise, Matthew (20) who was taking freelance work in the creative industries used Facebook as a professional contact database:

> If someone has talked about them or something, I'll accept it [friend request], because I don't classify Facebook friend as a friend, it is just like a contact, someone who is available, someone who can access me, do you know what I mean? (Matthew, 20)

Also wanting to work in the cultural and creative industries, Charlotte (23) described networking as well as more broadly the 'opportunities' that one can create through social network sites as the most positive aspects of the platforms:

> I think positive thing is kind of like the business aspect of it, like the way how it connects people. I think that is really *really* important...like being able to meet someone and be working in the industry and be able to contact them on Facebook and get advice or go to something. (Charlotte, 23)

Moreover, she was acutely aware of the need to be seen as media savvy and be 'clever' (i.e. proactive) with her uses of social network sites in order to make 'the most' of the platforms:

167

It is all about having like a Twitter and a blog, Facebook … and suddenly you have to have it if you want to be in this industry, you have to have an online presence, you have to go along with it and got to be clever with it. (Charlotte, 23)

Similarly, Emily (22), who wanted to become journalist, explained in her interview: 'you need to show that you are social media savvy' and that 'you can use these things'. Both Emily and Charlotte advocated strategic uses of the platforms which were prominent in their fields in order to advance their careers.

Participants with an ambition to work in these industries mixed work and leisure and used social network sites in order to find or create work opportunities, to promote their projects, to build a creative image and to demonstrate media skills and literacy. Some participants, however, were reluctant to present their uses in these ways. Molly (20), for instance, dissociated herself from these practices:

To be honest I am quite timid when it comes to self-promotion and stuff like that. I don't know how to do those things, I feel I am being pushy so I never do that and I think it is where my problem comes from because you have to advertise yourself. (Molly, 20)

David (24) who was picking up freelance work as cameraman also presented self-promotion in a negative light:

Like Sam [friend of David] he just posts things like … it is just constant promotion. It is like 'me, me, me', I hate that. I just kind of think that it is transparent [...] It is just interesting how people take it too seriously and they use it as a brand management where like they'll try to sell themselves to the world. (David, 24)

The careers Molly and David aspired to relied strongly on self-promotion, the capacities to create work opportunities and needs to demonstrate their skills and differentiate them from amateur and leisure uses. However, these participants were

navigating the field of cultural and creative industries which praise personal talent (and thus authenticity), entrepreneurialism and meritocracy (McRobbie, 2016). Their presentations of their uses of social network sites as 'timid' or 'against' self-promotion are inscribed in this specific context.

Participants who aspired to work in these industries demonstrated a high level of reflexivity toward social network sites' strategic uses while at the same time disassociating themselves from these uses. A few scholars have focused their analysis on the cultural and creative industries and shed light on participants' accounts. Conor et al. (2015) underlined how labour in the cultural and creative industries is characterised by informality and precariousness which generate 'constant attentiveness and vigilance to the possibility of future work' (p.10). In this context, activities such as self-promotion or the maintenance of social network sites become essential and can be understood as forms of affective and immaterial labour (Cote and Pybus, 2011). Research has shown that workers in the cultural and creative industries, often relying on digitalisation and the gig economy, faced a high level of insecurity, casualisation and precariousness (Conor et al, 2015). In other words, the objective conditions of their professional situations are at great discrepancy with the subjective conditions associated with their work (e.g. autonomy, creativity and self-realisation). According to Adkins (2003), reflexivity arises from a lack of fit between the habitus and the social fields in which the habitus is played, in other words 'when synchronicity between subjective and objective structures is broken' (p.23). It is not surprising therefore that participants with an interest and aspiring to work in the cultural and creative industries were more reflexive and in many ways more cynical about social network sites' uses. David (24), for example, described social network sites as 'games':

> It is like you put things up and you wait to get points and your points
> are retweets or favourites or new followers, so what you're doing,

> subconsciously, you are playing a game and you try to put up the best content you can so you get a favourite, a retweet or a like on Facebook. So what you're doing is that you do things to try to get them, maybe subconsciously, I figure out a way how you can get them, do you know what I mean? So I'll try to be funny or absurd, or weird so I can get those. (David, 24)

David was quite cynical in the way he presented his uses, distancing himself from social network sites while at the same time wanting to master it (what Bourdieu would describe as being ahead of the game).

Although particularly prominent in the accounts of participants with aspirations to work in the cultural and creative industries, reflexive understandings regarding social network sites uses emerged across the sample. Participants were often eager to demonstrate that they were not duped by social network sites and could 'read through' the self-promotional and contrived aspects of the platforms. Matthew, for example, put an emphasis on the contrived character of Facebook while reflecting back on it:

> People can create an atmosphere about themselves on Facebook, or they can totally diminish that atmosphere, and like I said some people only use Facebook for a specific purpose, like to share specific things, or to do things, some people give too much of themselves on Facebook, and it kind of ruins it. (Matthew, 20)

This is in accordance with Turkle (1997) and Andrejevic (2007) who argued that the potential for performing and playing with self-images on social network sites has lead users to become increasingly 'savvy'. Moreover, the persistent description of others posts and uses of social network sites as self-promotion or superficial were inscribed in processes of differentiation based on perceived life-styles. Bourdieu's (1984) work sheds light on how lifestyles, products of the habitus and read by the schemes of the habitus 'become sign systems that are socially qualified' (p.172). These processes of differentiation appeared repeatedly throughout the fieldwork and will be examined in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how young adults accounted for their practices on social network sites and how these had changed over time. These changes included the platforms that they used, their attitudes towards adding new contacts, their understandings of privacy or the types and frequency of their activities on the different platforms. This chapter argued that participants often portrayed their practices and past experiences in terms of responsibilisation, individual choice, personal development, corresponding to narratives of growing up and overlapping neoliberal discourses. The chapter then analysed how young adults in the study actively used different social network sites to manage their impressions and present an entrepreneurial and professional self. Finally, it demonstrated how some participants in the study perceived and used more proactively social network sites. In this context, the platforms were understood as tools for training for labour, effectively transformed as apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.

The next chapter explores the processes of differentiation that participants built upon when discussing their uses and understandings of social network sites in relation to how others supposedly used the platforms. It then analyses the ways in which young adults cultivated commonalities on social network sites.

Chapter Six

Social Network Sites: Practices of Distinction and Sorting

The previous chapter demonstrated how young adults in the study accounted for their practices and experiences of social network sites through narratives of growing up which overlapped with neoliberal discourses. It examined how participants' uses and understandings of the platforms were embedded in understandings of the self as an enterprise which were reflected through practices of self-government and training for labour.

The current chapter draws on Bourdieu's work to examine participants' accounts of their practices on social network sites in relation to their judgments and perceptions of how others used the platforms. By doing so, the chapter sheds light on the different processes of differentiation that young adults in the study engaged in when discussing their uses and understandings of social network sites.

In his work *Distinction; A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,* Bourdieu (1984) argued that social agents' preferences in cultural consumption (or taste) as well as the distinctions that individuals make, for instance, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, betrayed their own social positions. Indeed, as Bourdieu famously put it 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' (p.6). Social agents' location in the field of cultural consumption is relative to the types of economic and cultural capital they possess as Bourdieu explains below:

> In cultural consumption, the main opposition, by overall capital value, is between the practices designated by their rarity as distinguished, those of the fractions richest in both economic and cultural capital, and the practices socially identified as vulgar because they are both easy and common, those of the fractions poorest in both these respects. In

the intermediate position are the practices which are perceived as pretentious, because of the manifest discrepancy between ambition and possibilities. (p.176)

Aesthetic choices are therefore marked by processes of distinction (or differentiation) related to perceptions of practices, which vary between individuals in relation to the capitals they have. In the context of the current study, participants' aesthetic choices and preferences regarding social network sites as well as their perceptions of the appropriate language to use, pictures to post or the information to share were marked by these processes.

These expressed preferences and dislikes revealed participants' specific 'schemes of classification'. According to Bourdieu (1998), these classification schenes reflect 'acquired systems of dispositions, preferences and principles of vision and division' which are the products of the 'internalisation of objective structures' (p.25). Bourdieu called this 'habitus' which as a concept allows researchers to 'account for the unity of style, which unites the practices and goods of a single agent or a class of agents' (p.8). In other words, despite being individual, specific way of understanding the social world are grounded and informed by broader structures and formations such as class, gender or education.

Throughout the interviews, young adults in the current study often compared their uses of social network sites with how 'others' supposedly used the platforms. The term 'other', in this context, was often referring to people from high school or acquaintances. It was also deployed to account for how other people were perceived to use social network sites; what I referred to as 'mainstream'. Participants repeatedly characterised others' uses of social network sites using negative terms such as 'superficial', 'easy', 'cringy' and 'too personal'. Posting 'selfies' was particularly denigrated, frequently described as 'showing off'. By contrast participants tended to portray their own uses on one hand as authentic or on another hand as 'not taken too

seriously'.

The first part of this chapter examines participants' perceptions of the 'right' ways of using social network sites as well as their judgements of how others used the platforms. By doing so, it sheds light on the particular processes of differentiation which occurred in participants' accounts. These processes played out especially regarding the aesthetic impressions given away on the platforms, the language used and the expression of political opinions. These will be discussed in turn. The second part examines how participants cultivated commonalities on social network sites by customising, sorting and selecting content which was in agreement with their views or that they were interested in and by assessing shared interests and checking compatibility with prospective friends and acquaintances. These practices were based on and informed by the processes of differentiation described in the first part of the chapter as well as by the architecture and design of the platforms and neoliberal discourses emphasising choice, compatibility and customisation.

Social Network Sites: Markers of Differences

Taste is usually asserted in negative terms by the rejection or the negative judgment of the taste or lifestyle of others. Bourdieu (1984) argues that taste is the 'practical affirmation of an inevitable difference' and is asserted by the 'refusal of other tastes' (p.56). Often, participants described their uses in opposition to how others used the platforms in order to mark a difference. For instance, differences were underlined in the impressions that people were given away on social network sites by opposing 'being authentic' with 'showing off'. Accounts of the content that other people published on the platforms were marked by the same processes and often described as 'personal' or 'cringy'. Participants looked at people's photographs, the grammar and writing styles of their posts as well as the expression of political opinions on social network sites to make value judgements. This in turn sheds light on the socially

174

constructed perceptions and values that underpinned participants' understandings of specific uses of social network sites as legitimate.

Instagram, Showing Off and Selfies

Most young adults in the study understood and/or used social network sites as tools for self-presentational purposes (see Chapter Five). However, self-presentation needed to be covert and presented as casual. If self-presentational strategies were too obvious (e.g. having too many pictures or taking too many selfies), participants rejected them as superficial and narcissistic. Most participants described their own self presentational practices as authentic, often putting an emphasis on the need to avoid to show off on social network sites. Some participants based their judgements on negative perceptions of social network sites, particularly Instagram, as being part of a superficial culture. Dylan (23) argued that social media encouraged this culture:

> Researcher: how do you interact with social media when you are with your friends?
>
> I think people generally do like lots of selfies and pictures, … I mean a lot of the time, people genuinely want to remember like fun experiences but then a lot of the time I see people, they look as if like they want, because of the way social media work I guess there are so many people having a glimpse into your life they want to make it to look as exciting as possible. So they don't really... they're basically only doing it for the social media side of it, they're not doing it for kind of other possible reasons. (Dylan, 23)

Instagram was repeatedly described as a symbol of what participants perceived as the spread of a culture of superficiality and selfies. Indeed, the design of Instagram allows users to directly edit images by using filters, and the company as well as the platform encourage openly the editing of content in order to make one's images better.

Instagram was often portrayed as superficial, narcissistic as well as 'easy'. In this context, some participants felt compelled to justify their uses of Instagram and to differentiate themselves from Instagram's image of superficiality and facility. Nathan (22), for instance, described how the platform was reinforcing people's 'vanity'. It then justified his own use of Instagram by emphasising the fact that he did not 'really' use it:

> Essentially Instagram is this vanity thing, isn't it? Because they take pictures and put filters on it and they will look much better and then you know it let you think that you can't really take Instagram seriously because of this. […]
>
> Researcher: Do you have an Instagram account?
>
> I made one because I wanted to see what it is about and when I am ... like my phone is a little bit broken but it has this other app which has all the social media, Twitter, all that kind of things but like for Instagram ... like it doesn't make me in any way look at it. (Nathan, 22)

Similarly, Jessica (23) lengthily elaborated on her uses of Instagram and how these differed from the culture of superficiality that she associated with the platform. She put an emphasis on how she was genuine with it ('real') and insisted that, although she used Instagram's filters, she did not fundamentally alter her image on the platform.

> I try to be as honest as possible with stuffs like you know pictures and stuffs that I make, you know, they are real pictures, they are not, they might have been transformed on Instagram potentially but I don't try to make myself beautiful and you know whatever. And yeah I just try to be honest with who I am to show the real me over it if that makes sense? I think on Instagram, I basically use Instagram not to get followers or anything like that I just do it just because I like editing photos and it is just a very simple way of doing that, so I kind of do it more for me than for other people. Because I know certainly some people use Instagram to get lots of followers, lots of likes and everything like that. (Jessica, 23)

The values of honesty and authenticity (e.g. 'to show the real me', 'real pictures') were brought up by Jessica to contrast with perceived mainstream uses of the platform which she described as a quest for popularity and validation. This quest to get more likes or more followers was morally judged as shallow. This is in line with Bourdieu's work (1984). He argued that the ethics favoured by the 'bourgeois are based on class distinction expressed in a 'refusal of what is easy in the sense of simple, and therefore shallow, and "cheap"' and 'culturally "undemanding"' (p.486). Aaron, in the extract below, displayed such refusal and put an emphasis on how the platform was accessible to anybody as it did not require any specific skills to use it. He described it as 'a cheat' and 'easy', implicitly valorising 'genuine' photography as opposed to Instagram:

> I think Instagram is for a bench of twenty years' old who think that they are professional photographers and they are not, they only know how to use their filters. I love photography, I think it is a bit of a cheat to be honest, I mean it is only an application that you set on your phone and you can get all these different effects whereas in photography this is a skill that you need to learn and practice and it is quite annoying when these people go out and take these amazing photos. (Aaron, 20)

Similarly, Amy (22), who was studying Architecture and was not using Instagram, justified her choice as a means to differentiate herself from how 'art students' and 'other people' used the platform.

> Researcher: Do you use Instagram?

> No (laughs), no I don't. I feel I don't use any of these things, yeah... I got Snapchat really recently and I don't understand it. Err… yeah I know but I know a lot of people who use Instagram, a lot of art people and it seems to me that it is their platforms to get their art cast and other people just posting pictures of their food, I don't want to be involved in this. And I tried Tumblr as well but very briefly, I don't really use it anymore. (Amy, 22)

As Bourdieu pointed out 'explicit aesthetic choices are in fact often constituted in opposition to the choices of the groups closest in social space' (p.60). Here Amy (22) who studied in one of the local art institutions put an emphasis on how her choice of not using Instagram was explained by her lack of engagement with mainstream and 'arty' uses of the platform. In a similar way, when asked about the pictures that she posted on Instagram, Sarah (25) who worked as an IT consultant replied quickly 'definitely not selfies' as 'everyone does that'. Instead of describing what she would post, Sarah put an emphasis on what she would not post on the platform.

'Showing off' by posting a large number of pictures on social network sites, and especially selfies, was perceived by participants as superficial. In this context, some participants put an emphasis on the limited ('reasonable') amount of pictures that they had to contrast with perceived mainstream uses of social network sites. Benjamin (25), for example, defined himself as 'one of the less picture-rooted people' on Facebook and explained that he did not 'nurture' his profile. Likewise, Aaron (20) compared his uses of Facebook to his perceptions of how others use it.

> Researcher: have you experienced this side of social media yourself? [Aaron previously talked about Facebook as distracting]
>
> I wouldn't say so, I am quite timid when it comes to Facebook, obviously if my friend goes off and I got a message I'll reply but I don't go out and take photos, on my Facebook I think I have 10 photos maybe maximum, [..] Things don't have to be shared on social media platforms all the time and a lot of people obviously do that, they go on holidays straight away the first thing they do is to take photos and upload it. (Aaron, 20)

Like Aaron, other participants put an emphasis on simplicity and restraint, often in contrast to showing off and supposed superficiality. This demonstrates what Bourdieu (1984) defined as a specific "'sense of distinction" connected to the bourgeois ethics which steers them away from everything "common". (p.249). He outlined how this

sense of distinction is often translated in practice by 'discretion, sobriety and understatement as well as a refusal of everything which is "showy", "flashy" and pretentious, devaluating itself by the very intention of distinction'(p.249). This sense of distinction is visible in participants' accounts in which they stressed on how their practices differed from the mainstream or sometimes more specifically people who were 'the closest' to them in the social space. These practices read in term of cultural capital (tastes) acted as a form of symbolic capital, used to legitimate certain uses of social network sites and devaluate others as 'vulgar' and 'worthless' (see Chapter One).

Furthermore, in some of participants' accounts, the descriptions of other people's uses of social network sites were more explicitly informed by class and gender stereotypes, and in particular in relation to selfies. Amy (22), for example, explained how her friends from high school would constantly post pictures, with men 'posting pictures of their cars' and women posting selfies with a lot of make-up on. She clearly expressed her disapproval of such practices during her interview; 'why would you ever post a selfie?'. Similarly, Molly (20) described how one of her friend from her childhood who was more a 'girly girl' was posting a lot of selfies; something that Molly would not do and could not relate to. When discussed by participants, selfies were associated more frequently with women than with men. Moreover, the content posted by women on social network sites was discussed in terms of physical attributes and associated with perceptions of femininity. For instance, Lucy (24) described pictures posted by a friend in which she posed in sexy postures and was wearing 'provocative' and inappropriate outfits. These readings of femininity are inscribed within representations of class and gender and revealed expressions of female symbolic violence (McRobbie, 2004). Lucy's account resonates strongly with Skeggs's (1997) work on gender and class formation. Skeggs demonstrated how markers of femininity are always classed; for example, in the distinction between

179

'being looked at in 'admiration' and looked as a 'sexual object' (p.108). The latter reading of femininity is often attached to working class women and associated with vulgarity and lack of respectability (ibid.). Although the data does not allow to discuss significantly the gendered dimensions of young people's engagement with social network sites, the accounts highlighted above provide some evidence of a gendered reading of the uses of the platforms. Research has elsewhere demonstrated how identity performances on social network sites were gendered and sexualised (see for example Ringrose, 2011 or Cook, and Hasmath, 2014). In her work on the self-presentations of young women on social network sites, Dobson (2012, 2013) looked at how the construction of young femininity in relation to neoliberal discourses of individualisation impact on young women's self-display on the platforms (e.g. young women presenting themselves as inspirational, autonomous and entrepreneurial). This body of work sheds light not only that gender remains an important factor in structuring young women's engagement with social network sites but also that it is interconnected with broader forms of neoliberal governmentality.

Furthermore, processes of differentiation in relation 'the mainstream', often perceived as evidence of a culture of superficiality, reflect deeper social divisions. Woodman and Wyn (2014) commenting on Thornton's (1996) emblematic study *Club Cultures* have argued that certain youth cultures by defining themselves against the mainstream and its imperative to consume in specific ways, effectively 'defined themselves against was not only represented a capitalist driven and superficial pop culture but was also used as a synonym for working class or feminine culture' (p.134-135). In the current study, the idea of a culture of 'superficiality' is present in many interviews. In the data collected, the social formations such as class and gender upon which this culture is defined tended to remain occulted. However, research has evidenced that such formations still inform how young people perceive and engage with the platforms (see boyd, 2011b; Ringrose, 2011; Papapolydorou, 2014).

Young adults in the study often commented on what other people shared on social network sites as an illustration of what they would not share. Posting personal content such as writing about relationships or family issues was repeatedly described by participants as inappropriate, 'cringy' or 'cheesy'. Annie (21), for example, disapprovingly recounted how 'a lot of people' would write about their 'relationships, fights or directly put things about someone' on Facebook. In a similar way, Natalie (20) explained that people tended to 'over-share' ton social network sites and would 'keep on going on about their relationships and things, all the time'. Alex (24) recalled coming across this type of post on his newsfeed:

> There was a guy that I knew and he wrote a whole paragraph about his relationship because he just broke up with his girlfriend and I found it really cringy, I was just reading it and he was telling everything that had happened.
>
> Researcher: How did you feel about it?
>
> I just feel sorry for them that they don't ... you know I don't look them down because I've been there but I just feel sorry for them that they don't realise it, you shouldn't really, your breakup does not concern anyone. (Alex, 24)

Alex showed some empathy with people posting personal content as he used to partake in similar endeavours when he was younger. At the same time, he described details of personal relationships as something that should not be shared on Facebook as it comes across as seeking for attention (to show this Alex put an emphasis on the length of the post) and being dramatic. Alex as well as other participants often referred to personal content as 'dramas'. These perceptions were permeated by narratives of growing up and becoming responsible. Indeed, the term 'drama' was

often used by participants to account for past behaviours, typically associated with high school and teenager years (see discussion in Chapter Five). The use of the word 'cringy' further evidences the processes of differentiation playing out on participants' accounts in relation to taste. Alex (see excerpt above) and John (24) used this term to describe people who posted content about their relationships or family issues on Facebook. Bourdieu (1984) sheds an interesting light on this use. He outlined in his work how taste is often asserted by the refusal of the taste of others, and even manifested sometimes by a 'visceral intolerance ('sick-making')' (p.56). 'Cringy' expresses this refusal.

Some participants put an emphasis on the extreme mundane aspects of people's personal posting. For instance, Annie (21) described how 'a lot of people' would post about their 'eating habits or toilet habits' on Facebook. John (24) depicted some people as 'taking constant pictures of themselves wearing their dressing gowns' while Natalie (20) portrayed people who would post 'hundreds of photos' when they were 'walking their dogs'. These comments were clearly used to dismiss in an exaggerated way the everyday and mundane uses of social network sites. Bourdieu (1984) argued that people, who he identified as 'petit bourgeois' (often people who have climbed the social ladder), tended to worry more about distinction from the 'common' (or mainstream) and as a result were over-doing, betraying their own insecurities. Correspondingly, Natalie, John and Annie come from a less privileged background than other participants (based on an indication from their parents' occupations, their own occupations and their educations, see Table 1.2 in Chapter Three). While highlighting trends, the data and the nature of the sample do not allow to draw a clear conclusion regarding such class divisions. Perceptions about what was seen as appropriate to post on social network sites were not homogeneous and differences occurred between participants. By contrast with the previous accounts highlighted above, Sarah (25) expressed a taste for posting as well as watching mundane content:

I like to post photos of food a lot which I know it is a thing you're not meant to do but... I like watching picture of other people's food and things, or I'll take photos of my cat, that an important one, or just like when I am out with friends occasionally. (Sarah, 25)

Interestingly, Sarah is aware that these types of content were not perceived as legitimate and that she was not 'meant' to use Instagram in this way. This illustrates the symbolic property of social network sites uses and the legitimacy of certain uses over others.

