

The Other Side of the Screen

*Simultaneously maintaining social relationships in
real life and on social media*

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Abstract

Social media as a social concept is becoming a prominent fixture in social life and is taking on a significant increase in social relevance, both academically and in popular discourse. The academic research is often focused on either the online content itself or the macro societal implications, more than the real-life social aspect of social media. People using social media are now simultaneously producing content about their life online, whilst they are, in fact, living it. The new social feature of creating content for social media when being social with others in physical-social situations can have considerable implications for social interactions on a micro level. The volume and significance of social media production in social situations have become progressively substantial in social life for certain individuals. Therefore, the specific ways in which meaning is constructed and the individual handles the phenomenon can have substantial implications for social interaction.

In this thesis participants in the age group of independent adults that most frequently use social media (18-30), explain how they handle themselves in social situations and maintain social relationships when they themselves or others in social interactions concurrently produce content for social media. The exploration of the subject is concentrated around the following research questions: (1) How are social media use and production in social situations in *general* understood as socially significant by the participants? (2) How do the participants describe *specific* social media use and production in social situations? (3) And finally, how do the participants *normatively* legitimize and criticize their degree of social media use and production in social situations?

By imploring researcher-provoked data generated through interviews with participants who had varying degrees of use, I attempted to answer these research questions.

Erving Goffman's efforts on social framework, face-work, and spontaneous involvement, and George Simmel's understanding of social forms with a focus on exchange and sociability, in particular, function as the theoretical frame for analysis. Goffman's perspectives are applied to consider how social interaction is structured around common understandings of social frames, how the individual is considered and face is maintained during said interaction, and how participants become spontaneously involved and misinvolved. Simmel's social forms

exchange and sociability specify how the content of social interactions can have implications for meaning of the interaction and how the participants perceive it.

In the first chapter of analysis, I identify two main ways that social media production is socially significant for the participants: 1) The encompassing presence of social media in social life, and 2) social media as an extension of social life. The participants' experienced social media as substantially present in their social life, but also as an extension of social life itself. Some of the participants considered social media as a significant social frame whilst others did not. In the second chapter of analysis, I discuss how the participant's understandings of social media are relational to how they react emotionally when they experience social media production in social situations and how they respond to each other. In the last chapter of analysis, I argue that the participants legitimize and criticize personal use by utilizing their understanding of social media production in social situations. Some of the participants with little and average social media production argue that social media production makes "real-life" private moments unnecessarily public, and by producing content about social life on social media paradoxically the "real-life" social life is disrupted. This public aspect is exactly what contributes to the positive feature of broadcasting and legitimizing the real-life social relationships to other social relations on social media for the more avid users.

Acknowledgement

In the study of social media production in social situations, I was surprised by the amount of goodwill, openness, and enthusiasm shown on the part of my participants on such an “ordinary” subject. Therefore, I am enthused to express my appreciation for the participants and my kind acquaintances that took it upon themselves to make introductions. They generously gave of their own valuable time and allowed me to share their personal opinions and experiences. All of the time spent with you was overwhelmingly pleasant and interesting.

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1 Introduction

You could give me a call or send me a text message, not post a photo for the whole world to see. Why do people you have not spoken to since the fourth grade need more attention than the people you are sitting next to? (Hedda).

It is like I am maintaining two relationships at once, and I need to make a choice about which one I am going to sustain and which one I'm going to neglect. You want to do both and then you try to pretend like you are paying attention to the conversation while you are thinking about a clever photo caption for Instagram (Gregers).

Social interaction does not have a set and cemented shape in human lives. It is not always clear what is the acceptable manner of conduct in every given social situation (Goffman 1967:49). Nevertheless, it is often commonly acknowledged that it is respectful to recognize others and consider what they are saying whilst engaged with them in a social interaction. If someone is not giving you their full attention during a conversation it can be hurtful. If someone interrupts you whilst you are speaking you might feel offended or insulted. On the other hand, if someone wants to take time to share with others that they are spending time with you, this could be flattering even though it might interrupt or change the conversation. Norms and values shape the rules for what is considered right and wrong behaviors, but material context also constructs and shapes these established rules (Goffman 1967:45). For example, if you are at a lively party it can be difficult to devote your complete attention to only one person, especially if you have a smartphone.

The relatively recent technological advances have contributed to the availability of new devices that arguably affect the premises for certain aspects of communication and social interaction (Oulasvirta, Rattenbury, Ma, Raita 2012). There is no standardly accepted way of using these devices socially, but a popular choice, at least for certain demographics, is to use them for social media production in social situations. This activity entails producing content for various social media platforms whilst you are with others socially. The content being produced by the user may be related to the social situation he or she is engaged in, but it could also be content completely unrelated. The social media use in social situations might offer relatively new social possibilities: being able to keep in touch and update others who are

not present or even demonstrate a flattering image of your life, for significant others to see. The opportunity for producing content for social media also creates new issues of contention; how individuals deal with new technologies can affect their and others everyday life and their interaction with each other (Killingsworth & Gilbert 2010). Using social media to produce content about your social life, during real-life¹ social interactions with others can be quite noticeable for certain individuals. For instance, if one person at the dinner table is spending a substantial amount of time choosing the perfect photo to post on their Facebook timeline, this might impact the other guests and how they relate to this individual socially. The way and the degree of which these activities of social media production in social situations are integrated and become a natural part of social interaction, determine how they will continue to develop.

The two introductory quotations illustrate two different understandings of social media production in social situations and can show how this relates to social interaction. The two can nearly be seen as responses to each other. The first is Hedda, a young woman with little to no social media use. She is perplexed by the way her friends distance themselves from the current real-life social situations with her to produce content to publish for members of their online social networks and relationships to see. This behavior demonstrated by her friends appears to her as her friends maintaining relationships with people who are not significant parts of their current social situation, i.e. the one with her, and not really even their own lives in general. She interprets this as neglect of the social situation they are engaging in with her. She also does not understand the need to post any content publicly to other users when communication between her and them would suffice.

Gregers is the social media user behind the second quote. Being a quite active user and creator of personal content for his profiles, he acknowledges the pressure of social media production whilst he is amongst others. In this quote, he considers more substantially the value of both activities and parallel social relationships, both of them needing simultaneous stimulation to be sustained. The two activities might even be dependent on each other to serve both of their parallel functions; to produce content you might need an interesting social situation to post about, and the social situation is validated as interesting by posting about it on social media. The two quotes both show individuals grappling with familiar norms and rules for social interaction with a significant change in the technological premise.

¹ I use the term "real life" to distinguish this interaction from the interaction online even though both can be classified as real.

In this thesis, I explore the way social media production is used in social situations and how this use can become incorporated in social interaction. The concept of social media production in social interaction is considered in this thesis as: Someone that is producing content for his or her social media profile either about himself or herself or the social situation he or she is participating in. How do individuals incorporate social media production in social situations and how do they react to this amalgamation? I want to explore the following research questions:

(1) How are social media use and production in social situations in *general* understood as socially significant by the participants?

(2) How do the participants describe *specific* social media use and production in social situations?

(3) And finally, how do the participants *normatively* legitimize and criticize their degree of social media use and production in social situations?

In the following paragraphs, I will explore the concept of social media production in social interaction, and discuss its impact in everyday life. Then I will explain the reasoning behind and the structure of the projects selection of participants.

1.1 Social media production

To explore the concept of social media production in social situations, it is necessary to define what kind of social media is relevant to this thesis. Social media is a collective term without a standard textbook definition. Social media is often defined by how it compares and contrasts with a traditional understanding of media. These definitions can be contradictory and even confusing. There are however several prominent and decisive social media definitions that are particularly relevant for this thesis.

Social media is media that does not have a clear divide between publisher and audience; the same people can produce and consume. And social media facilitates communication that exceeds one on one or person to person (Aalen 2015:19).

Several people can communicate at once via social media. This ability to communicate is enabled by new communication technologies. People can carry their social media with them by using smartphones and responding and contribute to discussions instantly. The chance to contribute makes the boundary between mass media and communication media even more blurred (Aalen 2015:19). Different kinds of social media can also be defined by the established relationship between their users. *Synchronous* relations between users are mutual where users accept each other in social networks like on the website Facebook where users add each other as “friends”. Facebook can be classified as a social network site. *Social network sites* (SNS) have a more set definition than *social media*. Users have profiles, display online connections, and relations, and produce content for their profile. *Asynchronous* relations are based on a more producer and follower dynamic. On the video-sharing site YouTube there are several content creators that have a following and do not follow all of their audience back (Aalen 2015:20). There is not always a clear dichotomy across every platform. On the popular service Instagram, users can produce content for their profile and have followers, but there are popular content creators that do not follow all their followers back. The same goes for YouTube, where you can be a content creator without having any audience, or you can be a user but not produce anything at all and mainly follow others. The type of relationship between users is decided by the services’ material structures, and how users choose to customize any particular platform.