In addition, some of participants' attitudes towards personal posting were simultaneously inscribed in feelings of repulsion and fascination. Although, disapproving of personal content, some participants found it interesting, fascinating and/or entertaining. For example, James (22) explained that he did not want to see ' drama and conflicts' on Facebook but if such content came up on his newsfeed he would 'have a quick read just for morbid curiosity'. John enjoyed very much this type of content and reported taking screenshots of this content and sharing it on WhatsApp to have a laugh with his friends. John did not find these practices problematic and understood broadly the content on social network sites as a source of information available for 'public consumption'. These accounts call for an understanding of visibility and peer surveillance on social network sites, not only in terms of social sorting but also in terms of voyeurism, entertainment and consumption, all inscribed in broader structures of symbolic and corporate power. These practices can be understood as grounded in a 'viewer society' (Malthiesen, 1997) in which the media of mass communication have transformed our ways of watching, being watched and our relations to surveillance. Several scholars have highlighted the voyeuristic and entertainment values of surveillance which are incorporated in contemporary culture and consumption (see Haggerty and Ericson, 2000, p.616, Aalbrechtslund and Dubbeld, 2005, Finn, 2012). This will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Following the logic of differentiation, participants with a more privileged

background, identified by Bourdieu as 'bourgeois', were more likely to 'aestheticize' their practices (1984, p.196). David (24) and Matthew (20)'s accounts of how they used social network sites reveal such strategies. David reported 'messing around' with Instagram, using the platform in what he described as an 'ironic' way:

> Researcher: What pictures do you post on Instagram?
>
> I take pictures of quite unconventional or strange things and maybe ... I act as if ... like I am being sort of pseudo artist if it makes sense? Like I am trying to pretend that... because on Instagram everyone is a photographer or an artist right? So what I do it is kind of a tongue and cheek way of doing it as I'll take a picture of something like... I'll put a strange photo and a caption saying something like 'the meaning of life and death' do you know what I mean? And then just because it is funny, it is sort of taking the joke out of people who take that kind of thing seriously. Because it is not real art it is just taking a picture and then putting a photo of it, it is lazy so that is kind of why I use Instagram that way. (David, 24)

David portrayed his uses of Twitter in a very similar way, emphasising on his style of 'tongue in cheek' and his personal detachment from the platform:

> I started off just doing what everyone does, which is writing about what you're doing but now I'm kind of like an absurdist Twitter user now. I always use it in a kind of tongue in cheek kind of way, I have fun with Twitter, and I don't really take it, as seriously anymore. (David, 24)

Matthew's (20) account of his uses of Twitter bears a lot of similarities with David's:

> I am a bit more of a character on Twitter, it's weird, like I experiment with sentence structures, I post stupid things, and it's usually only about two people that follow me who really appreciate the things I post on Twitter, because of a really personalised inside sense of humour. (Matthew, 20)

Both presented their uses of social network sites as casual ('not taking it seriously',

posting 'stupid things') and put an emphasis on the inaccessible and unique character of the content they posted (i.e. 'inside sense of humour', 'absurd', experimentation with sentence structures) which allowed them to differentiate their uses from the mainstream.

The majority of participants, however, did not use social network sites in the distinctive ways described by Matthew and David. Most participants put an emphasis on being impersonal and positive to contrast with what they saw and described as oversharing and/or dramatic behaviours on social network sites. Charlotte (23), for example, explained how she would only write 'funny' stories and things that are not personal on Facebook. Likewise, Lucy (24) said that she would only use 'a happy tone' and post 'positive things' on social network sites while James (22) emphasised that Facebook should only be 'positive' and 'light'. In addition, the emphasis on 'positivity' illustrates the pervasive spread among participants of understandings of social network sites as positive and productive spaces for sharing, participation and connectivity; occulting the private corporations and interests which were promoting and underpinning this terminology (see Chapter Two and Four).

Although, differences appeared in how young adults' accounts of personal content and sharing practices on social network sites, they broadly had a common representation of what was seen legitimate to share on social network sites.

Language: Writing Styles and Expressions of Opinions

An emerging theme in the interviews was participants' practices of editing posts in order to correct grammatical structures or spelling mistakes. The editing of grammar or spelling mistake was seen by participants as a legitimate 'alteration' in comparison to more substantial alterations like editing pictures. It was always described as 'a tiny thing' that was not 'that important'. The fact that these practices appeared in a large

number of interviews shows, however, that it was significant.

Bourdieu (1984) argued that 'the tendency to hyper-correction' which he described as a vigilance which overshoots the mark for fear of falling short and pounces on linguistic incorrectness, in oneself and others' (p.331), follows the logic of differentiation. According to him, it is often exercised by social agents whose social backgrounds show an upwards mobility. Individuals with this trajectory tend to develop strategies of accumulation of capitals and concerns for conformity. While it is difficult to draw significant conclusions due to the relatively homogeneous nature of the sample, the data clearly shows strategies of hyper correction conducted by some participants on social network sites.

> Researcher: Would you edit something that you posted?
>
> I don't think I would edit any post unless there is a grammatical error or something in them, yeah because that is something that would annoy me but it is not that important. (Luke, 21)

Charlotte (23) had a similar answer to this question, stating that she would not edit anything at the exception of posts with 'bad grammar' whereas Lucy (24) explained that she was 'a bit picky' with wording and would edit post to add missing commas or improve her phrasing. Data also shows clear evidence of participants assessing others' writing styles and grammar on Facebook. During the interviews, some participants reported strong judgments towards people who did not comply to the perceived 'proper' use of language. Molly (20), for instance, explained how people's writing styles revealed a lot about them. She described how she could see 'patterns' of how people write, the words or the 'sentence structures' that they used and by doing so deduced 'how intelligent' people were or if they tried to be 'snobby'. In a similar way, John (24) discussed how he assessed others' 'intelligence' through their writing styles and was also very conscious of his own grammar and writing style on social network sites:

I really hate when my grammar is not good on Facebook. Because if you go to edit it, it shows that it has been edited so it shows that you've changed it but then you don't want to delete it and restart because people have already seen it and you know you've already got some likes or comments. I like trying to have a good grammar on it.... I don't know if you should but I use it to kind of assess people intelligence sometimes as well. Especially with the referendum, everybody was getting political, everyone thought they were writing their status of their life around the referendum, but it was interesting just to read it, see how they structure their arguments, see what their grammar is like, it really gives you an assessment of kind of how intelligent they are. (John, 24)

John, in the extract above, expressed a hatred of non-conformism to grammar and linguistic rules, resonating strongly with Bourdieu's argument. John disliked even more being caught correcting his grammar or spelling mistakes, arguably as it was simultaneously an admission of a lack of capital (here what Bourdieu called linguistic capital) and contrary to his presentation of his uses social network sites as authentic, casual and spontaneous.

The expression of political opinions on social network sites was also the object of processes of differentiation as John's account has already touched upon. The current study was conducted during and in the aftermath of the Scottish Referendum on Independence which explains a certain prominence of this topic during the interviews. Participants had different views on social network sites as tools to engage in political debates or express personal opinions. Overall, participants reported to be more likely to engage in political posting and commenting on Twitter rather than on Facebook. The audience on Facebook, often composed of friends and acquaintances form a range of contexts, was described as more likely to disagree and more volatile which could lead to public embarrassment. Natalie (20), for instance, had an experience of getting into an argument about politics on Facebook and was ever since staying away from such topics.

Researcher: Do you have examples of times when you got into arguments on social media?

I did it once actually when I was in high school, but I am not proud of that, like arguing on a post on Facebook but it is because like he said something that I thought was completely wrong and he kind of got me angry and I was like 'I am going to put it right', like here is why I think you are wrong and then he was just him fighting back, it was like a backward and forth thing... but again we posted something very political and very kind of opinionated so that was going to cause drama on Facebook. (Natalie, 20)

The context of high school as well as the use of the term 'drama' reveal that this experience, for Natalie was also marked by her narrative of growing up. She hinted that getting involved in a political argument on Facebook was part of a 'youthful' behaviour which, on reflection, was not useful. Luke (21) also reported avoiding political topics on Facebook by fear of coming across as uninformed or being caught in public arguments:

When it comes to politics and obviously with the referendum and things like that... I posted a few things on Twitter but I never said anything on Facebook because it was easy for people to jump on the bandwagon and to start commenting on things and I just didn't want to get myself into the situation where someone was overpowering me or... you know making me look stupid or something. […] I think it is good that people can discuss it, I think it is good for these conversations to be hold, I suppose at the time I just thought that this has nothing to do with me and I'll never get myself involved or anything like that. (Luke, 21)

Both accounts cast light on what can be described as an abstract ideal of debating ('it is good for these conversations to be hold', 'to put it right'). This highlights a discrepancy between the value of debating that is emphasised as the 'right' thing to do and practices of avoiding topics that were perceived as potentially controversial. This

discrepancy can be explained by the public and networked character of social network sites (see boyd, 2011a) but also by processes of identification. Bourdieu (1984) in his work also discussed the idea of 'the right to speak' (p.411) which he defined as the product of both self-identification and identification by the others as competent to speak on certain issues, creating and reinforcing the legitimacy for this person to speak publicly on a specific topic. These processes of identification are, according to him, underpinned by class and gender divisions as well as educational qualifications. In this logic some participants prevented themselves to trying out Twitter as they did not think of themselves as 'political'. For instance, Eleanor (22) who was studying an undergraduate degree in language explained that she did not use Twitter as she thought it was 'a platform for cool kids' which she defined as people with specific interests and opinions and politically engaged. This illustrates what Bourdieu has called a 'sense of one's place' (1984, p.466) which in turn reflects a fit or lack of fit between participants' habitus and the social field in which their practices were taking place. In this case, Eleanor did not feel that she possessed the forms of capitals and hence the legitimacy required to engage with Twitter. Others stayed away from politics on social network sites as it was perceived as too serious and pretentious as David explained:

> Researcher: Would you tweet about politics?
>
> It depends what the subject is, if it is something which is easily understandable then yes I might tweet something about it but when it comes to big things where I don't really know what... I can't actually say something without coming across as being self-indulgent. A lot of people just talk about politics but they are talking about themselves do you know what I mean? (David, 24)

David as it was highlighted earlier used Twitter in exaggerated ways to differentiate his uses from what he perceived as mainstream. Other participants, unsurprisingly the ones with an interest in politics or with an educational background in humanities,

189

were more likely to embrace the right to speak on political matters and engage with such debates on social network sites. Jessica, Benjamin and Hugo who studied humanities, perceived themselves as mediators of debates and advocated for the use of social network sites as platforms to encourage political debates and share political opinions. Hugo (25) explained that he was 'really interested in politics' and tended to comment on political issues among which the Scottish Referendum on Independence on Facebook. Jessica (23) used Facebook to debate about issues related to LGBT rights and feminism. To do so, she was sharing articles and information in order to raise awareness about these issues:

> I remember one time I provided some statistics (laughs)… just to kind of try to raise awareness of other people who were reading the post or status. I also posted something, that was an article about feminism and this guy commented like it was pretty, like it was just, not outrageous what he was saying but just very much what I did not agree with and I to try to pace the conversation down, about getting heated somehow online I've just you know said 'each other have our own opinion' to try to bring the conversation to an end. But in a friendly way, because I did not agree with him but I… but that was fine because I think it is good to debate anyway. (Jessica, 23)

Benjamin (25) had a similar approach and used Facebook to start and engage in political debates. Likewise, Jessica, Benjamin reported sharing a range of articles and information on the platform and saw himself as a mediator who was trying to be 'as objective as possible'. Participants who reported engaging with debates on social network sites tended to engage with specific issues such as human rights or animal rights (in the context of food production) or in contextual issues such as the Scottish Referendum on Independence. This engagement with specific issues can be analysed as part of the processes of differentiation and reflects on broader lifestyles and cultural affiliations (see Webster 2001). This has been shown elsewhere. For example, in her work on young people's political consumption through technology, Ward

(2008) suggested that 'socially conscious' consumption, especially around single-issue campaigns can be understood more as a 'lifestyle choice than 'something that encompasses the realm of citizenship' (p. 518).

Although only partially, the data of the current study reveals social divisions in relation to expressing personal and political opinions in the context of social network sites. Bourdieu (1984) argued that on one side of these divisions, 'there are those who admit that politics is not for them and abdicate [..] on the other, those who feel entitled to claim a 'personal opinion' (p.414). In the context of this study, young adults' engagement with political debates on social network sites have been understood as means of differentiation and as a result underpinned by class divisions (Bourdieu, 1984). However, the specific sample of the study prevented a further analysis of these class divisions per se. It is also important to put these engagements in relation to broader relations of power, i.e. the unequal distribution of power between users of social network sites and the economic interests of private corporations that shape the engagement with the platforms. The design and architecture of social network sites, using algorithms, reinforce processes of differentiation discussed above by systematically tailoring content to users and thus shaping users' engagement with the platforms while amassing a large amount of data about them. The next part analyses how participants' practices on social network sites were embedded in social and technological sorting, encouraged by the private corporations who own the platforms as well as broader neoliberal understandings based on notions of choice, compatibility and customisation.

Cultivating Commonalities on Social Network Sites

Young adults in the study used social network sites to 'manage' their everyday lives and relationships (see discussion in Chapter Four). One aspect of this involved learning to 'actively' use social network sites and their technological capabilities in order to rank, sort and tailor information provided by the platforms. For instance, participants changed their settings on Facebook to see the content of close friends first, followed news pages on Twitter to get specific types of news or developed a network based on common interests. A large majority of participants reported unfollowing or unfriending people and/or pages that they were not interested in or perceived as irrelevant or remote from their everyday lives. This section demonstrates how young adults in the study were actively cultivating commonalities on social network sites by customising or sorting information on the different feeds of the platforms and by using them to assess shared interests and compatibility with prospective friends. These processes were underpinned by the processes of differentiation discussed above, by the architecture and design of the platforms as well as by the corporate and economic interests of the private corporations that own these platforms.

Social and Technological Bubbling: Customised Newsfeeds

Participants in the study often reported deleting or unfollowing people and pages which they described as a strategy to avoid the 'spamming' of their newsfeeds with information that they perceived as 'annoying' or 'irrelevant'. To avoid to be exposed to content that they did not want to see or were not interested in, participants customised, more or less actively, their feeds by unfriending people and/or unfollowing contacts and pages. Overall, participants were more likely to unfollow people rather than to

unfriend them in order to avoid being rude and to maintain a possibility of contact while simultaneously effectively blocking the content of people's posts on their feeds as Dylan explained:

> Researcher: Would you unfriend people on Facebook?
>
> It depends... if it is someone I have maybe no regular contact with it could be infrequent, but I kind of assume it will be every now and again, I will block [unfollow] them so they don't come up but then I've not hurt their feelings by deleting them sort of thing. Like if it was someone I knew from school but I've not really spoken to them since, like since school, I feel it is kind of a general etiquette to kind of keep them as friends because you don't want to be rude ... I am kind of keeping them there as a kind of politeness. (Dylan, 23)

Unsurprisingly, participants' customisation of their feeds and their practices of blocking content mirrored quite closely the markers of difference discussed in the previous section. Participants reported unfollowing people who would 'overshare', post selfies or express different opinions. In many ways, the customisation of their newsfeeds was an attempt to create a space that they feel was relevant for them; matching their understandings and uses of social network sites.

Oversharing was the most commonly discussed as a trigger to unfollow or unfriend people. Natalie (20), for instance, explained that she would unfollow people who would constantly post 'cheesy' pictures such as pictures of their dogs and of their food whereas Nancy (22) would hide people who post constant mundane statuses 'about their lives'. High school friends and friends from the places participants grew up were often the subjects of practices of unfollowing. Emma (22), for example, unfollowed people that she knew from high school. She explained that she did not want to hurt their feelings by unfriending them but did not want to see their posts on her newsfeed either as they were posting 'things with their friends' or things that she did not find interesting. She also reported unfriending people who she had met during

a trip a few years ago and with whom she had not direct contact any more. She felt that they were 'unlikely' to get back in touch and that their posts were remote from her life. These practices of unfollowing people from their pasts reflects on the processes of differentiation discussed earlier but also on the life stages that participants were at which were informed by their experiences of moving from school to higher education and of moving from close to broader social circles in universities (Brook 2002, 2007).

Participants also reported to unfollow pages and people with different political views, evidencing Lievrouw (2001)'s argument about the role of new media in reinforcing people's identification with narrow interests (p.22). Amy (22), for instance, reported unfollowing one of her friends on Facebook after she started posting regularly about the Scottish Referendum on Independence, adding that this person 'didn't know anything about it'. Jessica (23) reported similar practices, unfriending people who made statuses containing things such as sexist or racist comments. She explained that she just did not 'want to see that' in her feeds. These accounts are quite typical of the self-reported practices from the rest of the participants.

On the other hand, some participants actively tailored their social network sites by liking pages or joining events or groups to get specific types of information. Instead of hiding content from their feeds, these participants were adding new content and information to them. This process can be seen from a Foucauldian perspective in which power is not only about exclusion but also production and related to individuality. Indeed, participants were actively tailoring the platforms to their individual taste and needs. Emma (22) customised her Facebook feed in this way. She was diabetic and was following a range of pages to get information about recipes, healthy food and food consumption. She wanted this type of information to appear on her newsfeeds. Eleanor (22) reported adding more newspapers' pages to get the news as it was 'easier' than going on the news websites. Similarly, Benjamin (25) explained

how he used Facebook as a tool to wider his sources of information about topics he was interested in by liking specific pages focusing on environmental protection or human rights. He was also snowballing from his network to find out new pages and blogs to follow or like. Benjamin consciously used the filtering capacities of social network sites to customise his newsfeed with 'valid' information. Connor (22) also actively 'enriched' his Facebook feed by following sites which focused on the financial sector. As for Charlotte (23), she described how she wished to use social network sites in the ways Emma, Benjamin and Connor did. She wanted to use the platforms more 'efficiently' in order to get more information relevant to her. According to her, people need to use social network sites 'correctly' which included deleting friends and following more newspapers' pages. As well as illustrating imperatives of 'doing social media' (see discussion in Chapter Five), these accounts show how some participants were actively using the technological capabilities of social network sites to create a space tailored to their individual needs, drawing on neoliberal and individualistic imperatives such as choice, compatibility and customisation. It also demonstrates that these participants were aware, to a certain extent, of the impact of these technologies, their functioning and their design on their uses of social network sites.

Some participants were more critical about the role of the architecture and design of social network sites in their perceptions of certain topics or social interactions. David (24) for instance who was supporting the yes campaign during the Scottish Referendum was critical of the role of Twitter in creating homogeneous echo chambers:

> I get a lot of my news on Twitter but it is interesting because … for example during the Referendum because a lot of my followers wanted to vote yes I thought that it was the general guess for the all country. I thought it is 200 people and they all vote yes so I thought 'ok we will definitely win' and we didn't. And then I realised that there are so many

different people on Twitter that make those circles and their followers are going to be biased towards which way they believe. So I mean it is completely unreliable. (David, 24)

David questioned the effects of the design of Twitter on the content he had access during the campaign as well as how it shaped his understanding of the referendum. David also described Facebook and Twitter as a 'democratic' alternative to the 'big media outlets' which were 'controlled by corporations', completely ignoring the corporate and economic interests that shaped the platforms. David's criticism was the result of a specific personal experiences in which the technological features of the platform became apparent. However, the majority of the time, the impact of the design and features of the platforms as well as the broader corporate and economic interests that underpinned them remained undiscussed. Similarly, Nathan (22) and Natalie (20) interrogated the effects of the algorithmic functioning of Facebook in relation to social interactions on the platform:

I would be interested to find out about, you know your chat box on the right [on Facebook]? I was always interested in how they decide who turns up, because obviously the top of it I think it is people who we talk to most but then the rest it is like a lottery of people... because this pretty much dictates whom you are talking to most of the time... They appear and then you know you are like 'oh I should say something to them'. (Nathan, 22)

If you search for someone a lot, does that person comes up more regularly on your news feed or something like that, they use it that way. It is scary isn't it? […] Also I've noticed it a lot that they were you know people I have regular conversations with, like say the 10 people I interact the most in my life I've got them on my chat, but then these people with whom I've never talked to, why are you on my chat page? (Natalie, 20)

Although grasping broadly that the interface and algorithms of Facebook had an impact on their practices, Nathan and Natalie did not understand the technicalities and

criteria of the algorithmic functioning of the platform in the selection of people who appeared on the chat or on the Newsfeeds. Participants in the study either did not question the impact of the design and architecture of social network sites on their practices or had a partial understanding similarly to David, Nathan and Natalie. This evidences an unequal relationship between young adults, users of social network sites and companies such as Facebook or Twitter that designed platforms to make them economically exploitable. In her work on social media, van Dijck (2013) argues that social network sites' interfaces and features are designed to accomplish connectivity; i.e. the creation of value from user data and the sharing of this data with third parties (p.47). This aspect, absent in the accounts highlighted above was brought up by some participants in relation to surveillance and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Seven.

Sorting Friends: Common Interests and Compatibility

Social network sites and especially Facebook were used by the young adults of the study to gather information about their about contacts, acquaintances and prospective friends. These practices which predate social network sites are inscribed in broader social behaviours in which individuals seek information and social cues that would help them to define social situations and to best adjust to it. Goffman (1959) described it as follow:

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in

197

advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him.
(p.13)

While gathering information about other people has always been part of social interactions, social network sites provide technological affordances described by boyd (2011a) as persistence, replicability, scalability and searchability (boyd ,2011a) which render information more accessible and thus the conduct of profile- checking and searching practices easier. Social network sites are purposefully designed to encourage social interactions through features such as the Newsfeeds which displays updates and stories from one's network of contacts and pages or 'People You May Know' through which Facebook suggests, based on algorithms, people to contact or add to one's friend list. Technological affordances and features need to be understood in this context as neither entirely determine users' behaviours nor totally detached from users' practices. In other words, the design, architecture and technological functioning of social network sites are embedded within social practices as well as 'intricately intertwined with a changing user experience and a restyling of content' (van Dijck, 2013, p.25). This dialectical relationship between social practices and technological design and affordances (themselves inscribed in the interests of private corporations) is particularly visible in the context of profile-checking practices (see Chapter Two).

The majority of participants, throughout the interviews, discussed Goffman-like types of gathering information using social network sites, and in particular Facebook. They reported checking people's profiles on social network sites in order to get information including what people looked like, their hometowns, their schooling, their activities, their contacts, and/or their interests. This allowed participants to form or confirm first impressions about people. Some participants explained that knowing such information would make them feel more comfortable in social situations such as for example the start of university, before assigned group works with people they

were unfamiliar with or parties. Checking someone's profile allowed them to make an impression about people and to get a sense of whether or not they were likely to 'get along' with them. Luke (21), for instance, reported checking prospective friends' profiles on social network sites and explained that if he could see on their profiles that they shared interests he would make sure to 'keep that friendship going'. Dylan (23) described how he would check people's profiles to get 'a grasp of what the persons are, to see if they are somebody [he could] get along with'. Other participants described these practices as getting a 'general overview', a 'head up' the 'headlines' or a 'glimpse' about someone.