In this thesis, I have limited the definition of social media to websites and applications that involve social media production and that are based on synchronous relations. The study is mostly relevant for the use of sites like Facebook via an *application*² and not an online site because that is the most practical for people in social situations when using a smartphone device. The production of content for social media in social situations was the activity relevant for analysis. For example, taking a group photo and publishing it on Facebook, choosing a selfie³ to post, or writing about what you are doing on your online profiles whilst socializing with others. This limitation would exclude using the Facebook Messenger application for chatting, looking at funny cat memes⁴, or reading the news. These are

² A mobile application is typically a small, specialized program downloaded onto mobile devices (Techopedia 2017)

³ Selfie is a popular term that describes “A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media (Oxford 2016a)

⁴ An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations (Oxford 2016b)

activities that can also affect social interaction by use of smartphones and social media sites in social situations, but without producing any content. The exclusion of social media use without production is not done to dismiss relevant social media activities, but to focus on a certain aspect of social media and social interaction. Previous research has explored the use of personal media in everyday life without excluding text messages and electronic mail (Helles 2009). Producing content adheres to the practice of maintaining simultaneous relationships. Deciding to post a photo when you are with others can impact that real-life social situation and the way the individuals interact, but it also has direct implications for the social situation on social media. Sharing content from everyday life may contribute to preserving the online relationships by mutual online activities. If a user is disengaging from a social situation simply by looking at their phone and not producing content, they might change the social real-life situation, but not necessarily impact the relationships on social media or their social media image because they are not contributing themselves. The limitation to social media production is better suited to capture the user's experience with engaging in two social realms at once, as opposed to passively consuming or communicating with others without creating content. The limitation to production also acknowledges the paradoxical aspect of interrupting or impacting real-life social situations to produce content that exhibits these social situations. Having an online social life can impact actual physical social life, depending on how it is used.

This thesis is not limited to the study of SNS. The application Snapchat is part of the reasoning behind not restricting this study to SNS, which had a major part to play in the social media production in social situations for my participants. Snapchat does not figure in under the definition of SNS because it does not have the format of having user profiles and connections to other users on display. It tends to be a more private application. Snapchat is also a difficult element to define in regards to social media production, because of the varying ways it can be used. *Snapchat* is commonly used as a chatting application, at times using only photographs and at other times words as communication. This type of use would exclude it from this thesis because this establishes its primary purpose as one-to-one communication and communication not sharing and content production. But it is also common to send a so-called "snap" to several users; this would classify as social media production in this thesis

The application also included a new feature in 2012 called Snap Stories, where users can publish their photos for all their followers to see (Snapchat 2017). Publishing content for particular followers is popular amongst private users, but it is also possible to follow users that do not follow you back. This type of use is reminiscent of the multifaceted way of using Instagram. Thus, a temporary definition of social media production for this thesis could be summarized as: Social media production is the production of content that reaches more than one other user on social media sites or applications with synchronous relations. The content can be communicative in nature but not be created for the sole purpose of being communicated to only one specific user. The participants who were active on social media could not produce content that was for commercial purposes. I have also excluded points of contention about social media that involve criminal behavior, like child pornography, bullying, as well as social media activity that was for the purpose of procuring a romantic partner.

1.2 Participants – finding the most relevant group

Social media use in Norway is quite substantial, and it was remarkable how every person I spoke with in connection to the thesis, from my middle-aged hairdresser to my teenage brother, all had quite interesting things to say about their personal experiences with social media. How use is different in regards to different demographics use social media, specifically in everyday life in Norway age will be further explored in Chapter 2. In order to research how social media production effects social interaction, I had to limit the field of study to what I could argue to be considered the most relevant group. In my case, I decided that “relevant” would entail the group that was a part of and surrounded by most frequent use. I had to approach individuals who were cognizant of the concept and could offer insight into social media production in social situations. I limited the potential participants to people within the age range of 18-30. Pragmatically, the users were situated in urban environments in the area of Oslo and Akershus County. The geographical limitation was an important practical restraint so I would be able to meet the participants in person. A face-to-face meeting made it possible to evaluate potentially significant elements such as body language, and it also gave the participants a sense of transparency and acquaintance to the researcher. The focus of the study found the largest group of established independent adult users to be the most relevant subjects.