Participants were assessing common interests and compatibility not using only information such as someone's likes or the pages that they followed but by also looking at the ways in which they used the platforms (e.g. tone of posts, number of pictures, frequency of posts, etc.). In this way, impressions formed on people through profile-checking on social network sites were inscribed in the social and reflected the processes of differentiation described above. Eva (25), for example, reported looking up the profiles of some of the people with whom she was about to study. In the extract below, she explained how she was interested in looking at pictures but also the content of people's posts or the links that they shared:

> Researcher: what kind of information would you look on their profiles?
>
> I'll have a look at... mostly the things that they're saying. Err… you take maybe a quick browse to a couple of pictures, I just mostly look through what they posted or shared or liked or whatever because you kind of feel that you can get an impression of what the person is like based on what they are interested in. (Eva, 25)

David (24) described with more detail how he looked up a friend of a friend's profile after meeting him at a party:

I think he added me and I looked him up and I realised he had Twitter as well so I followed him on Twitter. But now I get more of an idea of what he is like, on Twitter he will make hashtags to make jokes, and I quite like that, people using Twitter for jokes so I'll probably get along with him. I know what kind of person he is; I know what kind of music he likes because he always posts pictures of it on Instagram. And I know that he is also politically in line with me as well which makes me like him even more because he is talking about things I agree with in a humorous sort of way. (David, 24)

David looked for commonalities with his prospective friends (e.g. a similar sense of humour, shared music taste, similar way of using Twitter) and was trying to assess subjects of potential disagreement (e.g. political beliefs). Eva and David's accounts clearly evidence the processes of social sorting which take place through profile checking on social network sites. By gathering these types of information through profile checking practices, participants were effectively assessing compatibility and shared interests with prospective friends. These assessments and perceptions resulting from profile-checking practices were formed accordingly to perceived differences in uses highlighted earlier in this chapter. In other words, profile checking practices were embedded in processes of social sorting.

While David and Eva were quite open about using social network sites in these ways, this was not the case of the majority of participants who felt more uncomfortable or self-conscious talking about it. These practices were considered by a majority of participants as superficial and embarrassing. In addition, admitting using the platforms in those ways contradicted participants' self-presentations of their uses as casual and authentic. Profile checking practices were sometimes discussed in this context as a by-product of the act of adding someone on social network sites, i.e. as a product of the design of Facebook, Chloe (22), for example, described it in these terms, explaining that she would probably look at people's profile because she would be on their profiles 'anyway'. Searching and checking are integrated in the structures

200

of the platforms and became part of everyday practices. Indeed, on Facebook, for example, the act of 'friending' requires first to search the person (either directly on search box of the platform or using common friends) or to check the authenticity of the request before accepting it. In other words, the design and architecture of social network sites facilitate and encourage searching and checking practices. It also gave participants a legitimate way of explaining their behaviours. In this context, checking profiles was usually justified as a means to verify the identity of the contact requested or added and therefore perceived as appropriate. Some scholars have argued that users are growing accustomed to surveillance practices through the enhancing capacities, algorithmic functioning and design of these platforms (Trottier, 2012). This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Furthermore, profile-checking practices in the context of personal relationships, such as before deciding to pursue a relationship or to check shared interests, were permeated by understandings of intimacy or connectivity putting a strong emphasis on individual agency, choice, selection and compatibility. Alex (24), for instance, underlined the benefits of profile-checking practices on social network sites, describing it as a useful tool to start conversations and a way to instantaneously feel comfortable with someone:

> I think it is a good thing about social media that made it more kind of break the ice between people, you know it is just back then when you did not have anything you had no clues what kind of people you meet or what people, you know somebody new or you've been to uni, so say you go to uni, you just just don't know anyone but now with social media you can go before you go to uni, you can go onto people's profiles and see what they are interested in, what they do and that kind of breaks the ice a little bit and you almost feel like, it is almost like an instant click with someone. I suppose it really breaks the ice with you know strangers and in that way it makes it more err... how would I say it? I suppose. It is good to just connect people but it doesn't mean that you know we become you know good friends with them. (Alex, 24)

Alex here argued that the technological affordances of social media can enhance relationships by giving people opportunities to develop a relationship and by creating a point of connection with people. His account is particularly interesting as it draws on progressive and positive understandings of technology as making things better and allowing 'connectivity' as well as relationships to thrive. In Alex's account, the notion of connecting with people is related to management, compatibility and choice (i.e. you do not have to become friends with them). Using social network sites to check people's profiles can be understood as a practical application of these understandings, exacerbated and facilitated by the technological affordances the platforms offer. Thus, social network sites need to be understood as technologies with specific affordances and purposeful design connected to 'deep-seated aspirations for intimate connections of choice based on trust, sharing and reciprocity' (Chambers, 2013, p.52). These aspirations correspond without accident to broader corporate interests and neoliberal discourses.

Conclusion

Drawing on the theory of Bourdieu, this chapter has examined the 'markers' of differences highlighted by young adults to distinguish their own practices from how others supposedly used social network sites. Such markers included the disapproval of selfies or practices described as oversharing, both associated with a culture of superficiality, as well as normative judgments of writing styles and expressions of political opinions on the platforms. By analysing these markers, the chapter has outline the specific processes of differentiation which were at play in participants' accounts. The second part of the chapter demonstrated how participants, more or less actively, customised their social network sites' feeds. They were in effect exercising social sorting by selecting friends, followers, pages and content that were in agreement with their existing views and personal tastes or that they perceived

'interesting' and hiding content that was seen as 'spamming' or 'irrelevant'. They also did so by using social network sites to routinely assess common interests and check compatibility with prospective friends and acquaintances. Participants used the technological features of the platforms to cultivate and create spaces which were tailored to their individual needs. These understandings of social network sites, the chapter argued are permeated by neo liberal discourses that emphasise on choice, compatibility and customisation. It also touched upon the corporate power and interests which underpinned customisation and sorting practices. Although, some participants discussed and questioned the technological features and design of social network sites in relation to the information they accessed to or their social interactions, the corporate interests of the companies that own the platforms as well as how these shaped the design of the platforms remained largely unquestioned.

The next chapter analyses in further details profile-checking and monitoring practices conducted by young adults on social network sites. It examines participants' attitudes towards governmental surveillance, professional vetting and corporate data profiling in relation to social network sites. The chapter then explores young adults' understandings of peer monitoring and profile-checking, demonstrating that participants simultaneously disassociated these practices from offline stalking (associated with voyeurism and harassment) and reconstructed them in the context of Facebook as a form of entertainment, a by-product of the platform design and a normal way of interaction.

Chapter Seven

Interactivity as Surveillance: Monitoring and Profile-Checking on Social Network Sites

The previous chapter has examined the processes of differentiations that played out in participants' uses and understandings of social network sites as well as their practices of customisation which were shaped by the technological affordances of the platforms and broader neoliberal discourses.

The current chapter analyses how monitoring and profile-checking have been permeated by values promoted by private corporations, facilitated by the design and technological affordances of the platforms as well as nourished by broader neoliberal discourses. All of which have reshaped understandings of interactivity on social network sites as surveillance. Throughout the chapter, profile-checking practices refer to the array of strategies deployed by participants to find information about someone using social network sites.

A large amount of research has been conducted on the multiple dimensions of surveillance in contemporary society (see Chapter Two). Surveillance has been said to become ubiquitous and exacerbated by the development of digital technologies, enabling an easier and faster access to information and increasing capacities for storage and searching information. Social network sites offer such technological capacities where information becomes persistent, replicable, scalable and searchable (boyd and Marwick, 2011). Describing the expansion of digital technologies which amongst other things enable surveillance, David Lyon (1994) suggested that we are the witnesses not only of a quantitative shift but also of a qualitative shift (p.56). Following Lyon, the current study aims to provide insights into this qualitative shift and to understand monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites

not solely as a technological by-product but also as embedded in the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of contemporary society.

In order to do so, this chapter first analyses participants' attitudes towards governmental surveillance and corporate data profiling on social network sites, showing how both forms of monitoring were taken for granted and integrated as a normal form of participation. It then examines the forms of peer monitoring on social network sites which were perceived legitimate or appropriate by participants, such as family monitoring and prospective flatmates' profile-checking. It argues that these practices were understood in the context of family and flat shares within the frameworks of care, risk management and individual responsibility which justified and normalised monitoring practices on social network sites. Lastly, the first part of the chapter looks at participants' understandings of profile-checking and monitoring practices in the context of work. In this context, monitoring was often understood as part of neoliberal discourses focusing on transparency and accountability. The different forms monitoring, highlighted in the first part, illustrate the diffusion of an underlying culture of monitoring permeated by values promoted by private corporations and legitimated by broader neoliberal discourses.

The second part of the chapter first focuses on participants' understandings and practices of profile-checking and monitoring on social network sites in the context of romantic relationships. It argues that these practices have been permeated by values putting an emphasis on choice and compatibility. The part then examines closely participants' understandings of stalking in the context of social network sites and in particular Facebook highlighting how these practices were socially constructed and morally charged. It then demonstrates how some participants' disassociated their understandings of profile-checking and monitoring on social network sites from offline stalking (associated with voyeurism and harassment) to reconstruct them in the context of Facebook as a form of entertainment and a normal way of interaction.

An Underlying Neoliberal Culture of Monitoring

This section examines the neoliberal culture of monitoring which underpinned participants' understandings of profile-checking and monitoring practices on social network sites. It first explores participants' perceptions of governmental surveillance and corporate data profiling on the platforms, which often were unquestioned and seen as an avoidable side of participation. This demonstrates the impact of broader forms of power in the shaping of young adults' understandings. It then investigates the other contexts in which monitoring was perceived legitimate; that is in the context of family or prospective flat-shares. These legitimacies were built upon narratives of care and/ or risk management. Finally, this section examines participants' understandings of professional vetting and monitoring exercised in the context of work, arguing that although not always seen as appropriate, this type of surveillance had become normalised in an increasingly competitive and individualised labour market.

Governmental Surveillance and Corporate Data Profiling

Governmental surveillance on social network sites was only sparsely touched upon by participants or totally omitted throughout the interviews. Only Nathan (22) and Eva (25) alluded to it. Nathan defined his attitude towards such surveillance as 'realistic' and broadly justified it as means to prevent and fight against crime:

> You know the all NSA spying thing, a couple of years ago? I mean everyone knew what was going on, I feel more realistic like how are you going to detect people doing things wrong if you don't detect things? (Nathan, 22)

Eva adopted a similar attitude towards surveillance from governments and corporate monitoring, accepting both without much questioning:

> Researcher: do you know what your privacy settings are on Facebook?
>
> Yeah I have err ... something related to friends, just friends and then I have something related to friends of friends. I don't get too fussy about it; I know you know there has been a lot of big ramble about collecting information over Facebook whenever by the government or corporations but I don't really get that fussy about it. (Eva, 25)

Interestingly, both Nathan and Eva insisted on the discrepancy between the important media coverage received by revelations of governmental surveillance (e.g. 'big ramble' 'the all spying thing') and their own expectations, hinting over-exaggeration. Throughout the interviews, governmental surveillance was mostly unacknowledged by participants or briefly alluded to without questioning it, demonstrating how top-down surveillance was seen as legitimate and/or as a fact of life. This resonates with research which had looked at public perceptions of personal data collection by governments or CCTV cameras and shown that these types of surveillance were mostly taken for granted and integrated in the everyday (Lyon, 2002b).

Data profiling by corporations was discussed by a larger number of participants. Lucy (24), for instance, explained how 'people take your information to try to sell you things'. She accepted it in a pragmatic way as this was 'happening anyway' whether she liked it or not. Similarly, Benjamin (25) put an emphasis on how he was 'aware of the fact' that Facebook collected his data and sold it to third party companies. This was expressed as cold hard facts. Benjamin and Lucy's attitudes towards corporate data profiling were broadly representative of the attitudes of other participants. Data profiling was taken for granted and accepted by most participants as an unavoidable flip-side of participation on social network sites, evidencing the asymmetrical relation between corporations and users' choices.

A few participants were critical of corporate data profiling. James (22), for example, questioned the monopoly of few companies on the Internet:

> Most Internet traffic tends to go to like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google or whatever and I think it is a bad thing, we should be more varied. I would rather Facebook wasn't; the power wasn't concentrated in hands of so few companies to make money but I still think if I forget about that it is generally positive. (James, 22)

Despite these critiques, James saw Facebook as having an overall positive impact. In addition, by putting aside the fact that these companies exercised a monopoly, James accepted such situation as self-evident. Similarly, Dylan (23) although disapproving of the progressive transformation of Facebook as 'a marketing platform for companies' described this shift as unavoidable:

> It seemed that it [Facebook] just deteriorated to a new marketing platform for companies and like I think that was always like that but that the balance has shifted so now it is more centred on how can I talk about my products as much as possible to as many people as possible. I think Facebook becomes more about promoting companies than actually social interactions. It is companies using people to network, to sell their products, that is what I feel like. (Dylan, 23)

Dylan's account reveals how social relationships (i.e. connectedness) have been turned into commodities, illustrating what van Dijck (2013) has analysed as a culture of connectivity in which social interactions have become a source of profit by refining behavioral and profiling data (see also Fuchs, 2011). Dylan's interactions with his friends on the platforms were means for Facebook to create values and make profits. Although apparent to him, Dylan continued to engage with social network sites as most of his friends were using the platform (see Chapter Four). In a similar way, Matthew (22) adopted a pragmatic attitude towards corporate data profiling, explaining that in order to use social network sites you 'have to sell your

information':

> Facebook is very good but it comes with a baggage, and we accept the terms and conditions ... so that is a service, it is free but you, kind of have to sell your information and your activity as a sort of compromise... which is sad but which I have accepted obviously (laughs).
>
> Researcher: have you read the terms and conditions?
>
> I have skimmed over them and I've heard about what other people have read and they've brought things up so, err… things like it is usually things with cookies err... analysing activity, like information being valuable because investors who are interested in doing marketing and things like that... so I sometimes refrain from liking stuff for that reason. (Matthew, 22)

Matthew, like most participants, perceived corporate data profiling as an acceptable compromise (i.e. he gave his personal data in exchange of free access to the platforms). However, Mathew's account sheds light on the unequal power relations between individual decisions and corporate power; this exchange is not equal. Matthew, although aware and critical of the economic interests of platforms such as Facebook, described the platforms as useful and good, accepted data profiling as an unavoidable condition of participation and consented to the terms and conditions of the platforms without reading them (see also discussion Chapter Five about privacy settings). Corporate power was exercised in each of his decisions. Firstly, as a monopoly which made participation on Facebook almost mandatory, and secondly by obscuring the exact ways of how personal data is collected through the platform as well as making inaccessible to users the terms of uses of the site (see Meiselwitz, 2013).

Matthew, in the excerpt above, also reported occasionally refraining himself to like pages as a tactic to reassert his power to choose, evidencing some degrees of resistance. However, this resistance was embedded with the broader functioning of

corporate power. In a similar vein, Olivia's (23) approach to corporate data profiling was especially interesting regarding the power-relations between users of social network sites and the private corporations which own the platforms. Not only, she was aware of corporate data profiling on social network sites but was trying to unmask the targeted advertisements which resulted from it:

> Facebook would give me like very personalised ads that I find really funny because like, they know that I have been I don't know to some event or something like films and like for a week that will be just movies. (Olivia, 23)

In actively noticing targeted advertisement, Olivia felt that she was the one who was fooling Facebook or Google and their algorithms. She described corporate data profiling as entertaining and 'funny' and playfully engaged with it. Play, in this context, can be understood as a way of making people familiar with and rendering legitimate uses of technology which might be otherwise controversial. In her work on facial recognition technologies, Ellerbrok (2011) argued that the playful integration of these technologies on Facebook through the function 'tagging' participated to the legitimation, normalisation and intensification of facial recognition, a technology which was previously controversial (e.g. associated with airport security). Ellerbrok defined play in this context as the 'light-hearted use of a technology or technological system for purposes of personal entertainment, amusement, or fun' (p.537). In the extract above, Olivia engaged playfully with corporate data profiling as something fun and entertaining. In this way, corporate data profiling is being normalised through interactivity and play while at the same time obscuring the broader unbalanced power relations in which this type of monitoring takes place. Even though, Olivia was aware of and sometimes engaged with data profiling in a playful manner, her practices were embedded in power relations in which private corporations had a definite advantage (e.g. through the design of the interfaces, opt-out privacy settings, etc.). For example,

210

later in her interview, Olivia explained how she discovered that the locations she has been too since she bought her iPhone were systematically recorded on it through the GPS function without her consent:

> The other day, I found like that weird location thing on my iPhone so like you can see where I have been for ever since getting a phone. And like it shows me like, it knows like it labels my house 'home' because I spend the nights there but that is creepy, I don't know, I thought it was interesting. I kind of liked looking at it, like where I have been, I'd be like 'where is this?' 'why I was like here?' (laughs). I think it is kind of cool. But I think I am the only person who can see it, I mean I am pretty sure that iPhone probably takes the information but they are not like stalking me in a way that would make me uncomfortable. (Olivia, 23)

Olivia's account reveals some of the ambiguities that participants expressed towards corporate data profiling. Firstly, Olivia showed a broad awareness that private companies such as Apple were collecting her data but was not aware of how they were practically doing it, i.e. she did not know that her GPS locations were been recorded. When discussing it, she described it as 'weird' or 'creepy' but also as 'cool' and 'interesting'. Olivia was fascinated by the data collected about herself and tried to recount where she was in each instance, actively interacting with surveillance processes. Similarly, to noticing personalised advertisement, she engaged with data profiling in a playful way. Olivia's account evidences the entering of fun and game in everyday uses and understandings of corporate data profiling. In her work Whitson (2013) showed how increasingly intrusive surveillance practices are propagated 'under the banner of fun and play' and facilitated by processes of gamification, which have moved from video-games to non-game spaces, including social network sites. By providing users with playful design and feedback mechanisms, the private corporations which own the different platforms can amass a large amount of personal data from their users. In other words, the technological affordances, feedback

mechanisms and playful designs of social network sites encourage their users to engage with surveillance and self-surveillance through features aimed to quantify and gamify the everyday and which in turn normalise monitoring practices. Moreover, the fact that Olivia described these practices as 'stalking' but 'not in a way that make her uncomfortable' demonstrates how the meanings of the word 'stalking' have reshaped by corporate and commercial data profiling. Olivia, in her account, normalised these practices in the context of corporate data profiling which can encourage what Trottier (2012) described as a 'surveillance creep' in which surveillance practices are spread from one context to another (this will be discussed later in the chapter). Olivia saw data profiling in ambiguous ways, as playful as discussed above but also as convenient (e.g. to discover products tailored for her needs), fascinating (e.g. in accessing a quantified overview of her activities or geographical locations) and at times invasive. This reveals that although she was reflexive about data profiling, her uses of the platforms were still deeply inscribed in unequal power relations.

The accounts highlighted above showed that although participants did not necessarily agree with the collection of personal data by governments and by private corporations, such practices were often taken for granted and seen as part of using social network sites. Interestingly, young adults were trained to be anxious about potential risks of social network sites, especially regarding privacy and information disclosure (see Chapter Five), however the potentially harmful behaviours of private corporations which systematically collect and use their personal data to target advertisements and make profits was mostly unquestioned. Taken together, the arguments developed in this section evidences the unequal and asymmetrical relationship between participants' uses and understandings of social network sites and the corporate interests that were shaping their practices.

Legitimate Monitoring: Care and Risk Management

Profile-checking and monitoring practices were often described by young adults in the study as practices of care and risk management, two frameworks which illustrate the diffusion of neoliberal discourses in understanding and legitimating these practices.

Social network sites, especially Facebook, were spaces for family scrutiny, from parents, siblings or relatives. As a result, young adults in the study actively managed their information in relation to this audience, for instance by deleting pictures on which they appeared inebriated (see also Chapter Five). In this context, Hugo (25) explained how he became more careful with the information he posted following an argument with his mother following a Facebook post:

> We went out one night and one of my friend posted a photo of me drunk and my mum was like 'when was this, why are you doing stuff like that?' I was trying to explain that I went out. I don't like you know having parents on Facebook (laughs). They will be like I am partying too much; I am not studying, just because a friend posted a picture so I have to be careful. (Hugo, 25)

Similar stories emerged throughout the interviews, confirming previous research who found that young people often negotiate privacy on social network sites in relation to parents and relatives (Pascoe, 2010, boyd, 2011a, Marwick et al, 2010). As well as the management of information in accordance with this audience in mind, social network sites generated a greater accountability to family members for participants, as Hugo's story exemplified. Although described by some participants as 'annoying' or disliked, monitoring on Facebook by family members, and in particular parents, was accepted as a normal part of these relationships. It was perceived by participants as both forms of care and control as Amy explained:

Researcher: Do you know about your privacy settings on Facebook?

Amy: yeah I made sure of that when I added my mum (laughs)
Researcher: (laughs) when did you add your mum?

I think when ... It was after I went to university but it was when my sister left the country. […] At some point my mum pressured my sister to friend her and I know that my mum uses it to spy on us, to just check that we are okay and to talk to us. (Amy, 22)

Amy put an emphasis both on care ('to check that we are ok', 'to talk to us') and at the same time control ('pressured', 'to spy on us', set up more privacy settings). Family monitoring when emerging in the interviews was often understood both as a form of care and a form of control as Amy's account illustrates. Incidentally, research has shown that parents use social network sites and mobile phones to monitor their children and to expand their parental control (Green, 2002; William and William, 2005, Chambers, 2013, boyd, 2014). Research has also started to unpack the social impacts of such surveillance practices on young people's experiences of accountability, risks, responsibility and trust (McCahill and Finn, 2010, Rooney, 2010) which simultaneously deny young people opportunities to trust and to be trusted and normalise the uses of technology as parenting, caring and risk avoidance technologies. Often, parental monitoring as well as monitoring in the context of school were justified or read by participants in the current study in relation to risk-avoidance and risk management which reflect broader neoliberal discourses (Monahan, 2006).

Using the terminology of care and responsibility, some participants described instances in which they were scrutinising activities of their relatives on social network sites. Eleanor (22), for example, 'reported' her cousin to his parents after she saw pictures of him, binge drinking with his friends. She described how the situation made her feel uncomfortable but that she felt that she had to do it.

I got a young cousin who was about 15, 16 at the time and he started taking pictures like drinking alcohol and things like that. So as older cousin and with my other cousin we were like speaking about it on Facebook like "should we say something to his parents?" and things like that; which we did. When you see your younger cousin posting things that you wouldn't like to know about, this is another aspect of social media, it is like I don't want to be that person, I don't want to do these kind of things. (Eleanor,22)

This incident was clearly bothering Eleanor and she felt comfortable with using social network sites in this way. In the excerpt, she is attempting to put on the responsibility onto the design of the platform which informed her of something she did not want to know. However, ultimately monitoring is justified under the narratives of care, risks and responsibility. The accounts above showed how these practices were underpinned by neoliberal forms of governmentality which put an emphasis on 'the responsibilisation of citizen-subjects to take on the challenges of self-management and risk avoidance'(Andrejevic, 2005, p.485). The same types of governmentalities can be found in profile-checking practices directed towards prospective flatmates.

Checking social network sites' profiles of prospective flatmates was reported by approximately a third of participants in the study. In this context, participants often described monitoring and profile-checking as means to be 'on the safe side' and 'make sure' that prospective flatmates were trustworthy. Benjamin (25) and Dylan (23), for instance, reported checking information about prospective flatmates on Facebook, including where they were from, which schools they attended or the places they worked at. In this context, profile-checking was perceived to a certain extent as legitimate as means to manage risks. In a similar way, Annie (21) described how she looked up on Facebook a friend of friend who she was going to host for a night. Given the context, she felt that she 'had to find out about her through Facebook' beforehand. In other words, Annie wanted to avoid risks by getting more information about this person. Andrejevic (2007a) contended that these practices are nourished by processes

similar to peer vouching and reviewing. Likewise, Westcott and Owen (2013), in their study about friendships on Twitter, described such practices as 'vouching' and transferring 'trust' via lateral surveillance processes (p.321) exemplifying the new kind of trust that surveillance has been said to entail (Lyon, 2002a). Understandings of profile-checking and monitoring practices as 'vouching' as well as pre-emptive checks are deeply embedded in neoliberal discourses putting an emphasis on individuals' responsibility to proactively anticipate and manage risks.

However, while being routinely conducted, looking up the profiles of prospective flatmates was not unanimously perceived as socially acceptable. On the contrary to Dylan and Annie, Luke (21) who looked up his flatmate on Facebook prior to their first meeting felt uncomfortable with it, perceiving it as deceptive. In the interview, he recalled how knowing more about his flatmate made him more confident about sharing a flat as he noticed that he shared similar taste in music and a similar sense of humour (see also Chapter Six on compatibility). However, this is precisely what he experienced as deceptive. Similarly, Benjamin (25) mentioned similar 'checks' and perceived it 'a borderline thing to do':

> We were looking for a new flatmate and we were on Facebook, we just wanted to know, it is not so much that you would use that against the person but it is kind of … to know a bit of background you know, like kind of… preparing yourself for whatever person might be coming in, although it is just like it is … it is always kind of a borderline thing to do but… I wouldn't use it as kind of cliché thing like when you go on a date or something and then you would look up the person, I wouldn't do that. (Benjamin, 25)

In the excerpt above, Benjamin carefully justified his behaviour putting a strong emphasis on the fact that he would not have used this information 'against the person' and only checked people's profiles in a superficial manner. Benjamin revealed through this example his broader perceptions of the legitimacy of monitoring and profile-

216

checking on social network sites. Under some conditions it was seen as acceptable (e.g. in the context of flat share to get basic information) and under other circumstances unacceptable or socially stigmatising (e.g. using information against someone, in the context of dating). These perceptions varied from participants to participants. However, in the context of care or risk management monitoring practices were perceived broadly as justifiable, and even justified. This substantiates to some extent Andrejevic's (2007a) argument that:

> We are becoming habituated to a culture in which we are all expected to monitor one another, and to deploy surveillance tactics facilitated at least in part by interactive media technologies, in order to protect ourselves and our loved ones and to maximise our chances for social and economic success (p.239).

While participants were certainly deploying surveillance tactics in all these areas, the latter was not perceived by all participants as socially acceptable (e.g. strategic uses) while the former was (e.g. protective and preventive uses).

Professional Vetting: Accountability and Transparency

In the context of professional vetting, profile-checking practices were usually understood by participants as a means to establish the professionalism and reliability of candidates. People, therefore, who were too fearful of these checks were seen to have something to conceal. Given these understandings, the commonplace argument 'I have nothing to hide' appeared many times in participants' accounts. Dylan (23), for instance, recalled how people in his entourage changed their names on Facebook. According to him, 'a lot of people did that when they were looking for jobs as they were scared that employers find about their dirty secrets (laughs).' Taking the example of one of his friend who set up his profile to 'ultimate privacy', Dylan explained that

217

he found his friend's behaviour 'strange', reading it almost as an admission of guilt. In the same line, John (24) pointed out that people which restricted drastically the access of their profiles had 'probably something to hide'. As for Amy (22), she recalled how one of her colleague was 'hiding absolutely everything' and how people 'couldn't even search for his name'. According to her, it was because 'his page was full of pictures of him getting drunk all the time'. This strongly resonates with van Dijck's (2013) argument about understandings of 'privacy'. Van Dijck contended that privacy was increasingly used 'in contrast with openness' and has become associated with 'opacity, non-transparency and secrecy' (p.46). Charlotte (23) showed such understandings of privacy. She explained that she did not want to restrict her privacy settings as she did not want 'to go crazy' and that if you wanted 'to stay on social media you have to be open'. This legitimated a culture of monitoring reinforced by neoliberal values focusing on accountability, responsibility and transparency as well as by the common idea that if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear about unexpected checks by employers.

The term 'scrutiny' is useful to shed more light on participants' understandings of monitoring on social network sites in the context of work. Scrutiny originates from Latin 'to search' and is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as a 'critical observation or examination'. Being 'under scrutiny' is often related to notions of assessment, transparency and accountability. These notions resonate with Foucault's work on disciplinary power in which the concept of examination is essential. The examination imposes normalising judgements and 'transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power' (p.184). Some participants adopted pre-emptive behaviours to manage scrutiny by work colleagues and employers on social network sites. It was perceived as a way to stay away from potential issues, even when 'having done nothing wrong'. These practices evidence how the responsibility to demonstrate that one is trustworthy and righteous was continuously put onto individuals. Drawing on

218

Foucault, Gane (2012) underlined that techniques of examination and measurements such as audits demonstrated 'a shift from government based on trust to a new regime of accountability' (p.626). Professional vetting on social network sites can be understood as an informal audit, illustrating the pervasion of neoliberal ideology blurring the distinction between work and leisure. In this context, some participants reported being cautious of the 'connections' that could be made from their different activities on social network sites. For instance, Annie (21), who worked as an auxiliary nurse, reported that she would not post on Facebook when she went out during her free time. She explained that she did not want to post things that can 'be held against her' in the context of work such as for example pictures of night-outs prior to a work-shift. Likewise, Natalie (20) worried about what employers could work out from different pieces of information on social network sites. Her concerns partly rested on her own personal experiences of finding out and corroborating information from looking up people's profiles on the platforms. This illustrates the complex ways in which monitoring and profile-checking practices were entangled in different contexts and experiences. Profile-checking practices were not only, as Andrejevic (2007a) argued, the result of the creeping of political and corporate understandings of monitoring in the private realm (i.e. institutional surveillance through employers) but also a by-product of experiences of peer- to peer surveillance on social network sites (Trottier, 2011). In this way, Natalie's concerns regarding professional monitoring were also constructed by her personal experiences of looking up people from her social circle. This sheds light on how participants both played the part of the watcher and the watched across personal and professional contexts, rendering understandings of monitoring and profile-checking practices ambiguous and pervasive.

The possibility of being scrutinised by prospective or current employers was taken for granted and even expected by young adults in the study. Although participants did

not necessarily agree or feel comfortable with these practices, they perceived them as characteristic of the contemporary labour market. Alice (22), for example, acknowledged how professional vetting was 'happening now', even though she did not like it. Participants, in particular the ones who had ambitions in the cultural and creative industries, perceived that it was expected from them and essential for their prospects to appear professional on social network sites to evidence personal skills and trustworthiness as an extra asset in increasingly competitive labour markets (see also discussion in Chapter Five on training for labour).

Monitoring and Checking: Isn't it What Facebook is for?

Quantitative research has shown that profile-checking, searching and monitoring practices through social network sites are becoming commonplace (Lampe et al., 2006, Ellison et al., 2007, Madden and Smith, 2010). However, these studies have not explored in depth the legitimacies in which these practices are inscribed. Only a few qualitative empirical studies have focused on everyday experiences of peer surveillance on social network sites, described as 'social', 'peer-to-peer' 'lateral' or 'horizontal' surveillance (Andrejevic, 2005, 2007a; Lyon and Trottier, 2011, Trottier, 2012, Marwick, 2012) (see Chapter Two). This section draws on this body of research which has received only marginal attention in Youth Studies. Andrejevic's work is particularly insightful as an analytical framework to examine young adults' understandings of social network sites, in which 'surveillant' practices were often depicted.

The previous section of this chapter has demonstrated how participants in the current study were aware and taken for granted corporate data profiling as well as professional vetting. Participants, in this way, were pragmatic but not dupes of these types of monitoring. In his work, Andrejevic (2007a) argued that the political and

'commercial deployment of interactivity as an information gathering strategy' has spread into the private realm (p.213). As a result, the public has become habituated to interactivity as surveillance in which 'forms of monitoring that might have once been considered borderline stalking have become commonplace and routine' (p.228). In this context, this section examines participants' understandings of peer-to-peer monitoring on social network sites. It argues that their perceptions of these practices were shaped by the private interests of corporations that own the platforms as well as inscribed in broader forms of neoliberal governmentality.

The first part investigates how profile-checking and monitoring practices in the context of dating and romantic relationships were normalised by participants throughout the interviews. It then examines the meanings that participants ascribed to peer monitoring on social network sites, often described 'Facebook stalking'. The last section analyses how profile-checking and monitoring practices are becoming normalised on social network sites through the lens of play and values promoted by private corporations such as openness and sharing which encourage surveillance as a form of interactivity.

Digital Dating: Checking and Monitoring Romantic Partners

Profile-checking practices were extensively reported by young adults in the study in romantic contexts including to find out about dates, current and ex-partners. David (24), for example, described how he used Facebook to find out the relationship status of girls he was interested in:

> Researcher: do you have examples of when you would do this? [check people's profiles]
>
> It is much more like before I have a girlfriend, I used it for sort of relationship things as well or love interests so you'll see if I met a girl at a party I knew her name, it is the same as asking for a number now,

you just add her on Facebook so I'll add her on Facebook and I'd go on her Facebook profile and see if she is in a relationship. (David, 24)

Profile-checking practices on social network sites were discussed by some participants as a normal part of the dating process. These practices were used to gain an impression about someone as well as to find common interests to start conversations. Dylan (23), for instance, recalled how he looked up his prospective girlfriend's profiles on Tumblr and Instagram to get to find out more about her. Likewise, Aaron looked up his girlfriend's social network profiles to find out more about her when they were dating:

> When I met with my ex-girlfriend, I obviously didn't know her prior to that, so I added her on Facebook, so I looked to see what books she is into, what films she is into, just so I could create a conversation, create interests and discuss interesting topics because obviously you don't want to come across as boring and to have nothing to talk about so if I was to meet a woman for example who I am interested in I would definitely go onto her profile and see her interests. (Aaron, 20)

Aaron and Dylan understood profile-checking as a normal thing to do 'in preparation' prior to meeting people in the context of dating. In a similar way, Charlotte (23) reported looking up people's profiles on social network sites to gain an impression before going on dates:

> I remember going on a date with someone who I haven't met before and I found him on Facebook (laughs). It is really interesting when I think about it like it is quite strange because like the way you kind of... I mean it would put you completely off surely if there were anything like any pictures or anything like that would just give a bad impression. (Charlotte, 23)

Charlotte also understood profile-checking on Facebook as a normal part of dating but contrarily to Dylan and Aaron, she was more reflexive about these practices and the

222

impacts of social network sites in creating first impressions about someone. Similar accounts regarding profile-checking in the context of dating emerged throughout the other interviews, providing empirical evidence to previous research which highlighted similar trends (Pascoe, 2010, Gibbs, et al., 2016). Chambers (2013) highlighted how social network sites were 'effective tools' to gain an impression and discover more about romantic interests (p.124). In this context, she contended that 'the fluidity and choice apparently offered by online dating fits in neatly with today's new ethos of elective intimacy' (p. 139). Discourses emphasising choice and compatibility (e.g. checking 'common interests') permeated and shaped participants' understandings of profile-checking practices on social network sites in the context of dating. This arguably can also be explained by the expansion of dating websites and apps and the exacerbation of commodification of relationships that ensued (see Hobbs et al, 2016).

Andrejevic's (2007a) work sheds more light on the data of the current study. According to him, users have learnt that 'appearances can be deceiving' and as a result have grown 'reflexively savvy' about social network sites. In this context, 'one way of assessing the behind the facade reality of potential friends/dates is to bypass face to face interaction and conversation by going straight into forensic examination' (p.233). This was reflected in the data of the current study. Very aware of the constructed characters of social network profiles, Dylan, Aaron and Charlotte looked up prospective dates' profiles in order to gain an impression about them and as conversation starters, but also to assess the 'real' character of their dates as ways of avoiding deception and maximising chances. Dylan (23), for instance, described Facebook in terms of compatibility and optimisation:

> Like if you go on a night out and meet someone and get their number and then you meet afterwards, but you don't really remember what this person looks so it makes it like a blind date but because of Facebook and stuff, you can search her on Facebook and see 'ok she is good looking so I'll keep talking to her' so yeah the all kind of big... like

suspense over it has been totally eradicated. And it also means that you can also like before meeting up you can tell if you have anything in common, so if you don't have things in common, it is not going to work out so you don't have to put yourself into the drama of the first date. (Dylan, 23)

Dylan here emphasised how profile-checking in the context of dating were useful to assess compatibility and reduce deception. His understanding of these practices have been permeated by neoliberal forms of governmentality in which relationships, and in particular prospective love interests, have to be optimised and fully chosen, and risks of deception, waste of time or failure reduced.

Practices of monitoring in the context of dating were also gendered. Data in the current study showed that young men in the study tended to describe profile-checking in more sexualised and visual ways than young women. Dylan (23), for instance, described how he would search profiles of 'hot girls' he met at parties and 'check them out' with his friends. Similarly, Alex (24) recalled how he used to look up profiles of girls that they found attractive with his friends:

At my work some guys that show you pictures of a girl or something that they don't know but know from a friend and I would just find it very weird that they're showing me that they look at someone else profile they don't know, and they are looking at it in a kind of more sexual way as well, you know like 'she is hot', like that is weird. But I did it back then when I was like 19, 20, I would go on someone else's profile so maybe I find them hot or something (Alex, 24)

Alex, on the contrary to Dylan felt uncomfortable with such practices. To distance himself from them, he connected his past behaviours to processes of growing up (e.g. 'back then') and described them as problematic. Unfortunately, due to limited time, the gendered aspects of monitoring practices on social network sites have not been fully explored throughout the interviews. However, research has shown that social network sites can play an important role in reproducing existing gender stereotypes. For

example, research has evidenced that the ways users of social network sites create and perform identity on Facebook or MySpace are highly gendered in relation to social pressure on young women to display a sexy and attractive image (Cohen and Shade, 2008; Magnuson and Dundes, 2008; Ringrose 2010; Dobson, 2011b). Dylan and Alex's accounts displayed such gender representations and showed how for example female profile pictures (and especially selfies) were tuned into commodities (see Iqani and Schroeder, 2016).

A few participants described the impacts of monitoring practices on social network sites on their current relationships. Poppy (21), for example, explained how she prevented herself from checking her boyfriend's profile including looking at people he friended or events he was going to, as it caused her anxiety and made her feel jealous. Poppy's experience illustrates how the technological affordances of social network sites as well as the design of the platforms impacted on her relationships by exacerbating jealousy and anxieties. This is in line with data presented by Muise, Christofides and Desmarais (2009) who demonstrated that Facebook contributes to experiences of jealousy in romantic relationships and creates a 'feedback loop whereby heightened jealousy leads to increased surveillance of a partner's Facebook page' (p.443). Checking and monitoring practices on social network sites in the context of romantic relationships were described by participants as 'side effects' of the platforms. Expectations regarding the monitoring of one's romantic partner were also reshaped by these technological affordances. Some participants, for instance, were 'expecting' to be monitored on social network sites by their current partners or after a break-up. Molly (20) described how her ex-boyfriend monitored her activities on Tumblr her after they broke up:

> I was stalked a couple of times but like it was never intense, it was just you know kind of like for example my ex would like find out my Tumblr profile and like. and I'll be like posting on Tumblr and he

would be like 'ow by the way' and he would mention things that I mentioned on Tumblr, 'How did you know that?' … like you know he would check like little details like when I have been online on other social media which is why I try to be offline or invisible on most of the things. (Molly, 20)

By describing it as not 'intense' and at the same time explaining how he 'would check every little detail', Molly's account reveals how she was expecting this type of monitoring after a break-up and accepting her ex-boyfriend's behaviours. Molly's account is in accordance with evidence suggested by research on digital technology and stalking. Previous research has shown that information and communication technologies among which social network sites were used, predominantly by men, in intimate partner stalking and in the context of domestic abuse (see Woodlock, 2016). Melander (2010) in her study of American college students' perceptions of intimate partner cyber harassment found that the technological affordances offered by mobile phones (e.g. GPS tracking) as well as social network sites were commonly used by students to monitor partners or ex-partners.

The next section examines how participants understood Facebook stalking. It was often discussed in relation to looking up people from the past and acquaintances and characterised as both nosey and fascinating. It was in this context disassociated from offline stalking or stalking in the context of romantic relationships.

Facebook Stalking and Being Nosey

Young adults in the study repeatedly described looking up profiles of people connected to their past, such as high school friends or past colleagues. Usually conducted covertly (i.e. without the knowledge of the people checked), profile-checking and monitoring were discussed by participants, using euphemisms such as keeping oneself 'up to date' with people's lives or getting an idea of what people

'were up to' and were perceived as 'being nosey' and therefore socially embarrassing and morally disapproved of. Natalie (22), for example, described how she would 'often do go onto people's profiles to have a look and being nosey'. Similarly, Eva (25) explained how she goes through her newsfeed to see the activities of former high school friends:

> I don't you know if it is somebody that I know from high school I never comment on their activities but I do find it fascinating. This person got married and then with my friend we'll have a Facebook messenger open and like 'did you see that?' (Eva, 25)

The practices described by Olivia and Eva which can be broadly defined as gossip, are not new. However, social network sites' technological affordances and design (e.g. newsfeed) have been said to magnified gossips (Ito et al, 2010; Marwick, 2012).

Practices of profile-checking on social network sites were often associated with the term 'stalking' which is connected to harassment or voyeurism. While all participants distanced themselves from the former, some participants described and understood these practices through the lens of 'voyeurism', as a result experiencing self-consciousness and moral dilemmas. For instance, Chloe (22) considered going onto people's profile 'to have a look' as 'nosey'. Luke (21) depicted such practices are conducted only out 'nosiness' and pure 'curiosity'. Lucy (24) described how she felt 'a bit pervy' when she looked up people. David (24) deemed these practices as 'sneaky', 'voyeuristic' and 'weird' whereas Molly (20) explained 'you know you can do it, there is nothing wrong with it, it just looks weird.' Olivia (23) explained how she regularly looked people up, but did not reveal it during conversations as these practices were socially sanctioned.

> A couple of years ago if I had met just like some random person and we had a laugh or something, I'd probably look them up but they were like guys (laughs) but I would be careful to not like slip anything into

227

the conversation because this person would think I was like very creepy. (Olivia, 23)

As the accounts have demonstrated, profile-checking in the context of weak ties (e.g. acquaintances, people from the past) were morally sanctioned as 'being nosey' (in relation to gossiping).

To counter perceptions of profile-checking, constituted around the notion of offline stalking, young adults in the study made a clear distinction between what was described as 'casual' looking versus 'in depth researching', and between 'seeking for' and just 'seeing' information already publicly available. In other words, participants put an emphasis on synchronicity and spontaneity, in contrast to asynchronicity and intentionality (often described as 'creepy'). Annie (21), for example, emphasised that she would 'usually just look quickly at pictures' and 'would not scroll through all their things.' In the same line, Connor (22) explained that he does not 'research people' or 'look into their history' but would only check someone's profile whenever he would 'notice' a person posting on his newsfeed. Eleanor (22) put an emphasis on how she would not 'dig things or stalking or anything like that' while Jessica (23) underlined that she 'wouldn't go out of her way to find information about someone'. Likewise, Alex (24) described how he would go on people's Facebook profiles but 'not in an intense way'. The terminology used by participants allow them to dissociate their practices from 'offline stalking' understood as harassment and reframing profile-checking and monitoring on social network sites into a lighter and more casual version of stalking; 'Facebook stalking'. In this way, some participants re-appropriated or redefined the meanings of 'stalking' in the context of social network sites. Eva (25), for instance, described profile-checking practices as 'friendly Facebook stalks'. Olivia (23) explained how she used Facebook to 'stalk' people but in a 'cool' way. She differentiated her ways of 'stalking' from the negative connotations of the word or as she put it 'it is what I call stalking but it is not in a creepy way'.

Both Eva and Olivia redefined the word 'stalking' in the context of Facebook, ascribing new meanings to it and by doing so normalising its use.

As part of the interviewing process, young adults were asked to discuss their search history on Facebook (see Chapter Three). It was used as a means to provoke discussion. At first, search histories often raised discomfort or embarrassment, illustrating the discrepancy between discussing profile-checking practices in abstract and impersonal terms (e.g. participants often used examples from 'friends of friends') and in concrete and personal ways. Participants, although describing these practices as commonly conducted, did not want to be seen as engaging in them. Unease also rose when discrepancies appeared between what participants said (e.g. 'I don't use Facebook to look people up') and the searches recorded on their Facebook accounts, which tended to be seen as an 'objective' picture of their practices. Often participants wanted to 'check' it first (they were given the time to do so as well as the option to withdraw). Lucy (24) for instance, expressed some concerns: 'I don't think there is anything weird but you never know'. Molly (20) had the strongest reaction to seeing her search history and deleted it straightaway as she did not 'want to see this'. Eleanor (22) and Natalie (20) had deleted their search history quite recently too but commented on the recent outputs. Nathan (22), when going to his search history, cheekily commented laughing: 'let's see whom I have searched for lately?', deliberately putting an emphasis on the 'awkward' aspect of the situation. These accounts show that participants were aware of the negative and moral judgments attached to these practices. Furthermore, most participants took the discussion about their search history as an 'opportunity' to demonstrate that they had nothing 'weird' or 'creepy' on them. While they were being asked more general questions about how seeing this information made them feel or about the uses of social network sites as a searching tool, the majority of participants explained in lengthy details the context and the specifics of each search that appeared on the screen, justifying how their

searches were appropriate and legitimate. Lucy (24) for example, provided a lengthy justification of why she looked up someone on Facebook. She started by describing the person as 'a friend of a friend' who she has briefly met and explained how she only had a 'quick look' at the first page of the profile to get 'a general overview' of this person. She then, put an emphasis on how she had no 'bad intentions' and that she did 'not always do that' which allowed her to disregard derogatory understandings of profile-checking practices.