I found that variation in the use of social media use could be a contributing factor in relation to their opinions about the topic, how they perceive social media production in social situations and how this affected social interaction. The assessment of types of users was based on the participant's subjective definition of how they experienced their personal use, and not on an objective measurement of actual use. The categories I established based on their definitions were: (1) Little to no use, (2) average use, (3) above average use.

The different users consisted of in all ten individuals that were interviewed during the course of three months.

1.3 Outline of Thesis

In this introduction, I have presented the concept of social media and discussed social media production in social situations. I have also explained some of the criteria for the eventual participants for this project's selection. In the next chapter, I wish to present a more specific overview of the concept of social media production in social situations, how social media is presented and what social implications are often ascribed to it as it impacts Norwegian culture and society in general. Chapter 3 is a more comprehensive look at the current social media research in academic literature. I also go more in depth into studies that pertain to this project's theme. Chapter 4 includes the micro-interactionism perspectives. In Chapter 5, I present the data selection and recruitment process, along with the method of qualitative interview. Chapters 6-8 include the analysis of the data with the theoretical perspectives. Chapter 9 will contain a summary and some concluding remarks.

2 Social media production in everyday life

In this chapter, I want to explain how social media is integrated into everyday life. Firstly I desire to illustrate how “social media” is a prominent feature in everyday life. Everyday life is not seen here as the domestic premises for the individual, rather it indicates the “routine activities of human existence, the ordinary actions taking place in various settings, spanning productions as well as reproduction” (Lie & Sørensen 1996:2). Basically, it is what people do again and again, and thereby creating and establishing social patterns. Some of the examples do not deal exclusively with social media but include reflections on smartphone use in general. I have included this to show how the technological premise is a substantial part of how social media is portrayed in popular culture. I will use some examples from news articles and popular culture to illustrate that social media’s role can be seen on several levels of Norwegian society. Then I want to use statistics to explain how social media is used and to demonstrate how substantial everyday use of social media is in Norway. I also wish to show how use of social media varies specifically in different age groups and across different social media platforms. Finally, I will use relevant research on how social media is used in social life, with a focus on the significance of online connections and activity, and integration of social media in social interaction. This research, along with examples from popular culture, should contribute to a better understanding of how social media has got a social as well as a material significance for everyday life.

2.1 Cultural significance

The term *social media* itself has become quite common in popular discourse; it is an inescapable phrase. Because of the shifting technological landscape, the possibilities of social media are as of yet undefined. The multiple depictions of it in Norwegian society could lead to the term “social media” being dismissed as a vague buzzword. Its impact can be observed in several areas of human culture. Commercially and financially there are signs of adjustments that recognize the importance of social media. New, entrepreneurial companies and traditional businesses both include positions for employees that are capable of exploiting the commercial opportunities of social media (Edosomwan, Simeon, Kouame, Prakasan, Seymour & Watson 2011). Beyond these developments, social media is considered to be an influence on traditional media and communication configurations. It is often attributed to a shift in conventional power structures.

The possibility of individual broadcasting changes the media architecture. “Anyone” with a smartphone can become a content creator. An *equalization hypothesis* sees social media as the great equalizer that enables anyone with a message that connects with an interested public the chance of exposure at the same high rate as other established media (Aalen 2015:144). Equalization allows for the emergence of new opinion leaders as well as new opportunities. Norwegian blogger Sophie Elise Isachsen is currently making quite an affluent living writing her blog through endorsement deals. She has also been named one of the most influential people in Norwegian media (Michaelsen 2017). Her success is credited to her substantial online following, which has catapulted her to a career as a prominent figure in more established media platforms, like television and radio. The changing media landscape raises the question: When the media structure is shifting and unpredictable, who possesses the power to shape it? The alternative hypothesis is one of *normalization*, where the existing power structures can be amplified and reproduced by social media (Aalen 2015:145).