The accounts above highlighted the range of reactions that discussing search history triggered during the interviews, showing that although widespread, these practices were often morally or socially sanctioned and associated within the cultural imagery of the voyeur (see Calvert, 2000). In this context, monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites often provoked simultaneously feelings of fascination and guilt. Turkle (2011) described stalking as 'a guilty pleasure and a source of anxiety' for young people (p.251) that can 'make them feel like spies and pornographers' (p.252). This also coincides with Koskela (2006)'s description of the 'voyeuristic fascination' of looking and the 'moral landscapes' of surveillance (p.155). The fascination repulsion can be found in the origins of the word 'stalking' which is connected to the old English 'to steal' and has two basic interpretations: 'take dishonestly' and 'go secretly' (Oxford Dictionary). While these interpretations have clear moral sanctions (e.g. being dishonest, lack of morality), stalking is also related to the idea of 'secret knowledge' and access to information. Participants' feelings of guilt were underpinned by the imagery of stalking and the voyeur while their feelings of fascination were fed both by human needs to acquire information and compare oneself to others (Goffman, 1959) and by the technological affordances of the platforms which allow a quick and extensive access to people's personal information. Amy (22) described this 'attraction- repulsion' with profile-checking practices:

230

> At first I was a big snoop, and I liked to spy on people but I tried to stop it because it made me feel bad. But I do enjoy having a good snoop at people. (Amy, 22)

In a similar way, David (24) explained how checking people's profiles on social network sites made him feel guilty. At the same time, he depicted looking up people whom he remembered but was not friends with on Facebook as 'captivating', recalling how he spent 'almost an entire night' going through people's profiles. David and Amy simultaneously felt guilty and also gained some pleasure when checking profiles of other people on social network sites. Profile-checking and monitoring practices on social network sites had pleasurable and entertaining elements to it which resulted in the feelings of attraction-repulsion described above. The next section explores these elements.

Normalisation of Facebooking: Surveillance as Interactivity and Entertainment

Profile-checking and monitoring practices were not always described in terms of moral judgements (i.e. 'being nosey' or 'being voyeuristic'). It was also described by participants as a normal part of using social network sites, as a form of interaction and entertainment.

Some participants reported conducted profile-checking practices when they were bored or procrastinating. In these contexts, participants often connected profile-checking to the design and technological affordances of social network sites. Benjamin (25), for example, argued that 'flicking other people's profiles' is part of 'procrastinating' on social network sites. According to him, it is 'a nice thing' on Facebook to be able to 'scroll down and look at stuffs without even explicitly thinking about it'. Natalie (20) and Chloe (22) used the same terminology, describing these practices as 'scrolling through' or 'scrolling down' people's timelines. David described

how he would 'browse through people's profiles' and 'go on the recent photos and click a few' when he was bored. Similarly, Alex (24) explained how he would be 'on Instagram and Facebook clicking, scrolling down' with 'no purpose or whatsoever' while Lucy (24) described how she would 'waste her time' on social network sites and have a look at people's profiles 'if a name pops up'. All accounts highlighted above directly mentioned the design and architecture of social network sites through words such as 'scroll', 'click' and 'pop up' evidencing how the platforms themselves as well as the private corporations which own them were shaped participants' practices and understandings. Moreover, some participants put an emphasis on how profile-checking practices would occur as only a result of being on social network sites. Benjamin for instance described scrolling and looking at the content on Facebook 'without even explicitly thinking about it'. Alice (22) described how the technological affordances of social network sites reinforced profile-checking practices creating a knock-on effect:

> It is so easy I think to just … like if someone associated with one of your friends posts a status and someone writes a comment and then it is so easy just to click on their names and go onto their pages and find out who they are, what they are up to; and then it is just sort of a domino effect, you end up like someone half way across the world, and you are like 'what am I doing? I think everyone has done it at some point (Alice, 22).

Similarly, Charlotte (23) explained that if one spends 'a lot of time' on these platforms, it is just 'going to lead onto things like that [looking up people]'. According to her, checking people's profiles on social network sites is like 'following a path that goes very quickly'. These accounts demonstrate how the design and architecture of social network sites (e.g. newsfeed, public interfaces, networked information) partly shaped and exacerbated participants' uses and understandings of the platforms as sites of peer-to peer surveillance.

Profile-checking practices were used as a form of entertainment in peer socialisation, especially in connection to romantic interests or to have fun and play tricks on friends. Charlotte (23), for example, recounted how she used to have a laugh with her friends checking out 'all the ex-boyfriends'. As for Molly (20), she explained that it became a 'trend' to look up people, and often prospective dates when she was hanging out with friends:

> I've never liked this trend but people are like 'ow tell me his name, I'm going to look him up', 'I am going to see who is he and then I am going to browse photos really quick and things like that. (Molly, 20)

Similarly, Aaron (20) explained how he was showing his friends the profiles of his ex-girlfriends. Checking friends' profiles was also reported in the context of friendships. James (22), for example, recalled how he had looked up friends' profiles to play tricks on them:

> There have been times where for fun I went on someone else's page and went to the photos, like the latest photo and then if you click like back you'll then see the first photo on like the first year since they've joined Facebook. I'll do this just for a laugh to see what their posts are like (laughs). Also it is quite funny if you like something from someone on someone's wall like 5 years ago, then he will be notified like 'what is that' I did say that and then they will look at the day and they realise that was like 5 years ago. I'll do that just for fun so yeah I've done that quite a few time with my friends, (James, 22)

In the same way, Natalie (20) described how her friends would go back to each other's' timelines on Facebook to find embarrassing information and played tricks on one another. John (24) also used peer to peer monitoring as a form of entertainment. He described how he would take screen shots of 'people's ridiculous statuses' on Facebook and share them privately with his friends to 'have a laugh'. In the accounts highlighted above profile-checking on Facebook gained an entertainment value in the

context of peer socialisation. This evidences Albrechtlund and Dubbled's (2005) argument that surveillance enabling technologies 'are able to perform entertainment functions' (p.217). In fact, participants often described them as entertaining or 'funny'.

Ellerbrok (2011) argued that playful uses of technologies fundamentally reshape popular representations and the ways in which technologies are used by the public (p.530). In her work on facial recognition technologies, she described how the representations of these technologies which have been integrated on social network sites have been transformed from an identification with state control to 'a "benign" and user-friendly computer application that speaks to pleasure, convenience, and personal entertainment' (ibid). She analysed how the meaning of the word 'tagging' itself has changed. In today's context, it is mostly used to described the photo-sharing function of social network sites whereas it was previously associated with criminal identification (ibid). Thus, the cultural representations associated with tagging have shifted and the integrated use of facial recognition technologies on social network sites has been normalised. The current study argues that play and the integration of profile-checking practices as part of social network sites have reshaped understandings of these practices on social network sites and in doing so displaced representations of monitoring practices from the imagery of the voyeur and offline stalking to understandings of profile-checking as entertainment and a normal forms of interactivity. In turn, the benign representations of profile-checking practices have participated to the normalisation of these practices, often rebranded as 'Facebooking'.

A number of young adults in the study described monitoring and profile-checking on Facebook using the neologism 'Facebooking'. Van Dijck (2013) pointed out that turning a brand is turned into a verb or noun illustrates the success of the company in permeating a social activity (p.7). Beyond the enormous success of the company, the neologism 'Facebooking' also evidences the acceptance and recognition of profile-checking and monitoring as a function (if not the main function) of the platform.

234

Following Bourdieu (1984) this neologism reveals the social function exercised by specific uses of the platforms. Indeed, Bourdieu explained that:

> The imposition of a recognized name is an act of recognition of full social existence which transmutes the thing named. It no longer exists merely de facto, as a tolerated, illegal or illegitimate practice, but becomes a social function (p.480).

The term 'Facebooking', describing actions of looking up covertly people's profiles on the platform, recognises the social existence of these practices but also participate to their normalisation. Young adults in the study often understood 'Facebooking' as part of using of social network sites. Benjamin (25), for example explained how profile-checking on Facebook has become integrated in the everyday:

> It is just kind of a thing that you do. We almost like automatically go and try to find out about that person and whatever. It is like you want to touch things, you cannot just look at a phone you want to take it in your hands, it is the same thing with Facebook, you just want to look the person and see what the person looks like although it doesn't really matter, it is like an attitude. (Benjamin, 25)

This perspective appeared in several interviews. Poppy (21) described profile-checking practices as what 'Facebook was for' while Lucy (24) depicted looking up people's profiles on Facebook as something that 'people do these days'. Likewise, Jessica (23) explained that these practices were constitutive of the platforms:

> I guess in a way I am on Facebook so they've got the right to have a look onto my profile because if I did not want people to look on my online self, I wouldn't have Facebook if that makes sense? (Jessica, 23)

To put it another way, social network sites, due to the ways they operate, give people the right to look into other people's information and lives. Alex (24) shared this view,

arguing that people who signed up to social network sites such as Facebook and who restrict their privacy to prevent people to see their activities should renounce to the platforms 'because that is the all-purpose of it.' Later in his interview, he emphasised that looking up and checking people's profiles is 'a normal thing because it is social media.' Similarly, Charlotte (23) explained that if people used social media platforms then they had 'to be open' and accept that other people will have access to your information. In the excerpts highlighted above, participants not only understood profile-checking and monitoring as part of social network sites but as legitimate and normal characteristics of the platforms. These understandings were substantiated by values such as openness and sharing characterising the interactions on the platforms. Such values encouraged users to generate more personal data under the positive ideas of connectedness and collaboration. However, as van Dijck (2013) argued the promotion of such values allow private corporations to turn connectedness into connectivity and in effect commodify social interactions. In this way, participants' understandings of monitoring and profile-checking practices were inscribed and shaped by values promoted by private corporations and by the design and technological affordances of social network sites which encouraged and normalised interactivity on the platforms as surveillance.

Conclusion

This chapter explored participants' practices and understandings of monitoring in the context of social network sites, and in particular on Facebook. It has first analysed how participants' understandings of governmental surveillance and corporate data profiling were taken for granted by participants and often understood as an unavoidable compromise in order to participate to social network sites. In this way, participants were made familiar with this type of monitoring and even in some cases

playfully interacted with it. It then showed how family monitoring and prospective flatmates' profile-checking were perceived by participants as appropriate under the framework of care, risk management and individual responsibility whereas professional vetting was legitimated in terms of transparency and accountability. These different forms of monitoring were broadly perceived as legitimate and were accepted as part of social network sites, evidencing how private corporations and neoliberal discourses normalised and permeated understandings of monitoring practices. Lastly it demonstrated how profile-checking and monitoring on social network sites in the context of romantic relationships have been permeated by values putting an emphasis on choice and compatibility.

The chapter then looked more closely at how young adults in the study understood and used the terminology of stalking in the context of social network sites. These practices were often understood in ambiguous ways, often morally charged. As a result, participants disassociated actively their monitoring and profile-checking practices from offline stalking (associated with voyeurism and harassment) and repeatedly reconstructed them in the context of Facebook as a form of entertainment, an outcome of the platform design and/or a normal way of interaction. The chapter, overall, has demonstrated how monitoring and profile-checking on social network sites were permeated by values promoted by private corporations, facilitated and legitimated by the design and technological affordances of the platforms and rendered normalised by broader neoliberal discourses; all reshaping understandings of social network sites as tools for monitoring and profile-checking.

Conclusion

Mediated Young Adulthood: Intersections between Practices, Corporate Power and Neoliberal Governmentalities

The current study has examined young adults' accounts of their uses of social network sites in their everyday lives as well as the meanings that they ascribed to these platforms. Its aims have been to first challenge binary understandings of young people's with social network sites which have repeatedly focused on addiction and risks or on empowerment and increased participation. Furthermore, by adopting a critical perspective, the thesis has attempted to understand and reinscribe young people's digital practices within the processes of social differentiation, the context of corporate capitalism and neoliberal discourses that inform them. In this final chapter I briefly summarise the key arguments and conclusions of the thesis.

Literature Addressed

The field of youth studies has been historically divided between two broad perspectives, 'youth cultures' and 'youth transitions'. This has led to continuous attempts to establish a middle ground position and, according to Woodman (2009), an ensuing neglect of the role of institutional change and of the macro level of analysis in youth research. Taking into account these critiques, the thesis has drawn on a recent body of work in youth studies which has called for renewed approaches to understand young people's lives and to overcome the enduring divisions in the field. Such approaches have included understanding contemporary youth through the lens of 'social generation' (Woodman, 2012b, Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Bennett, 2015), of critical studies (Kelly and Kamp, 2015; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015) or adopting a new political economy perspective of youth (Coté, 2014b, 2016).

The thesis has adopted an analytical framework which followed the directions advocated by the last two.

Furthermore, the thesis has drawn on empirical and theoretical research which have examined young people's lives and how these have been affected in relation to processes of globalisation, technological change, austerity policies and more broadly by neoliberal capitalism (Woodman and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Threadgold, 2015; France 2016; Kelly and Pike, 2017). This body of work has been essential to understand young people's experiences in the context in which they take place. Drawing on Foucault, the work of Kelly (2001, 2006, 2013) on the self as an enterprise and youth-at-risk has paved the way in this direction by outlining the ways in which neoliberal forms of governmentalities produced a positive construction of youth as entrepreneurial, active, independent, choice making and responsible (as opposed to normative constructions of youth-at-risk).

The literature on young people's uses of the Internet and social network sites has been permeated by binary debates about the so called 'digital generation'. Some of these debates have tended to put a great emphasis on the risks and dangers posed by new media and digital technologies to young people which in turn have fed a range of moral panics (see Chapter Two). By contrast, a second body of work has stressed the opportunities generated by these technologies, often in terms of empowerment and increased participation, often describing young people as 'digital natives' or 'tech savvy'. Both perspectives have reified false dichotomies on private and public and/or online and offline. To overcome these binary understandings, the thesis has drawn on a more recent body of work which has shed light on the complex ways in which young people use and understand social network sites and how these were inscribed in a dialectical relationship between social and technological (see Livingstone, 2008; boyd, 2014).

In addition to this body of work, the thesis has made use of critical literature on

the Internet and in particular social network sites (see Couldry, 2008; van Dijck, 2013; Fuchs, 2014) which has allowed not only to grasp the technological in the social but also within broader (and asymmetrical) power relations and the ideology characterising corporate and neoliberal capitalism. Finally, the thesis has mobilised some of the more recent work in surveillance studies (see Andrejevic, 2005, 2007; Marwick, 2012) which has examined the underlying neoliberal forms of governmentality in which young people's engagement with social network sites were built upon (e.g. self or peer monitoring). Moreover, surveillance has emerged as a useful analytical framework as it enabled me to make sense of young adults' accounts of social network sites, in which monitoring practices were often discussed. By shedding light on the broader neoliberal discourses and context of corporate capitalism, the thesis argued that these bodies of work provide new and important insights on young people's engagement with social network sites.

To pursue this direction of inquiry, the thesis has made use of Bourdieu's theory of practice and Foucault's work on power/knowledge and governmentality. The study argued that the combination of both provide analytical tools to understand how young people *actively* and *practically* negotiated and engaged with social network sites and how these engagements were *embedded* in the context of neoliberal capitalism. Both theorists have dedicated their works to better understand neoliberalism (see Laval, 2017). Bourdieu has famously described neoliberalism as 'the utopia (becoming a reality) of unlimited exploitation' (Bourdieu, 1998b). This 'utopia' has emerged, according to him, from the conversion of an economic theory into a political programme and has progressively become part of the dominant discourse as a result of 'symbolic inculcation' in which 'ordinary citizens participate *passively*' (ibid. p.29, my emphasis). By contrast, Foucault understood neoliberalism as forms of government (of the self and others) through which power is conceptualised as active and productive and exercised by individuals. These forms of government in turn

produce neoliberal subjectivities and corresponding techniques and procedures. While Foucault's work sheds light on the active appropriation of neoliberal discourses, Bourdieu's theory reinscribes these discourses within social agents' habitus and their practical relations to the social world (see Chapter One). To put in another way, taken together, the theoretical inputs of Bourdieu and Foucault allow to understand young people's uses and understandings of social network sites as:

- shaped by practical relations to and experiences of the social world which are mediated by the habitus, a system of transposable dispositions, in turn mediating organically their practices;
- informed by neoliberal discourses which function as truths and actively encourage corresponding forms of governmentality.

The thesis argued that these two bodies of work, although sometimes understood or misrepresented as contradictory, are particularly useful to make sense of young people's experiences as characterised by practical relations to their social environments in which broader power relations are at play.

Overview

Based on the analysis of the empirical data, this thesis argued that young adults' accounts of their everyday uses of social network sites were entrenched in notions of individual choice and responsibility, and at the same time deeply informed by corporate power and neoliberal forms of governmentalities.

The analysis developed in Chapter Four showed the complex ways in which young adults in the study understood and negotiated social network sites as well how these platforms, and especially Facebook, had become deeply entrenched in their

everyday lives. Overall, social network sites were perceived by participants as 'tools', often described as 'useful' and in many cases even indispensable, to 'keep in touch' with people, spontaneously arrange meetings with friends as well as to routinely manage their schedules and everyday lives (e.g. they reported using the platforms to obtain practical information about events or to organise university group works). The data, moreover, demonstrated that participants were continuously balancing convenience offered by the platforms with anxieties and stress triggered or exacerbated by them, most notably the burden of 'being always on' and fears of missing out. Furthermore, young people's quite often described social network sites, and in particular Facebook, using positive terms such as convenience, speed and connectivity; a terminology which was often used to cancel the anxieties that the platform triggered. In light of this data, the chapter argued that participants' understandings and engagement with social network sites were shaped in various ways by the economic interests, monopoly and underlying ideology of the private corporations which own them. These powerful interests rarely acknowledged by young people, left them in effect with little margin to use alternative communication tools or give up the platforms altogether, desires which were regularly expressed during the interviews.

Chapter Five examined young people's accounts of their uses of social network sites in more depth and explored how participants made sense of the changes in their uses of the platforms over time (e.g. regarding their information disclosure, privacy or adding new contacts). The chapter demonstrated that participants tended to describe their current practices and the changes that had occurred in their practices using two overlapping narratives; namely growing up and becoming responsible. These narratives often emphasised on notions of individual choice, self-improvement, risks management and responsibility, mirroring broader neoliberal discourses. Examining more closely these understandings and drawing on Foucault's work, Chapter Five

demonstrated how the majority of participants actively used social network sites to manage their impressions and present an entrepreneurial and professional self. It then provided an analysis of how a number of participants (more likely to aspire to careers in the cultural and creative industries) employed social network sites more proactively as tools for training for labour. These practices, often described as 'doing social media', effectively turned the platforms as apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.

Using Bourdieu's analytical framework, Chapter Six investigated the processes of differentiation playing out in young adults' accounts of how others supposedly used social network sites. Markers of differences were especially visible in participants' descriptions of how people used Instagram to 'show off', practices often understood as part of a superficial and mainstream culture of selfies, as well as in their accounts of the language used and writing styles of other people on the platforms. By doing so, participants outlined their own personal preferences and the ways in which they thought social network sites ought to be used. These judgements and processes of differentiation were then mobilised by young people (not necessarily consciously but as practical understandings of their environments) to cultivate commonalities on social network sites in two ways. Firstly, participants actively selected and sorted content in agreement with their views and personal tastes on the different platforms; and secondly, they checked compatibility and shared interests with prospective friends and acquaintances. The chapter argued that although reinforced by technological effects (e.g. echo chambers generated by algorithms), these processes were deeply grounded in the social.

Finally, Chapter Seven made use of the critical literature on digital technology and surveillance, to examine monitoring and profile-checking practices on social network sites, often discussed by participants. By looking at young adults' attitudes towards governmental surveillance, corporate data profiling, family monitoring and professional vetting on social network sites, the chapter demonstrated that these forms

of monitoring were almost always taken for granted and integrated as a normal form of participation; illustrating the underlying culture of monitoring. The chapter then focused on peer monitoring and profile-checking practices (e.g. in the contexts of friendships, acquaintances and romantic relationships, highlighting how these practices were accounted through notions reflecting broader neoliberal discourses such as choice, compatibility and risk management, Lastly, the chapter demonstrated participants' ambiguous understandings of monitoring and profile-checking; practices repeatedly disassociated them from offline stalking (associated with voyeurism and harassment) and/ or reconstructed as a form of entertainment, an outcome of the platform design and/or a normal way of interaction (often using the term 'Facebooking'). Overall, the chapter argued that monitoring and profile-checking practices exemplified the complexity behind the task of understanding young people digital practices. Indeed, the chapter demonstrated how monitoring and profile-checking, actively conducted and engaged with by participants were at the same time reinforced and triggered by processes of differentiation (e.g. out of curiosity), permeated by values promoted by private companies (such as sharing, openness, fun and connectivity), facilitated by the design and technological affordances of the platforms, as well as informed and legitimated by neoliberal discourses.

Limitations of the Study

Inevitably, the study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample of the study consists largely of urban (relatively) educated middle class young people (see Table 1.2 for an overview of the sample). Although providing in depth material on the experiences of this specific population of young people, the over-representation of this population has arguably brought up an over-emphasis on certain aspects of the data while occulting others. Brown and Gregg (2012) argued for example that impression

management in relation to potential professional vetting and networking, is more important and often acted upon by young people wanting to get white collar jobs and less significant for the wider demographic of Facebook users (p.362). In this way, the data of the current study which found significant data related to professional vetting captured the concerns and interests of the former rather than the latter. Furthermore, class structures and inequalities continue to shape young people's engagement with social network sites (Lee, 2008; boyd, 2011b; van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014). Although, partially captured through the processes of differentiations which played out in participants' accounts (e.g. for example in participants' description of drama on Facebook or selfies on Instagram), the gendered and classed analysis of young people's digital practices remains fragmentary. An in depth discussion of how social network sites can exacerbate inequalities and reinforce social reproduction has been omitted; due to the nature of the sample and the focus adopted by the research. In addition, important social factors such as ethnicity and race have been left out in the design and the analysis.

Finally, the current study, did not examine in depth the range of policies of governmental and educational which have been implemented in the UK to supervise and protect young people online. Arguably, these policies have impacted on young people's uses and understandings of social network sites. The thesis has touched upon it, most notably in the analysis of young people's understandings of privacy and information disclosure. These specific findings resonate strongly with emerging work which has analysed e-safety policies as particular strategies of governmentality and responsibilisation (Barnard-Wills, 2012, Hope, 2015). However, the study did not collect enough relevant data to substantiate such an analysis and although interesting this was considered outside the scope of this work.

Summary

By focusing on young adults' everyday uses and understandings of social network sites, this study has revealed the extent to which these platforms were entrenched in participants' everyday lives and as such actively negotiated as well as the extent to which their practices were shaped by corporate power and neoliberal discourses. It has demonstrated simultaneously that:

- Young adults used and perceived social network sites as tools to manage different aspects of their lives and relationships. Although, they often described their engagement with the platforms in terms of personal choice, their accounts outlined the ways in which these choices were informed by the economic interests, monopoly and ideology of private corporations.

- Young adults accounted for their past and current uses of social network sites in narratives of growing up and overlapping neoliberal discourses. This in turn informed their uses and perceptions of the platforms, effectively transforming them as apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.