Established media, similarly, can be observed integrating the social media platform into published content with varying degrees of success. The publication strategy behind the popular teen series *SKAM* (NRKP3 2017) has been given a significant amount of the credit for its success. The fictional characters in the show have their own social media profiles and publish content that adheres to the plotline of the show. The social media incorporation in the show has been credited for lending an added realism to the show, but also in reaching young viewers on a platform that is more adapted to their viewing habits and the way they consume media (Nymo 2016). The success of *SKAM* nationwide and even internationally can demonstrate the influence social media has on popular culture at large. These examples might illustrate that there are strong cultural implications for social media use. Social media’s significance can be revealed in an analysis of statistics on its use in Norway.

2.2 Social media use

Liberal democratic values like free speech can be credited for the rise of social media in Norway. Ideological premises can influence material boundaries that can be limited or expanded. Boundaries can be defined by terms of use on specific sites or by specific social media platforms being blocked in certain geographic areas or nations (Talmadge 2016). The way the platforms are available to the individuals can, therefore, shape who uses them and how they are used. The financial predisposition for participants is also a substantial factor,

especially for social media production in social situations. It is easier to be active on social media and produce content if you can afford to bring the social media applications along in your pocket via a smartphone. Norwegians could arguably be seen as citizens of a nation and a society that has a good ideological and financial basis for social media production, something to keep in mind when looking at the specific numbers for Norwegian social media use.

2.2.1 “Everybody’s on Facebook”

On an average day, 70 percent of the Norwegian population that go online use Facebook and almost 50 percent use other social media (Vaage 2015:59). The actual technological material reality has significance for how social media is integrated into social life. In the first quarter of 2011 under 50 percent of the population had smartphones. By 2016 the portion of the population had risen to 81 percent (Medie-Norge 2017). The rise of smartphones makes social media a more available option for Norwegians. With 3.3 million users over the age of 18, Facebook is the most popular site in Norway. Norwegian Snapchat users are estimated at about 2.7 million, which is over half of the population (Tore 2017). This figure can be considered to be a substantial part of the population. Norwegians are spending more time online than before, and there has been an even larger increase in people using social media by 2016. The most avid users are in the age group 16-24 and spend approximately three and a half hours online every day. This is the group with the highest percentage that uses Facebook and other social media when they are spending time online (Tore 2017). These data do not account for time spent using social media or producing content to social media with others, but it illustrates that there is a substantial foundation for social media use in Norway. There are also indications in gathered statistics of how age affects use.

2.2.2 Age and use

The same sites and applications are used differently depending upon who is using them. In regards to Facebook, users under the age of 30 mostly use the messenger app, for chatting with their Facebook friends. The users over 40 are also active on chat, but they are more active when it comes to giving likes⁵ on friends’ posts. The users over 40 also are more enthusiastic when it comes to commenting and sharing their own posts. The older users’ use

⁵ Clicking Like below a post on Facebook is an easy way to let people know that you enjoy it without leaving a comment. Just like a comment, the fact that you liked the post is visible below it.

strengthens the supposition that younger generations are more private on social media and have moved their content creation to applications like Snapchat (Ipsos 2016). Snapchat allows users to customize who sees their content and it excludes the possibility of publicly liking or commenting on other user's content. The appeal of applications that do not include public recognition is an interesting aspect because it adds nuances to the needs social media fulfills for young users; the most active group. This pattern of use demonstrates a more communicative pattern and smaller need for exposure; it also demonstrates a more selective and tailored use of social media.

Having to choose to put your smartphone away in social situations is not relevant for everyone; this is a more significant social choice for certain demographics. Age often seems to be the clearest indicator of use. Therein lies the assumption that if you are of a certain age you are confronted with not *if* but *how* to integrate social media into your everyday life. The potential exposure to social media production was the reasoning behind the boundaries for potential participants in this thesis. To better understand the widely debated influence of social media in social life, it is necessary to explain the more *social* impact of social media.

2.3 Relation to social life

After having established the level of use amongst the most relevant age demographic in Norway, it is appropriate to examine what frequent use can suggest socially. There is not a cause and effect relationship between social media and social life. I do not ascribe to the assumption that social media is an independent entity, but an element in social interaction. The integrated social nature of social media can be demonstrated with a study about self-esteem and its relation to Facebook use. Users with reported high self-esteem were more likely to report the positive traits of the site like sharing photos and memories, whilst individuals with lower self-esteem reported more negative aspects of the site like untagging oneself in unflattering photos (Tazghini & Siedlecki 2013). This study can show how Facebook as a site does not necessarily cause high or low self-esteem but might reflect or contribute to uphold and reinforce certain feelings and experiences. To preface: I incorporate the following research that considers social media's social impact with a relational perspective.