- Young adults differentiated their personal uses of social network sites from others and mobilised these differences as means to select and sort the content on the platforms' as well as to check compatibility and shared interests with prospective friends and acquaintances.

- Young adults' understandings and practices of monitoring and profile-checking exemplified the processes highlighted above. These were embedded in:

- *economic interests and the ideology* of private corporations; attaching values such as sharing, openness and fun to monitoring and profile-checking and designing the platforms in ways which facilitated 'connectivity' and turning personal data into profits. (1)

- *neoliberal discourses* putting an emphasis on imperatives of choice, risk management, responsibility, entrepreneurship and compatibility which in turn constructed monitoring and profile-checking practices as forms of government of the self and others. (2)

- *differentiation processes* which were at the heart of young adults' perceptions of monitoring and profile-checking practices as 'nosey' as well as the motives underlying these practices (e.g. comparing oneself to others, gaining impressions and having fun). (3)

Overall, by outlining the ways in which young adults actively negotiated and engaged with social network sites as well as how their uses and understandings of the platforms were informed by corporate power and neoliberal discourses, the study challenged binary understandings of young people's engagement with social network sites and provided instead a more critical perspective on youth and social network sites.

Future Directions for Research

Drawing on literature from different fields of studies and adopting a multidisciplinary perspective to understand contemporary youth is to me the way forward for future research focusing on different aspects of young people's experiences. In this way,

recent discussions regarding renewed approaches such as a new political economy of youth or critical perspectives in the field (Côté, 2014b, 2016; Kelly and Kamp, 2015; France and Threadgold, 2015; France, 2016) have clearly reenergised youth research and reopened important questions about 'the larger macro contexts that are allowing economic interests to take advantage of young people while disguising their exploitation with the consent-manufacturing mechanisms' (Côté, 2014a, p.216). It is important, however, to recognise that new perspectives do not cancel out other perspectives (e.g. studies drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice) which have been proved otherwise invaluable in understanding young people's experiences. In the context of the current study, the body of work on surveillance as well as the critical literature on technology and new media, proved to be fruitful lenses to understand and contextualise young people's digital practices. Both Foucault and Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks added to the analysis of young people's engagement with social network sites. More need to be done in this direction. Further research also need to be done to explore the meanings that other populations of young people attached to social network sites, and especially monitoring and profile-checking practices, and to examine the ways in which these populations negotiate the platforms and the extent to which these are informed by corporate power and neoliberal discourses.

Finally, the methodological framework developed throughout this research opens up fertile ground for future research. In my research design, I have incorporated features of Facebook (ie. activity logs and search history) as digital prompts to encourage discussion. This could be applied to other social network sites such as Instagram or Twitter (e.g. Twitter analytics, Instagram search history). This also raised critical questions regarding the use of Facebook, and more broadly social network sites in social research. In this context, researchers need to reflect on understandings of social network sites as spaces for information gathering and self-

monitoring and examine how personal data extraction is becoming normalised as a way of interacting with technology and disclosing information both in social research and in everyday life. Further research is therefore needed to critically analyse the impacts of social network sites, platforms owned by private corporations and designed to extract personal information, in shaping the data we generate as well as the ways we understand technology and research.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Recruitment Poster

These are increasingly relevant questions in our everyday lives. Here is a chance to talk about and share your personal experiences of social media and mobile technologies. As part of my degree, I am conducting a project about young adults' understandings of these technologies and how they use and experience them.

I look for young adults from 16 to 25 years old to take part to an individual interview. If you are interested or if you want to know more about the project, please get in touch with me:

07 511 551 081 or
j.gangneux.1@research.gla.ac.uk.

252

Appendix 3 - Information Plain Language Statement

University | College of
of Glasgow | Social Sciences

Young adults, mobile technologies and social media

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part or not it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

About the study

My name is Justine Gangneux and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Glasgow. As part of my Ph.D. in Education I am exploring young adults' uses and understandings of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.) and mobile technologies (e.g. phone applications). The purpose of the study is to find out about young adults' perceptions of these technologies and platforms in their everyday lives and how they use and experience them. In order to find this out, the research uses individual interviews.

What does taking part in the study involve?

You will be invited to take part to one or two interviews to talk about your uses and experiences of social media and mobile technologies and how it impacts on your everyday life (e.g. What kind of technologies? With whom? Where? Etc.) During the interview, I will ask you to log onto social media platforms that you use through your device to provide material for discussion. With your permission I would like to look at your activities on social media with you (e.g. Posts; comments, time-lines). You can share with me as much or as little as you like and you are free to opt-out of this activity at any time if you wish. I will not keep record of any information. This data

will be use to set off discussions during the interview, it will remain strictly confidential and will NOT be published.Interviews are likely to last approximately one hour and will take place at Glasgow University or at another place that is convenient for you.

Do I have to take part?

It is your own decision to take part or not in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your contributions at any point during the research. You can share as much as you want, you don't have to answer to a question if you don't want to.

What will happen to my answers?

If you agree, interviews will be recorded and then written down exactly as spoken on paper. The data generated and contributions will be anonymised and kept confidential. The only circumstances where I will pass on any information that you provide to us are if you tell me that you or someone else is at risk of harm. If I was going to do so, I would discuss this with you first. Any element allowing identification will be withdrawn and data will be presented using pseudonyms in my Ph.D. Thesis that will be submitted for examination and in future publications. Any personal data will be destroyed once the Ph.D. has been awarded.

This study has been approved by the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

For further information about the study, please contact me by email; j.gangneux.1@research.gla.ac.uk or you can contact my supervisor, Prof. Andy Furlong, using the details below:

Prof. Andy Furlong
School of Education, University of Glasgow
517d, Level 5, St Andrew's Building
Glasgow G3 6NH

email: Andy.Furlong@glasgow.ac.uk
Tel: + 44 (0)1413304667

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the study, you can also contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer;

Dr Muir Houston
University of Glasgow, School of Education
Rm223, Level 2, St Andrew's Building, Glasgow G3 6NH
Email :Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk
Tel: + 44 (0)1413304699

Appendix 4 – Information Participant Form

University | College of
of Glasgow | Social Sciences

Young adults, mobile technologies and social media
Interview Participant Information Sheet

Age:
Occupation:
Qualification:
Father's occupation :
Mother's occupation:
Nationality:

Social Media/ Digital Technologies:

How long have you been using social media for?

How long have you been using a smart phone for?

Social platforms that you used and are currently using (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, ect.):

-
-
-
-

Thank you!

Date:

Appendix 5 - Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank participants for agreeing to take part in the research. Description of the study, information form (with emphasis on digital prompts), confidentiality of the study, seek permission to record interview and ask participants if they have any questions about taking part in the study.

Seek for consent from participants (consent form)

Ice breaker / Personal Background

Could you tell me a bit about you?

Probes: What do you normally do in your spare time?
Where do you live in Glasgow?
What do you study/ Where do you work?

Personal uses of social network sites and mobile technologies

Tell me more about the social media platforms that you currently use?

Probes: Why these platforms? In which situations?
Time/ frequency of uses
How many friends/followers do you have? When was the last time you added someone/ send a friend request?
Do you use your name or an username?

Activities on different platforms

What types of activities would you usually do on the different platforms you use?

Probes: Creating content/ sharing/ commenting/ liking/ reading?
What was the last content you posted?
What kind of content would you post/ avoid to post?

Previous uses of social network sites / Changes of uses over time

Would you say that you have changed the ways in which you used the platforms? If so how?

Probes: Have you used other social network sites in the past?
When and why did you first subscribe to social network sites?
Would you amend/ delete posts/pictures that you shared?

Perceptions of social network sites

What do you personally think of social network sites?

Probes: Positive/ negative perceived impacts of social network sites?
What do you like/dislike about social network sites?

Social network sites and relationships

How you use social network sites with … your family/ different friends/ romantic partners?

Probes: Negotiations of different relationships/ people on the same platform.
Experiences of family on social network sites.
Arguments/tensions related to social network sites?

Profile-checking / monitoring practices

Are you aware that people use social network sites to get information about other people?

Probes: Perceptions of checking people's information on social network sites.
Example of one time you searched/ looked up someone on social network sites.
Situations where it is legitimate to search/look up people?

Digital Prompts

Closing

Thank participants, ask if they have questions/ any issues they would like to raise about taking part in the study or about the interview. Hand out information participants form.

References

Aas, K, Gundhus, H. and Lomell H., (2009) *Technologies of InSecurity: the Surveillance of Everyday Life*, Oxford: Routledge Cavendish.

Adams, R. G. and Allan, G. (1998), *Placing Friendship in Context,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adkins, L. (2003). Reflexivity: Freedom or Habit of Gender, *Theory, Culture and Society,* Vol. 20(6): 21–42

Albrechtslund, A. and Dubbeld, L (2005), The Plays and Arts of Surveillance: Studying Surveillance as Entertainment. *Surveillance & Society* 3(2/3).

Albrechtslund, A., (2008), Online social networking as a practice based on participatory surveillance, *First Monday*, 13(3).

Allmer, T. (2015), *Critical Theory and Social Media, Between Emancipation and Commodification,* New York: Routledge.

Anderson, A. (2015), What is Critique, The Critical Potential of Foucault's Genealogy in Kelly, P. and Kamp, A. (eds), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century*, Leiden, Brill Editions.

Anderson, M., Bechhofer, F., McCrone, D., Jamieson, L., Li, Y., and Stewart, R. (2005) Timespans and Plans Among Young Adults, *Sociology*, 39(1), 139–155.

Anderson, M, Bechhofer, F, Jamieson, L, Mccrone, D, Li,Y and Stewart, R. (2002), Confidence and uncertainty: Ambitions and plans in a sample of young adults. *Sociological Research Online* 6 (4).

Andrejevic, M., (2011), Exploitation in the Data Mine in Fuchs, C. , Boersma, K. Albrechtslund, A and Sandoval, M. (eds) *Internet and Surveillance: The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media,*New York: Routledge.

Andrejevic, M. (2008) 'Watching television without pity', *Television & New Media*, 9(1): 24-46

Andrejevic, M., (2007a), *iSpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive Era.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Andrejevic, M., (2007b), Surveillance in the Digital Enclosure, *The Communication Review,* 10: 295–317

Andrejevic, M. (2005). The work of watching one another: Lateral surveillance, risk, and governance. *Surveillance and Society*, 2(4), 479-497.

Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Association of Internet Research (2012).Ethical Decision--Making and Internet Research. Available at: http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf

Bakardjieva, M., and Gaden, G. (2011). Web 2.0 Technologies of the Self. *Philosophy and Technology*, 25(3).

Bakardjieva, M. (2005) *Internet Society:The Internet in Everyday Life.* London: Sage.

Ball. S.J. (2008), *The education debate: Policy and politics in the twenty-first century*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball K. and Haggerty K. (2005) "Editorial: Doing Surveillance Studies", *Surveillance and Society* 3 [2/3] : 129-138.

Ball, S.J., D. Reay, and M. David. (2002). Ethnic choosing: Minority ethnic students, social class and higher education choice. *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 5: 333–57.

Barnard-Wills, D. (2012). E-safety education: Young people, surveillance and responsibility. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 12(3), 239–255.

Barnes, S. (2006). A privacy paradox: Social networking in the United States. *First Monday*, 11(9).

Batchelor, S. , Whittaker, L., Fraser, A. and Ling, L. (2017) Leisure lives on the margins: (re)imagining youth in Glasgow East End. In: Blackman, S. and Rogers, R. (eds.) *Youth Marginality in Britain*: Contemporary Studies of Austerity. Policy Press: Bristol.

Bauman, Z. and Lyon, D. (2013) *Liquid Surveillance, A Conversation*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2001) *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity.*Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (1999), The Self in a Consumer Society, *The Hedgehog Review,* Vol 1 (1).

Baym, N. (2010) *Personal Connections in the Digital Age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baym, N (2005) 'Introduction: Internet Research as it Isn't, Is, Could Be, and Should Be', *The Information Society*, 21(4): 229–32.

Beck, U. (2007). Beyond Class and Nation: Reframing social inequalities in a globalizing world', *British Journal of Sociology*, 58(4), 679–705.

Beck, U. (2000) *The Brave New World of Work.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beck, U. (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage Publications.

Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: Sage Publications.

Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E., (1996). Individualization and precarious freedoms perspectives and controversies of a subject-oriented sociology. In: P. Heelas, S. Lash and P. Morris, eds. *Detraditionalization: critical reflections on authority and identity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 23-48.

Beer, D. (2008) 'Social network(ing) sites...revisiting the story so far: a response to danah boyd and Nicole Ellison', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13(2): 516-529.

Beer, D. and R. Burrows. (2013). Popular Culture, Digital Archives and the NewSocial Life of Data, *Theory, Culture & Society,* 30(4) 47–71

Beer, D. and R. Burrows. (2007). Sociology and, of and in Web 2.0: Some Initial Considerations. *Sociological Research Online*, 12 (5).

Bennett, A. (2002) 'Researching Youth Culture and Popular Music', *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(3): 451–66.

Bennett, A. (1999) Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. *Sociology*; 33(3): 599-617

Bennett, A. and Robards, B. (eds.) (2014) *Mediated Youth Cultures,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennett, A, Cieslik, M. and Miles, S. (eds) (2003), *Researching Youth*, Baingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1991, [1966]), *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Penguin Books, London.

Berriman, L. and Thomson, R. (2015) Spectacles of intimacy? Mapping the moral landscape of teenage social media, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18:5, 583-597.

Best, A. (2009), Young People and Consumption, in Furlong, A. (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New perspectives and Agendas*, Routledge, London.

Bivens R. and Haimson, O. (2016), Baking Gender Into Social Media Design: How Platforms Shape Categories for Users and Advertisers, *Social Media + Society,* October-December: 1–12

Blackman, S. (2005) Youth Subcultural Theory: A Critical Engagement with the Concept, Its Origins and politics, from the Chicago School to Postmodernism, *Journal of Youth Studies* 8(1):1-20.

Blatterer, H. (2007). "Contemporary Adulthood: Reconceptualising an Uncontested Category." *Current Sociology* 55: 771–792.

Boltanski, L and Chiapello, E (2006) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, London, Verso.

Bourdieu, P. (2013), Symbolic capital and social classes, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 13(2) 292–302

Bourdieu, P. (2005), *The Social Structures of the Economy*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (eds) (2000), *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, Cambridge: Polity.

Bourdieu, P. (1999). *The Weight of the World: Social suffering in contemporary society*. Oxford: Polity.

Bourdieu, P. (1998a), *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998b), *Acts of Resistance, Against the New Myths of our Time*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1993), *Sociology in Question*, London, Sage Publications.

Bourdieu, P. (1993b), Youth is just a Word, in *Sociology in Question*, London, Sage Publications.

Bourdieu, P. (1990a) *The Logic of Practice,* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990b) *In Other Words, Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1988) 'Program for a Sociology of Sport' in *SocioIogy of Sport Journal,* 5, 153-161.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). New York, NY: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. (1984), *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu P. and Wacquant L (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Bowe, G. (2010). Reading romance: The impact Facebook rituals can have on a romantic relationship. Journal of Comparative Research, *Anthropology and Sociology*, 1(2), 61- 77.

boyd, d. (2015). "Making Sense of Teen Life: Strategies for Capturing Ethnographic Data in a Networked Era." In Hargittai, E. & Sandvig, C. (Eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

boyd, d. (2014), *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

boyd, d. (2011a) 'Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics,and Implications', in Papacharissi, Z. (ed.), A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites. New York: Routledge, pp. 39–58.

boyd, d. (2011b). White flight in networked publics? How race and class shaped American teen engagement with MySpace and Facebook. In *Race after the Internet,* ed. Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White, 203–22. New York: Routledge.

boyd, d. (2010) 'Friendship', in Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., boyd, d., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., Horst, H.A., Lange, P.G., Mahendran, D., Martinez, K.Z., Pascoe, C.J., Perkel, D., Robinson, L., Sims, C., and Tripp, L. (eds.), *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 79–116.

boyd, d, (2007). Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics. In D. Buckingham, ed. *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp.119–142.

boyd, d. (2006). Friends, Friendsters and MySpace top 8: Writing community into being on social network sites. *First Monday* 11 (12).

boyd, d. and Crawford, K. (2012) Critical Questions for Big Data, *Information, Communication & Society*, 15:5, 662-679

boyd, d. and Marwick, A. E (2011) Social Privacy in Networked Publics: Teens Attitudes, Practices, and Strategies. pp. 1-29. In: *Proceedings of the Decade in Internat Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society*, 21 - 24 September 2011, University of Oxford.

boyd, d., and Ellison, N. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.

Brannen, J., and Nilsen, A. (2002). Young people's Time Perspectives: From youth to adulthood ', *Sociology*, 36(3), 513–537.

Brannen, J., and Nilsen, A. (2005). Individualisation, Choice and Structure: a discussion of current trends in sociological analysis ', *The Sociological Review*, 53(3), 412–428.

Brannen, J., and Nilsen, A. (2007). Young People, Time Horizons and Planning: A response to Anderson et al. ', *Sociology,* 41(1), 153–160.

Brewer, J.D. (2000) *Ethnography*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Brooks, R. (2007), Friends, peers and higher education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* Vol 28,(6).

Brooks R. (2002) 'Transitional friends? Young people's strategies to manage and maintain their friendships during a period of repositioning'. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5 (4), pp. 449-467.

Brooks R. and te Riele K. (2013) 'Exploring Ethical Issues in Youth Research: an introduction'. *Young*, 21 (3), pp. 211-216.

Brooks R and Hodkinson P. (2008) 'Young People, New Technologies and Political Engagement: Introduction'. *Journal of Youth Studies,* 11 (5), pp. 473-479.

Brooks, R., and Everett, G. (2008). The Prevalence of —Life Planning: Evidence from UK graduates, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(3), 325–337.

Brown, M., and M. Gregg. (2012) The pedagogy of regret: Facebook, binge drinking and young women. Continuum: *Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 26, no. 3: 357–69.

Brown, V.R., and Vaughn, E.D. (2011). The writing on the (Facebook) wall: The use of social networking sites in hiring decisions. *Journal of Business and Psychology* 26, no. 2: 219– 25.

Brown, B., Green, N. and Harper, R (eds.) (2002), *Wireless World: Social and Interactional Aspects of the Mobile Age*, Springer, London, 32-45.

British Sociologication Association (2002), *Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association* Available at: https://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/ (accessed 26/06/2017).

British Sociologication Association (2017), Guidelines on Ethical Research, Available at: https://www.britsoc.co.uk/ethics (accessed 26/06/2017).

Buckingham, D. (2007), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

Buckingham D, (2006) 'Is there a digital generation? ' in Willett, R. and Buckingham, D. *Digital Generations: Children, Young People and New Media.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.

Buckingham, D., Banaji, S., Carr, D., Cranmer, S., and Willett, R. (2005). *The media literacy of children and young people: A review of the research literature.* London: Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media Institute of Education.

Buffardi, L.E. and Campbell, K.W. (2008) 'Narcissism and Social Networking Web Sites', Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 34(10): 1303–1314

Bullingham, L. and Vasconcelos, A.C. (2013) The presentation of self in the online world: Goffman and the study of online identities, *Journal of Information Science*, 39 (1), 101–112.

Burgess, R. (1984), *In the Field, An Introduction to Field Research*, London, Allen and Unwin.

Burgess J. , Cassidy E , Duguay S , and Light, B (2016) Making Digital Cultures of Gender and Sexuality With Social Media, *Social Media + Society,* October-December: 1-4.

Calvert, C. (2000), *Voyeur Nation: Media, Privacy, and Peering in Modern Culture*, Critical Studies in Communication and in Cultural Industries,Oxford, Westview Press.

Campbell, R., (2006), 'Teenage Girls and Cellular Phones: Discourses of Independence, Safety and "Rebellion", *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9 (2): 195–212.

Cassell, J. and Cramer, M. (2007) 'High Tech or High Risk? Moral Panics about Girls Online', in MacPherson T. The John D., and Catherine T. MacArthur *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected, Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 53–75.

Castells, M. (2007) 'Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society'. *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007), 238-266

Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. V*ol. 1, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture.* Cambridge, MA, and Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Chatterston P. and Hollands, R. (2003), *Urban Nightscapes*: *Youth* Cultures, *Pleasure* Spaces and Corporate Power. New York: Routledge.

Chambers, D. (2013), *Social Media and Personal Relationships. Online Intimacies and Networked Friendship,* Palgrave Macmillan.

Cheung, C. (2004). Identity construction and self-presentation on personal homepages: Emancipatory potentials and reality constraints. In *Web.Studies: Rewriting media studies for the digital age*, ed. Gauntlett D. and Horsley R.,

53–67. New York: Edward Arnold.

Christofides, E., Muise, A. and Desmarais, S., (2009). Information Disclosure and Control on Facebook: Are They Two Sides of the Same Coin or Two Different Processes? *CyberPsychology and Behavior,* 12(3), 341–345.

Cieslik, M. (2003) 'Contemporary Youth Research: Issues, Controversies and Dilemmas', in Andy Bennett, Mark Cieslik and Steven Miles (eds) *Researching Youth*, pp. 1–10. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cieslik, M. (2001) 'Researching youth cultures: some problems with the cultural turn in British youth studies', *Scottish Youth Issues Journal,* vol. 2, pp. 27-48

Cieslik, M. and Pollock, G. (eds) (2002) *Young People in Risk Society: The Restructuring of Youth Identities and Transitions in Late Modernity.* Aldershot: Ashgate Press.

Cieslik, M. and Simpson, D. (2013), *Key Concepts in Youth Studies*, London: SAGE Publications.

Coffey, J., and D. Farrugia. (2014) Unpacking the black box: The problem of agency in the sociology of youth. *Journal of Youth Studies* 17(4): 461–474

Cohen, N. S. (2008). The valorization of surveillance: Towards a political economy of Facebook. *Democratic Communiqué* 22(1), 5–22.

Cohen, N. S. and Shade L.R. (2008). Gendering Facebook: Privacy and commodification. *Feminist Media Studies*, 8 (2): 210-214.

Collin, P. and Burns, J. (2009).The experience of youth in the digital age in Furlong, A. (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New Perspectives,* Routledge, Oxford.

Conor, B., Gill, R. and Taylor, S (2015) Gender and Creative Labour in *The Sociological Review*, 63:S1, pp. 1–22

Cook, R. (2013) *The Changing Face of Youth Unemployment and Employment in Scotland.* 1992 – 2012. The Scotland Institute. Available at : http://www.scotlandinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/YouthUnemployment-Scotland-Institute-May-2013.pdf (accessed 26/06/2017).

Cook, J. and Hasmath, R. (2014), The Discursive Construction and Performance of Gendered Identity on Social Media, *Current Sociology* 62(7) 975-993.

Côté, J. (2016) A new political economy of youth reprised: rejoinder to France and Threadgold, Journal *of Youth Studies* 19(6):852-868.

Côté, J (2014a) *Youth Studies, Fundamental Issues and Debates*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Côté, J. (2014b). Towards a new political economy of youth, *Journal of Youth Studies,* 17(4), 527 543

Côté, J (2000) *Arrested Adulthood: The changing nature of maturity and identity in the late modern world.* New York: New York University Press.

Coté, M., and Pybus, J., (2011), 'Learning to immaterial labour 2.0: Facebook and

social networks', in M.A. Peters and E. Bulut (eds), Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labour, 169–193, New York: Peter Lang

Cotterill, P. (1992) 'Interviewing Women: Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power', *Women's Studies International Forum* 15: 593–606.

Couldry N. (2008) Mediatization or mediation: alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media & Society* 10(3): 373–391.

Couldry, N.(2000) *The Place of Media Power.* London:Routledge.

Day Good K. (2013) From scrapbook to Facebook: a history of personal media assemblage and archives. *New Media and Society* 15(4): 557–573.

Dean, M. (1999), *Govermentality, Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London, SAGE Publications.

De Certeau, M. (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press (first published in French in 1980)

Deleuze, G. (1990). "Postscript on Control Societies". In *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.177-182.

Denzin, N.. (1994) 'The Art and Politics of Interpretation', in N.. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) (1998), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

De Souza, Z. and Dick, G.N., (2009), Disclosure of information by children in social networking Not just a case of "you show me yours and I'll show you mine". *International Journal of Information Management,* 29(4), 255-261.

Deuze M, Blank P and Speers L (2012) A life lived in media. *Digital Humanities Quarterly,* 6(1).

Devine, F. and S. Heath (1999) *Sociological Research Methods in Context*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Celeste, C., and Shafer, S. (2004). Digital inequality: From unequal access to differentiated use. In K. Neckerman (Ed.), *Social inequality* (pp. 355-400). New York: Russell Sage.

Dobson, A. (2013), Performative shamelessness on young women's social network sites: Shielding the self and resisting gender melancholia, *Feminism and Psychology*, Vol. 24(1) 97–114.

Dobson, A. (2012) '"Individuality is Everything": Autonomous Femininity in MySpace Mottos and Self-descriptions', *Continuum*, 26(3): 371–83.

Dobson, A. (2011). Hetero-sexy representation by young women on MySpace: The politics of performing an 'objectified' self. *Outskirts*, vol 25

Dreyfus, H. and Rabinov, P., (1982) *Michel Foucault ; Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, with an Afterword by Michel Foucault

Driscoll, C., and M. Greggs (2008). Broadcasting yourself: Moral panic, youth culture

and internet studies. In *Youth and media in the Asia-Pacific Region,* ed. Usha M. Rodrigues and Belinda Smaill. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.

du Bois Reymond; M. (2009) Models of Navigation and Life Management in Furlong, A. (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New perspectives and Agendas*, Routledge, London.

Duffy, D. (2017) Get on Your Feet, Get Happy: Happiness and the Affective Governing of Young People in the Age of Austerity in Kelly, P. and Pike. J., *Neo-liberalism and Austerity; The Morals Economies of Young People's Health and Well-Being*, London, Palgrave MacMillan.

Duguay, S. (2016) "He has a way gayer Facebook than I do": Investigating sexual identity disclosure and context collapse in a social networking site, *New Media & Society* 18 (6).

Edwards, R. and Holland, J. (2013) *What is Qualitative Interviewing?*, London Bloomsbury Academic.

Ellerbrok. A (2011) Playful Biometrics: Controversial Technology through the Lens of Play, *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4

Ellison, N. and boyd, d.(2013).Sociality through Social Network Sites. In Dutton, W. H. (Ed.), The *Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 151-172.

Ellison, N., Lampe, C., Steinfeld, C., and Vitak, J. (2011a) 'With a Little Help from My Friends: How Social Network Sites Affect Social Capital Processes', in Papacharissi, Z. (ed.), *A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York: Routledge, pp. 124–145.

Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C., and Lampe, C. (2011b) 'Connection Strategies: Social Capital Implications of Facebook-Enabled Communication Practices', *New Media and Society* 13(6): 873–892.

Ellison, N., Steinfeld, C., and Lampe, C. (2007) 'The benefits of Facebook "Friends": Exploring the relationship between College Students' Use of Online Social Networks and Social Capital', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12(3): 1143–1168.

Elwood, S. and Martin, D. (2000) 'Placing interviews: location and scales of power in qualitative research', *Professional Geographer,* 52: 649–657.

Evans, K. (2007). Concepts of bounded agency in education, work and the personal lives of young adults. *International Journal of Psychology* 42, no. 2: 85–93.

Evans, K. (2002). Taking control of their lives? Agency in young adult transitions in England and the new Germany. *Journal of Youth Studies* 5, no. 3: 245–69

Evans, K., and Furlong, A. (1997.) Metaphors of youth transitions: Niches, pathways, trajectories or navigations. In *Youth, citizenship and social change in a European context*, ed. J. Bynner, L. Chisholm, and A. Furlong, 17–41. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Faber, A. (2017) From False Premises to False Conclusions. On Pierre Bourdieu's Alleged Sociological Determinism, *The American Sociologist,* pp1-17

Farrugia, D.(2013) 'The Reflexive Subject: Towards a Theory of Reflexivity as Practical Intelligibility', *Current Sociolog*y 61(3):283– 300.

Farrugia, D. and Woodman D. (2015), Ultimate concerns in late modernity: Archer, Bourdieu and reflexivity in *The British Journal of Sociology,* Volume 66 Issue 4.

Finn, J. (2012), Seeing Surveillantly, Surveillance as a social practice in Doyle A., R. Lippert and D. Lyon (eds), *Eyes Everywhere: The Global Growth of Camera Surveillance*, Oxon, Routledge.

Foucault, M. (2010), *The Government of Self and Others*, *Lectures at the College de France, 1982 – 1983,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2009), *Security, Territory, Population, Lectures at the College de France, 1977 – 1978*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1997), "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom in Rabinow. P. (eds) *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, vol. 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, New York: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self.* In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton (Eds.), Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault (pp. 16–49). Amherst: Univ. Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1982), The subject and Power in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 8 (4), pp.777-795

Foucault, M. (1980), *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings* 1972-1977, The Harvester Wheatsheaf Press Limited.

Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: The will to knowledge,* translated by R. Hurley. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1975) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison.* New York, Vintage Books.

France, A. (2016) *Understanding Youth in the Global Economic Crisis*, Bristol, Polity Press.

France, A. (2007) *Understanding Youth in Late Modernity*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

France, A., and S. Threadgold. (2015). "Youth and Political Economy: Towards a Bourdieusian Approach." *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol 19 (5).

France, A., and Roberts, S. (2015). The problem of social generations: a critique of the new emerging orthodoxy in youth studies. *Journal of Youth Studies* 18 (2), 215-230.

France, A., and E. Haddon. (2014). "Exploring the Epistemological Fallacy: Subjectivity and Class in the Lives of Young People." *Young* 22 (4): 305–321.

France, A. Bottrell, D and Armstrong D. (2012) *A Political Ecology of Youth and Crime,* Palgrave Macmillan.

Fraser, A. (2015) *Urban Legends: Gang Identity in the Post-Industrial City*. Series: Clarendon studies in criminology. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Fuchs, C. (2015). *Culture and economy in the age of social media.* New York, London Routledge.

Fuchs, C. (2014) *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. London, Sage.

Fuchs, C. (2012). The political economy of privacy on Facebook. *Television and New Media.* 13 (2), pp. 139-159.

Fuchs, C. (2011), Web 2.0, Prosumption, and Surveillance, *Surveillance and Society* 8(3): 288-309.

Fuchs, C. (2009). Information and communication technologies and society. A contribution to the critique of the political economy of the Internet. *European Journal of Communication* 24 (1): 69-87.

Fuchs, C. (2008). *Internet and society: social theory in the information age*. New York Routledge.

Fuchs, C., Boersma, K. Albrechtslund, A and Sandoval, M. (2011) *Internet and Surveillance: The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media,* New York: Routledge.

Furlong, A. (2015) Transitions, Cultures, and Identities: What Is Youth Studies? In Woodman, D. and Bennett, A. (eds) *Youth Cultures, Transitions, and Generations, Bridging the Gap in Youth Research*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York.

Furlong, A. (2013) *Youth Studies: An Introduction.* Oxon: Routledge.

Furlong, A. (ed.) (2009a) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New perspectives and Agendas*, Routledge, London.

Furlong, A. (2009b) Revisiting transitional metaphors: reproducing social inequalities under the conditions of late modernity, *Journal of Education and Work,* 22 (5) pp.343-353.

Furlong, A., Woodman, D. and Wyn, J. (2011), 'Changing times, changing perspectives: Reconciling 'transition' and 'cultural' perspectives on youth and young adulthood ' in *Journal of Sociology*, 47: 355.

Furlong, A. and Cartmel, F. (2007) *Young People and Social Change: New Perspectives*, Open University Press, Buckingham, Second Edition.

Furlong, A., Cartmel, F. and Biggart, A. (2006) Choice biographies and transitional linearity: Re-conceptualising modern youth transitions, Papers: *Revista de Sociologia,* No. 79 pp.225-239.

Furlong, A., and Kelly, P. (2005) The Brazilianization of youth transitions in Australia and the UK? *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 40(2).

Gane, N. (2012), 'The Governmentalities of Neoliberalism: Panopticism, Post-Panopticism and Beyond' *The Sociological Review,* vol 60, no. 4, pp. 611-34.

Gershon, I. (2010) *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media.* Ithica, NY and London: Cornell University Press.

Gibbs, J., Ellison, N. and Heino, R. (2016) Self-Presentation in Online Personals: The Role of Anticipated Future Interaction Self-Disclosure, and Perceived Success in Internet Dating, *Communication Research*, Vol 33 (2).

Giddens, A. (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy.* Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.* Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.

Gillepsie, T. (2010) 'The Politics of "platforms"'. *New Media & Society*, 12 (3) 347-364.

Gill, R. and Pratt, A. (2008) 'In the social factory? Immaterial labour, precariousness and cultural work', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 25(7-8): 1-30.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goggin, G. (2006), *Cell Phone Culture*: *Mobile Technology in Everyday Life, New* York, Routledge.

Goodwin, J., and O'Connor, H. (2005). Exploring Complex Transitions: Looking back at the golden age of youth transitions ', *Sociology*, 39(2), 201-220.

Gregg, M. (2011) *Work's Intimacy,* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Gregg, M. (2009) Learning to (Love) Labour: Production Cultures and the Affective Turn, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, v. 6 no. 2.

Gregg, M. and Driscoll, C., (2008). The YouTube generation: moral panic, youth culture and Internet studies. In: U. Rodrigues, ed. *Youth and media in the Asia-Pacific region*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Green, N. (2002) Who's Watching Whom? Monitoring and Accountability in Mobile Relations. In B. Brown, N. Green and R. Harper (Eds.), *Wireless World: Social and Interactional Aspects of the Mobile Age*, Springer, London, 32-45.

Green, E.and Singleton, C. (2009), Mobile connections: an exploration of the place of mobile phones in friendship relations, *The Sociological Review*, 57:1

Griffin, C. (2010) 'The trouble with class: researching youth, class and culture beyond the Birmingham School', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14 (3): 245–59.

Griffin, C., et al., (2009). ''Every time I do it I absolutely annihilate myself'': loss of (self)-consciousness and loss of memory in young people's drinking narratives. Sociology, 43 (3),457-476.

Griffiths, V. (1995) *Adolescent Girls and their Friends: A Feminist Ethnography.* Aldershot: Avebury.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds) (2002) *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research*: Context and Method, Th ousand Oaks, CA, London and New Delhi: Sage.

Guillemin, M. and Gillam, L. (2004) "Ethics, Reflexivity, and 'Ethically important moments" in *Research, Qualitative Inquiry*, 10: pp. 261–80.

Haggerty, K. and Ericson, R.(2006) *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press Incorporated.

Haggerty K and Ericson RV (2000) The surveillant assemblage, *British Journal of Sociology* 51(4): 605–622.

Hall, S. and Jefferson, T., (2006). Once more around 'Resistance through rituals'. In: S. Hall and T. Jefferson, eds. *Resistance through rituals*. 2nd ed [first edition 1976]. London: Routledge, vii-xxxii.

Hargittai, E. (2008) 'The Digital Reproduction of Inequality', in Grusky, D. (ed.), *Social Stratificatio*n. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 936–944.

Hargittai, E. (2002). Second-level digital divide: Differences in people's online skills. *First Monday,* 7(4).

Hargittai, E. and Hinnant, A. (2008) 'Digital Inequality Differences in Young Adults' Use of the Internet' in *Communication Research* Volume 35 Number 5, pp. 602-621.

Harris, A. (2008). Young women, late modern politics, and the participatory possibilities of online cultures. *Journal of Youth Studies* 11, no. 5: 481–95.

Harris A (2004) *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (2005), *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heath, S and Walker, C. (2012), *Innovations in Youth Research*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, E. and Ireland, E. (2009), *Researching Young People's Lives, London*: Sage.

Henderson, S..; Holland, J.; McGrellis, S.; Sharpe, S. and Thomson, R. (2006), *Inventing Adulthoods, A Biographical Approach to Youth Transitions*, London Sage Publications.

Henderson, S..; Taylor, S.. and Thomson, R.(2002).In Touch, Young People, Communication and Technologies, *Information, Communication and Society*, 5 (4).

Herring, S.C., (2007). Questioning the generational divide: Technological exoticism and adult construction of online youth identity. In D. Buckingham, ed. *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 71-94.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2010), User-generated content, free labour and the cultural industries, *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 10 (3/4), 267-284

Hey, V., (1997), *The Company She Keeps: An Ethnography of Girls' Friendship*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hirsch, E. and Silverstone R. (1992) *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*, Routledge, London.

Hobbs, M, Owen, S. and Gerber, L. (2016) Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy, *Journal of Sociology* 1–14

Hochschild, A. R. (1997). *The Time Bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work.* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Hodkinson, P., (2007). Youth cultures: a critical outline of key debates. In: P. Hodkinson and W. Deicke, eds. *Youth cultures: scenes, subcultures and tribes*. London: Routledge, 1-22.

Hodkinson, P. (2005) '"Insider Research" in the Study of Youth Cultures', *Journal of Youth Studies,* 8(2): 131–49.

Hodkinson P, (1999) 'Use of Habitus, Capital and Field in Understanding Young People's Career Decision Making', in *Pierre Bourdieu: Language, Culture and Education*, ed. by Grenfell M and Kelly M, Bern: Peter Lang.

Hogan, B. (2010) The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media: Distinguishing Performances and Exhibitions Online in B*ulletin of Science, Technology & Society,* 30 (6).

Hollands, R. (2015). Waiting for the weekend?: Nightlife studies and the convergence of youth transition and youth cultural analyses. In Woodman, D. and Bennett, A., *Youth Cultures, Transitions, and Generations, Bridging the Gap in Youth Research*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York.

Hollands, R (2002) Divisions in the Dark: Youth Cultures, Transitions and Segmented Consumption Spaces in the Night-Time Economy, *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol 5 (2).

Holland, J., Reynolds, T. and Weller, S (2007) 'Transitions, networks and communities: the significance of social capital in the lives of children and young people', *Journal of Youth Studies* , vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 101 -120.

Holdsworth, C. and Morgan, D. (2007) 'Revisiting the Generalized Other: An Exploration', *Sociology* 41(3): 401–417.

Holloway, S. and Valentine, G, (2003) *Cyberkids: Children in the Information Age*, London: Routledge Falmer.

Holstein, J. and J. Gubrium. (1997). *The Active Interview*.Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hope, A. (2015), Schoolchildren, governmentality and national e-safety policy discourse *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* Vol. 36, No. 3, 343–353.

Howie, L. and Campbell , P.(2016) Guerrilla selfhood: imagining young people's entrepreneurial futures, *Journal of Youth Studies,* 19:7, 906-920.

Hutchby, I. (2001). Technologies, texts and affordances. *Sociology*, 35, 441–456.

Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., boyd, d., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., Horst, H.A., Lange, P.G., Mahendran, D., Martinez, K.Z., Pascoe, C.J., Perkel, D., Robinson, L., Sims, C., and Tripp, L. (2010) *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media.* Cambridge, MA:

MIT Press.

Jamieson, L. (1999) 'Intimacy Transformed? A Critical Look at the "Pure Relationship"', *Sociology* 33(3): 477–494.

Jamieson, L. (1998) *Intimacy: Personal Relationships in Modern Societies*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Jansson , A. (2012) Perceptions of surveillance: Reflexivity and trust in a mediatized world *European Journal of Communication* , 27(4) 410–427.

Joinson, A. (2008), 'Looking at', 'Looking up' or 'Keeping up with' People? Motives and Uses of Facebook in *CHI* 2008.

Jenkins, H (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: NYU Press.

Jenkins, H. (2004). The myths of growing up online. *Technology Review*. Retrieved April 16, 2016, from http://www.technologyreview.com/Biotech/13773/ (accessed 26/06/2017)

Jenkins, H, Ito M. and boyd d. (2016) *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce, and Politics,* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Jones, G. (2009), *Youth,* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Jones, G. (2002) *The Youth Divide*: *Diverging Paths to Adulthood*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Kehily M.J. (2007) *Understanding Youth: Perspectives, Identities and Practices*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Kelly, P. (2013) *The Self as Enterprise: Foucault and the Spirit of the 21st century capitalism* ,Gower.

Kelly, P. (2006) The Entrepreneurial Self and Youth at-Risk: Exploring the Horizons of Identity in the 21st Century, *Journal of Youth Studies,* 9 (1), pp.17-32.

Kelly, P. (2003) "Growing Up as Risky Business? Risks, Surveillance and the Institutionalised Mistrust of Youth." *Journal of Youth Studies* 6 (2): 165–180.

Kelly, P. (2001). Youth-at-risk: Processes of Individualisation and Responsibilisation in the Risk Society. *Discourse* 22 (1): 23–33.

Kelly, P. (2000) Youth as an Artefact of Expertise: Problematizing the Practice of Youth Studies in an Age of Uncertainty, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3:3, 301-315

Kelly, P. and Pike. J. (2017) *Neo-liberalism and Austerity; The Morals Economies of Young People's Health and Well-Being,* London, Palgrave MacMillan.

Kelly, P., Campbell, P. and Harrison. L (2015). "Don't be a Smart Ass': Social Enterprise-based Transitional Labour-Market Programmes as Neoliberal Technologies of the Self." *British Journal of the Sociology of Education* 36 (4): 558–576.

Kelly, P. and Kamp, A. (eds) (2015), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century*, Leiden, Brill Editions.

Kelly, P. and Harrison, L. (.2009.) *Working in Jamie's Kitchen: Salvation, Passion and Young Workers*. Hampshire: Palgrave

Koskela, H. (2006). 'The other side of surveillance'. Webcams, power and agency. In D. Lyon (ed.) *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond.* Willan Publishing, Cullompton.

Kvale, S., (1996) *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*, London, Sage Publications.

Lambert, A. (2013), *Intimacy and Friendship on Facebook,* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lampe, C., Ellison, N., and Steinfield, C. (2008). Changes in Use and Perception of Facebook. In *Proceedings of the 2008 Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work.*

Lampe, C., Ellison, N., and Steinfield, C. (2007). A Familiar Face(book): Profile Elements as Signals in an Online Social Network. *Proceedings of Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2007)* (pp. 435-444). New York: ACM Press. San Jose, CA.

Lampe, C., Ellison, N., and Steinfield, C. (2006). A face(book) in the crowd: social searching vs. social browsing. *Proceedings of CSCW-2006 (*pp. 167-170). New York: ACM Press. Banff, Alberta, Canada.

Laval, C. (2017) Foucault and Bourdieu: To each his own Neoliberalism?, *Sociologia & Antropologia*.vol.7, no.1.

Leander, K. and McKim, K. (2003)Tracing the Everyday 'Sittings' of Adolescents on the Internet: a strategic adaptation of ethnography across online and offline spaces, *Education, Communication and Information*, Vol. 3, No. 2.

Lee, L. (2008). The impact of young people's internet use on class boundaries and life trajectories. *Sociology,* 42(1), 137-153.

Lehmann, W. (2009). Becoming Middle Class: How Working-class University Students Draw and Transgress Moral Class Boundaries. *Sociology*. 43 (4), 631-647

Lenhart, A. (2015). "Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview: 2015." *Pew Research Centre*. http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015 (accessed 26/06/2017).

Lewis, K., Kaufman, J., & Christakis, N. (2008). The taste for privacy: An analysis of college student privacy settings in an online social network. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14, 79-100.

Lievrouw, L., 2001. New media and the 'pluralization of live-worlds': a role for information in social differentiation. *New media and society,* 3 (1), 7-28.

Light, B (2014) *Disconnecting with Social Networking Sites* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Light, B, Burgess, J, Duguay, S. (2018) The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps, *New media & Society*, Vol. 20(3) .

Lincoln, S. and Robards, B. (2017), Editing the project of the self: sustained Facebook use and growing up online, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20:4, 518-531.

Lincoln, S. and Robards, B. (guest editors) (2014) 10 years of Facebook, *New Media & Society* Vol 16 (7).

Lincoln, S. and Robards, B. (2014), Being Strategic and Taking Control: Bedrooms, Social Networks Sites and the narratives of growing up, N*ew Media and Society*, Vol. 18(6) 927–943.

Ling, R. (2004). *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society*: San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufman..

Ling, R. (2000) ""We will be reached": the use of mobile telephony among Norwegian youth", *Information Technology and People* , Vol. 13 Iss: 2.

Liu, H. (2007). Social network profiles as taste performances. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 13, 252–275.

Livingstone, S. (2009) 'On the Mediation of Everything', *Journal of Communication* 59(1): 1–18.

Livingstone, S. (2008) Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New media and society,* 10 (3).

Livingstone, S. (2002). *Young People and New Media*. London, UK, and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., and Ólafsson, K. (2011) Risks and Safety on the Internet: The Perspective of European Children. Full Findings. *LSE*, London: EU Kids Online.

Livingstone, S., K. O'lafsson, and E. Staksrud. (2011). Social Networking, Age and Privacy. *EU Kids Online Report.*

Livingstone, S. and Bovill, M. (2011) 'Families and the Internet: An Observational Study of Children and Young People's Internet Use'. *Final report to BT*, Media @ LSE: London School of Economics.

Livingstone, S., and Haddon, L. (2009). Introduction. In S. Livingstone and L. Haddon (Eds.), *Kids online* (pp. 1-18). Bristol: the Policy Press.

Livingstone, S., and Helsper, E. (2007). Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people and the digital divide. *New Media and Society*, 9(4), 671-696.

Loader, B., (2007). Introduction: young citizens in the digital age: disaffected or displaced? In: B. Loader, ed. *Young citizens in the digital age.* London: Routledge, 1-18.

Lup, K, Trub, L. and Rosenthal, L. (2015) Instagram #Instasad?: Exploring Associations Among Instagram Use, Depressive Symptoms, Negative Social Comparison, and Strangers Followed, in *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking*, Vol 18, N.5

Lupton, D. (2016) *The Quantified Self,* Polity Press. Cambridge.

Lupton, D. (2013), Quantifying the body: monitoring and measuring health in the age of Health technologies, *Critical Public Health,* Vol. 23, No. 4, 393–403

Lyon, D. (2007) *Surveillance Studies, An Overview*, Polity Press.

Lyon, D. (2006) *Theorizing Surveillance, The Panopticon and Beyond,* Portland, Willan Publishing.

Lyon, D. (2002a), Editorial. Surveillance Studies: Understanding visibility, mobility and the phenetic fix, *Surveillance and Society* 1(1): 1-7.

Lyon, D. (2002b), Everyday Surveillance : Personal data and social classifications in *Information, Communication & Society* 5:2.

Lyon, D. (2001) *Surveillance Society: Monitoring Everyday Life*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lyon, D. and D. Trottier (2011), Key Features of Social media Surveillance in Fuchs, *Internet and Surveillance: The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media,* Routledge.

MacDonald, R. (2011) 'Youth transitions, unemployment and underemployment: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' *Sociology,* 47(4).

MacDonald, R and Shildrick, T. (2007) 'Street corner society: Leisure careers, youth (sub)culture and social exclusion', *Leisure Studies,* 26 (3): 339-355.

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J. (2005) *Disconnected Youth? Growing up in Poor Neighbourhoods*. Houndsmill: Palgrave.

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J. (2001) Disconnected Youth? *Journal of Youth Studies* 4(4): 373-391.

MacDonald, R., Mason, P., Shildrick, T., Webster, C., Johnston, L. and Ridley, L. (2000) 'Snakes and ladders: in defence of studies of transition', Sociological Research On-line , vol. 5, pp. 4.

Madden, M. (2012) 'Privacy Management on Social Media Sites', *Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Projec*t, pewinternet.org, pp. 1–20.

Madden, M., and A. Smith. (2010). Reputation management and social media: How people monitor their identity and search for others online. *Pew Internet Report,* available at http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Reputation-Management.aspx?r¼1 (accessed 26/06/2017).

Madianou and Miller, (2012), Polymedia: towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication, *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 16: 169–187.

Mann, S., Nolan, J. and Wellman, B. (2003), "Sousveillance: Inventing and Using Wearable Computing Devices for Data Collection in Surveillance Environments" *Surveillance and Society* 1(3): 331-355 .

Marwick, A.(2013) *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age.* Yale University Press.

Marwick, A. (2012). The Public Domain: Surveillance in Everyday Life, *Surveillance and Society* 9(4): 378-393.

Marwick, A. (2008). "To Catch a Predator? The MySpace Moral Panic." *First Monday* 13(6).

Marwick, A. and boyd, d. (2014) 'It's Just Drama': teen perspectives on conflict and aggression in a networked era. *Journal of Youth Studies.*

Marwick, A and boyd, d (2014b) Networked Privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media, *New Media & Society*, Vol. 16(7) 1051–106.

Marwick, A. and boyd, d. (2011), I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience, in *New Media and Society* 13(1): 113-144.

Marwick , A., Diaz , D.M. and Palfrey, J. (2010), Youth, Privacy and Reputation, Literature Review, *Berkman Centre for Internet and Society* , available at https://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications/2010/Youth_Privacy_Reputation_Lit_Review (accessed 26/06/2017).

Mason, J. (2002), *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage Publications, Second Edition.

Mathiesen, T. (1997) The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's `Panopticon' Revisited, *Theoretical Criminology*, vol 1(2)

Mauthner, N. and Doucet, A. (2003) Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis in *Sociology*, Vol 37(3): 413–431

McCahill, M. and Finn R.. (2010). The Social impact of Surveillance in Three UK Schools: 'Angels', 'Devils' and 'Teen Mums'. *Surveillance and Society* 7(3/4): 273-289.

McLeod, J. (2000). Metaphors of the self: Searching for young people's identity through interviews. In *Researching youth*, ed. Julie McLeod and Karen Malone, 45–58. Hobart: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

McLeod, J and Wright, K. (2009) The Talking Cure in Everyday Life: Gender, Generations and Friendship, *Sociology,* Volume 43(1): 122–139

McNay, L. (2009), Self as Enterprise Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics, *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 26(6): 55–77.

McNay, L. (1999), Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity, *Theory, Culture and Societ,y* Vol 16 (1) 95-117.

McRobbie, A. (2016) *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries,* Polity Press.

McRobbie, A. (2007). Top girls? Young women and the post-feminist sexual contract. *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 4–5: 718–37.

McRobbie, A. (2004) Notes on What not to Wear and Symbolic Violence. *Sociological Review*. 52 (supplement 2), 97-109.

Meiselwitz, G. (2013). Readability assessment of policies and procedures of social networking sites. In *Online Communities and Social Computing* (pp. 67-75). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Melander, L. A. (2010). College students' perceptions of intimate partner cyber harassment. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking,* 13, 263-268.

Mendelson, A., and Papacharissi, Z. (2010). Look at us: Collective narcissism in college student Facebook photo galleries. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *The networked self: Identity, community and culture on social network sites* (pp. 251-273). London, England: Routledge.

Miles, S. (2000) *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Miles, S (1998), *Consumerism: As a Way of Life,* Sage Publications.

Miles, S., Dallas, C. and Burr, V. (1998) 'Fitting in and sticking out: consumption, consumer means and the construction of young people's identities', *Journal of Youth Studies* , vol. 1 no. 1, pp. 81-96.

Miller, D. (2011), *Tales from Facebook*, Polity Books.

Monahan, T (2006), The Surveillance Curriculum - Risk Management and Social Control in the Neoliberal School. In Monahan, T (eds) *Surveillance and Security: Technological Politics and Power in Everyday Life*, Routledge.

Morey, E., Bengry-Howell, A, and Griffin, C. (2012) Public Profiles, Private Parties: Digital Ethnography, Ethics and Research in the Context of Web 2.0 in Heath, S and Walker, C. (eds), *Innovations in Youth Research*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Muise, A., Christofides, E., and Desmarais, S. (2009). More information than you ever wanted: Does Facebook bring out the green-eyed monster of jealousy? *Cyberpsychology and Behavior,* 12(4), 441-445.

Muncie, J. (2004),*Youth and Crime* (second edition), London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Murthy, D. (2008) Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research, *Sociology*, Volume 42(5).

Naidoo, R., Shankar, A and Veer E. (2011) 'The consumerist turn in higher education: policy aspirations and outcomes', *Journal of Marketing Management,* 27, 11-12, pp.1142-62.

Nissenbaum, H. (2010) *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life*. California: Stanford University Press.

Oakley, A. (1998) Gender, methodology and people's ways of knowing: some problems with feminism and the paradigm debate in social science. *Sociology* 32(4): 707-731.

Ofcom, (2016), Adults' media use and attitudes Available at https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf?lang=uqovrjuc (accessed 26/06/2017)

Ofcom. (2009), Media Literacy Audit, Digital Lifestyles: Young adults aged 16-24, Research Document. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/internet-and-on-demand-research/internet-use-and-attitudes (accessed 26/06/2017)

Ofcom. (2008). Social Networking: A quantitative and qualitative research report into attitudes, behaviours and use http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/02_04_08_ofcom.pdf (accessed 26/06/2017).

O'Reilly, T. (2007) 'What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software.' *Communications and Strategies* 65(1): 17-37.

Orgad, S. (2005) From online to offline and back: moving from online to offline relationships with research informants. In: Hine, Christine, (ed.) *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet*. Berg, Oxford, UK, pp. 51-66

Padfield, M. and Procter, I. (1996)The Effects on the Interviewer's Gender on the Interview Process: A Comparative Enquiry, *Sociology*, Vol 30, Issue 2.

Pahl, R., (2000), *On Friendship,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Papacharissi, Z. eds. (2011), *A Networked Self: Identity, Community and Culture on Social Network Sites*. London: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2002) 'the Presentation of the Self in virtual life, Characteristic of home pages' in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly.*

Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Pascoe, C.J. (2010) 'Intimacy', in Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., boyd, d., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., Horst, H.A., Lange, P.G., Mahendran, D., Martinez, K.Z., Pascoe, C.J., Perkel, D., Robinson, L., Sims, C., and Tripp, L. (eds.), *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 117–148.

Pinch, T. (2010). "The Invisible Technologies of Goffman's Sociology from the Merry-go-round to the Internet." *Technology and Culture* 51 (2): 409–424.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.

Reay, D. (2012). 'We Never Get a Fair Chance': Working Class Experiences of Education in the Twenty-First Century' in Atkinson, Will et al. (eds) 2012. Class Inequality in Austerity Britain: Power, Difference and Suffering. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 33-50.

Reay, D, David, M. and Ball, S. (2001) Degrees of Choice: social class, `Race' and the Higher Education Choice Process, *Sociology* vol. 35 no. 4 855-874.

Regan, P. and Steeves, V. (2010). Kids R Us: Online Social Networking and the Potential for Empowerment. *Surveillance and Society* 8(2): 151-165.

Rheingold, H. (1993) *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. Reading: MA: Addison-Wesley.

Rice G. (2010) "Reflections on interviewing elites" in *Area* Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 70–75.

Richman, A. (2007), 'The Outsider Lurking online, adults researching youth cybercultures' in Best, A. *Representing Youth: Methodological Issues in*

Critical Youth Studies, NYU Press.

Ringrose, J. (2011) 'Are You Sexy, Flirty, Or a Slut? Exploring ''Sexualization'' and How Teen Girls Perform/Negotiate Digital Sexual Identity on Social Networking Sites'. In: Gill, R. and Scharff, C (eds) N*ew Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 99–116.

Ringrose, J. (2007) 'Successful Girls? Complicating Post-feminist, Neoliberal Discourses of Educational Achievement and Gender Equality', *Gender and Education* 19(4): 471–89.

Robards, B. (2013) Friending participants: managing the researcher–participant relationship on social network sites. *YOUNG* 21(3): 217–235.

Robards, B. (2012) Leaving MySpace and joining Facebook: 'growing up' on social network sites. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 26(3): 385–398.

Robards, B. (2010) Randoms in my bedroom: unsolicited contact on social network sites. *Prism* 7(3): 1–12.

Robards B. and Lincoln, S. (2017) Uncovering longitudinal life narratives: scrolling back on Facebook, *Qualitative Research* 17 (6) 715-730.

Robards, B. and Lincoln S. (2016) Making It "Facebook Official": Reflecting on Romantic Relationships Through Sustained Facebook Use, *Social Media + Society.*

Robards, B., and A. Bennett. (2011). MyTribe: Postsubcultural manifestations of belonging on social network sites. *Sociology* 45, no. 2: 303–17.

Roberts K, (2009), Socio-economic reproduction in Furlong, A. (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood: New perspectives and Agendas*, Routledge, London.

Roberts K, (2007) Youth Transitions and Generations: A Response to Wyn and Woodman. *Journal of youth studies*, Volume: 10; Issue: 2.

Roberts, K. (2003) Problems and priorities for the sociology of youth', in A. Bennett, A., Cieslik, M. and Miles, S. *Researching Youth*, Basingstoke, Palgrave

Roberts, K. (1995) *Youth and employment in modern Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Roberts, S (2011) 'Beyond 'NEET' and 'Tidy' Pathways: Considering the "missing middle" of youth transition studies', *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 21-39.

Roberts, S. and MacDonald, R. (2013) "Introduction for Special Section of Sociological Research Online: The Marginalised Mainstream: Making Sense of the 'Missing Middle' of Youth Studies", in *Sociological Research Online,* 18 (1) 21.

Reynolds, T. (2007), Friendship Networks, Social Capital and Ethnic Identity: Researching the Perspectives of Caribbean Young People in Britain. *Journal of*

Youth Studies, 10 (4), 383-398.

Rooney, T. (2010). Trusting children: How do surveillance technologies alter a child's experience of trust, risk and responsibility? *Surveillance and Society* 7(3/4): 344-355.

Rosa, H, (2003) 'Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society', *Constellations* 10(1): 3–33.

Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought,* Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N., (1989). *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*. London: Routledge.

Rose , J., Mackey-Kallis , S., Shyles , L., Barry , K., Biagini , D., Hart C. and Jack, L. (2012) Face it: The Impact of Gender on Social Media Images, *Communication Quarterly,* 60:5, 588-607

Roulston, K. (2010) *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, London: Sage.

Scholz, T. (2008) Market ideology and the myths of Web 2.0, *First Monday,* 13(3).

Schroeder, R. (2002). The social life of avatars: Presence and interaction in shared virtual environments. In R. Schroeder (Ed.), *Social interaction in virtual environments: Key issues, common themes, and a framework for research* (pp. 1-18). Berlin, Germany: Springer-Verlag.

Selwyn, N. (2004). Reconsidering political and popular understandings of the digital divide. *New Media and Society,* 6(3), 341–362.

Selwyn, N. (2003) 'Doing IT for the Kids: Re-examining Children, Computers and the Information Society', *Media , Culture and Society* 25: 3.

Sennett, R. (2006) *The Culture of the New Capitalism*. London: Yale University Press.

Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., Webster, C. and Garthwaite K. (2012) *Poverty and Insecurity*: *Life in Low-Pay*, *No-Pay Britain,* Bristol, Policy Press.

Shildrick, T., and MacDonald, R. (2006). In Defence of Subculture: Young people, leisure and social divisions', *Journal of Youth Studie*s, 9(2), 125–140.

Shove, E (2009) Everyday practice and the production and consumption of time. In E. Shove, F. Trentmann, and R. Wilk (Eds.), *Time, consumption and everyday life*. Oxford Berg.

Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for analysing text, talk and interaction (*second edition). London: Sage.

Silverman, D (1997) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Methods and Practice*, London Sage.

Silverstone, R. (2005) Mediation and communication. In: Calhoun C, Rojek C and Turner, B. (eds) *Handbook of Sociology*. London: Sage, pp. 188–207.

Silverstone, R. (2002), Complicity and collusion in the mediation of everyday life. *New Literary History*, 33 (4). pp. 761-780.

Skeggs, B. (2015) Introduction: stratification or exploitation, domination, dispossession and devaluation?, *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 63, pp. 205–222.

Skeggs, B. (2005) The Making of Class through Moral Subject Formation. *Sociology.* 39 (5), 965-982.

Skeggs, B. (1997) *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable.* London: Sage.

Srnicek, N. (2016), *Platform Capitalism*, UK: Polity Press.

Song, M. and Parker I. (1995) 'Commonality, Difference, and the Dynamics of Disclosure in In-depth Interviewing', *Sociology* 29: 241–56.

Sukarieh, M.,and S. Tannock. (2015). *Youth Rising?: The Politics of Youth in the Global Economy.* New York: Routledge.

Sukariek M and Tannock S (2011)The positivity imperative: a critical look at the youth development movement. *Journal of Youth Studies* , 14 (6) pp. 675-691.

Standing, G. (2011). *The Precariat, The New Dangerous Class* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Stroud, N. J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior,* 30, 341–366.

Sturken, M., Douglas, T. and Ball-Rokeach, S. (2004) *Technological Visions: The Hopes and Fears that Shape New Technologies.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Tapscott, D. (1998) *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generatio*n, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Terranova, T. (2004). *Network culture: Politics for the information age.* London, Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

Thomson, R. (2011) *Unfolding Lives: Youth, Gender and Change.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Thomson, R. (2007). "A Biographical Perspective." In *Understanding Youth: Perspectives, Identities and Practices,* edited by M. J. Kehily, 73–106. London: Sage.

Thomson, R., R. Bell, J. Holland, S. Henderson, S. McGrellis, and S. Sharpe. (2002). Critical moments: Choice, chance and opportunity in young people's narratives of transition. *Sociology* 36, no. 2: 335–54.

Thornton, S (1996) *Club Cultures*: *Music, Media and Subcultural Capital,* Polity Press

Threadgold, S (2011) Should I pitch my tent in the middle ground? On 'middling tendency', Beck and inequality in youth sociology, *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 381-393

Threadgold, S., and P. Nilan. 2009. "Reflexivity of Contemporary Youth, Risk and Cultural Capital." *Current Sociology* 57 (1): 47–68.

Tilleczek, K. (2011). *Approaching youth studies: Being, becoming and belonging*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Tokunaga, R. (2011), Social Networking Site or Social Surveillance Site? Understanding the Use of Interpersonal Electronic Surveillance in Romantic Relationships, *Computers in Human Behaviour* 27 (2) (March): 705–713.

Trottier, D. (2012) *Social Media as Surveillance: Rethinking Visibility in a Converging World*, Surrey; Ashgate.

Trottier, D. (2011), 'A Research Agenda for Social Media Surveillance' in *Fast Capitalism,* Vol 8.1.

Trottier, D, and Lyon. D. (2012). Key Features of Social Media Surveillance. In *Internet and Surveillance: The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media,* edited by Christian Fuchs, Kees Boersma, Anders Albrechtslund and Marisol Sandoval, 89-105. New York: Routledge.

Tufecki, Z. (2008) 'Can You See Me Now? Audience and Disclosure Regulation on Online Social Network Sites', Bulletin of Science, *Technology and Society,* 28(1): 20–36.

Turkle, S. (2011), *Alone Together, Why we expect more from technology and less from each other,* New York, Basic Books.

Turkle, S. (1996) 'Parallel Lives: Working on Identity in Virtual Space' in *Constructing the Self in a Mediated World: Inquiries in Social Construction*, ed. D. Grodin and T. R. Lindlof, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.156-75.

Turkle, S. (1995) *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet.* New York: Simon & Schuster

Valentine, G. (2004). *Public Space and the Culture of Childhood* Hants, UK: Ashgate.

van Deursen, A. J., and van Dijk, J. A. (2014). The digital divide shifts to differences in usage. *New Media and Society*, 16(3), 507-526.

van Dijck, J. (2013), *The Culture of Connectivity A Critical History of Social Media*, Oxford University Press.

van Dijck, J. (2012) 'Facebook as a tool for producing sociality and connectivity', *Television and New Media*, 13(2): 160–176.

van Dijck, J.(2009) Users like you: Theorizing agency in user-generated content; *Media, Culture and Society*; Vol. 31, No. 1, 41-58.

van Dijck, J. and Nieborg D. (2009), Wikinomics and its discontents: a critical analysis of Web 2.0 business manifestos, *New Media & Society*, Vol 11, Issue 5.

Vromen, A., M. A. Xenos, and B. Loader. (2015). "Young People, Social Media and Connective Action: From Organisational Maintenance to Everyday Political Talk." *Journal of Youth Studies* 18 (1): 80–100.

Wacquant, L. (2013), *Symbolic power and group-making: On Pierre Bourdieu's reframing of class*, Journal of Classical Sociology, 13(2) 274-291.

Walkerdine, V, (2003). Reclassifying upward mobility: femininity and the neoliberal subject. *Gender and education*, 15 (3), 237-248.

Walkerdine, V. and Bansel, P. (2009). "Neoliberalism, work and subjectivity: towards

a more complex account". In *Identities handbook*, Edited by: Wetherell, M. 492–507. London: Sage.

Ward, J. (2008), The online citizen-consumer: addressing young people's political consumption through technology, *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 5, 513-526.

Webster, F., (2001). A new politics? In: F. Webster, ed. *Culture and politics in the information age*.London: Routledge, 1-14.

Webster, C., Simpson, D., MacDonald, R., Abbas, A. Cieslik, M, Shildrick, T. and Simpson, M. (2004) *Poor Transitions: Social exclusion and young adults,* Bristol: The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

West, P. (2009) Health in Youth: Changing Times and Changing Influences, in Furlong, A (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood*, London: Routledge

West, A., Lewis, J. and Currie, P, (2009), Students' Facebook 'friends': public and private spheres. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(6), 615–627

Westcott, H. and S. Owen. (2013), Friendship and trust in the social surveillance network. *Surveillance and Society* 11(3).

White, R. and Wyn, J.,(2007). *Youth and society: exploring the social dynamics of youth*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press.

Whitson, J. R. (2013). Gaming the Quantified Self. *Surveillance and Society* 11(1/2): 163-176.

William, S. and William, L. (2005) Space invaders: The negotiation of teenage boundaries through the mobile phone, *Sociological Review* 53(2):314 – 33.

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Winlow, S. and Hall, S. (2009) Living for the weekend: youth identities in northeast England. *Ethnography*, 10 (1), 91-113.

Wittel, A. (2001), Toward a Network Sociality, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18 (6), 51-76.

Wohn, D.Y. and Bower, B.J. (2016), Micro Agenda Setters: The Effect of Social Media on Young Adults' Exposure to and Attitude Toward News, *Social Media + Society*, 1–12.

Woodlock, D. (2016), The Abuse of Technology in Domestic Violence and Stalking in *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 23(5),584-602.

Woodman, D. (2013) 'Young People's Friendships in the Context of Non-standard Work Patterns', *Economic and Labour Relations Review* 24(3): 416–32.

Woodman, D. (2012a) Life out of Synch: How New Patterns of Further Education and the Rise of Precarious Employment Are Reshaping Young People's Relationships. *Sociology,* 46(6) 1074–1090.

Woodman, D. (2012b), 'Researching 'Ordinary' Young People in a Changing World: The Sociology of Generations and the 'Missing Middle' in Youth Research', *Sociological Review Online*, 18 (1) 7.

Woodman D, (2011) Young People and the Future Multiple Temporal Orientations Shaped in Interaction with Significant Others, *Young* Vol 19, Issue 2.

Woodman, D. (2009) 'The Mysterious Case of the Pervasive Choice Biography: Ulrich Beck, structure/agency and the middling state of theory in the sociology of youth', *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 243-256.

Woodman, D. and Threadgold, S. (2015) Critical Youth Studies in an Individualized and Globalized World: Making the Most of Bourdieu and Beck in Kelly, P. and Kamp, A. (eds), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century*, Leiden, Brill Editions.

Woodman, D. and Bennett, A. (2015) *Youth Cultures, Transitions, and Generations, Bridging the Gap in Youth Research*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York.

Woodman, D and Wyn, J. (2014), *Youth and Generation, Rethinking change and inequality in the lives of young people*, SAGE Publications.

Wyn, J., (2009). *Youth health and welfare: the cultural politics of education and wellbeing*. Melbourne: Oxford.

Wyn, J., Cuervo, H., Crofts, J. and Woodman, D. (2017) Gendered transitions from education to work: The mysterious relationship between the fields of education and work, *Sociology*, Online version 1-15.

Wyn, J., S. Lantz and A. Harris (2012) 'Beyond the "Transitions" Metaphor: Family Relations and Young People in Late Modernity', *Journal of Sociology* 48(1): 1–20.

Wyn, J and Woodman, D (2007) 'Researching Youth in a Context of Social Change: A reply to Roberts', *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 373-381.

Wyn, J. and Woodman, D. (2006) 'Generation, Youth and Social Change in Australia', *Journal of Youth Studies* 9(5): 495–514.

Wyn, J, and White. R. (1997) *Rethinking Youth*. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

Zillien, N. and Hargittai, E. (2009), 'Digital Distinction: Status-Specific Types of Internet Usage',*Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 90, Number 2.

Zimmer, M. (2010) '"But the Data is already Public": On the Ethics of Research in Facebook', *Ethics and Information Technology*, 12(4): 313–25.