How social media relates to social life and vice versa is both contested and celebrated. The possibilities for individuals to contribute to public opinion could potentially be more substantial with social media. People can because of social media be connected all over the world and contribute to public opinion in a more prominent and substantial way. This development, in turn, can also be attributed to a more globalized society in general (Haugseth 2013:34). The negative aspects of social media are not limited to but include a concern for universal, amplified narcissism (Leung 2012). Facebook accounts become an annoyance when users depict their everyday life in excruciating detail. There is also concern about the pressure of having to produce and curate an impressive social media self. There are several that argue that there is noticeably more pressure in everyday life because of the public nature of social media (Aalen 2015:77). Social pressure and narcissistic tendencies blamed for negative consequences of social interaction. These concerns are a result of the fragmentation and interruption of social life. Social media use during conversations can disrupt or alter the course of interaction because users have the want or need to post an Instagram photo. There is also the issue of people in general not paying attention to physical conversations whilst looking at their phones instead. Consequently, being less involved online can be seen as a positive social value (Turkle 2012). I wish to explore some of these points of contention closer because I believe they can have an impact on how social media is thought of and how they relate to social interaction.

2.3.1 Significance of online connections and activity

Online social connections can be of varying significance to real-life social life. The online social network can be a direct reflection of or offer new opportunities for expanded social reality. The rise of social media has made it possible for people to join online communities to maintain friends or engage in particular communities in order to fulfill personal needs. These online connections can, therefore, be seen as valuable for different social needs. Social media contribute to shaping emerging forms of social interaction that are significantly unlike offline interactions previously studied (Oldmeadow, Quinn & Kowert 2012). The potential for social life of online connections and activity should neither be exaggerated nor dismissed. The consequences of being active online are also undetermined by social media not being a fixed structure, it is constantly changing and evolving. The understanding of these connections can be varied, and this conditions how much impact they may have on the individual. How does online activity relate to self-esteem or self-disclosure? I have included some research that

examines these issues.

There is research that suggests that online communication could benefit those with high social anxiety (Oldmeadow, Quinn & Kowert 2012). Connections with others online can fulfill significant human needs. Studies have demonstrated that social networks that involve a supportive social network and connections with others are related to higher levels of wellbeing. By referring to established research on real-life social networks and taking into account the human need to belong, there is an assumption in social media research about online connectedness that humans are driven to develop and maintain positive social relationships (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Tolan & Marrington 2013:1). But the research I have used is focused on how individuals interact and connect using social networking sites and instant messaging applications and how these sites might be essential to enhancing and maintaining social connections. But this raises the question of how similar online social connections can be compared to real-life social connections (Grieve et al. 2013:2). The results imply that not only are psychological effects for the individual of online connectedness positive but substantial (Grieve, et al. 2013). The significance of online connections can, therefore, be described as fundamental for some users. Social media activity can have multiple social consequences.

There are social gratifications, other than belonging, that can be sought through content generation on social media. Social media can be used to receive confirmation of one's self. One study examines how self-esteem becomes prevalent in the experience of Facebook use, suggests that those with lower self-esteem might use Facebook to achieve a higher social capital in contrast to individuals with higher self-esteem (Tazghini & Siedlecki 2013). There might, hence, be a certain gratification achieved through self-disclosure online. Does Facebook change our disposition to unveil personal information? With the advent of SNS there is an increased necessity for online disclosure (Taddei & Bastianina 2013). In a study by Trepte & Reinecke (2012) the continuous use of social networking sites was deemed to have a reinforcing effect on the eagerness to disclose private information online. This research could underline how the frequency of use is crucial to how it relates to social life and consequently social interaction. Social media can also be a good platform for individuals' narcissistic tendencies, but it is not concluded that this leads to more narcissism in users in general. The relevance of narcissism all depends on what content is deemed acceptable (Leung 2012). One cannot postulate that social media creates an increase in narcissism, but

that social media can contribute to reinforcing preexisting social conditions. Thus social media can, therefore, be seen as relevant in relation to social life in how individuals form and sustain social connections and reflections on the self, but also the way people interact.

2.3.2 Social media in social interaction

A practical point regarding social media is that it is an element that requires a certain level of attention. Multitasking is often necessary to produce content for social media. Several studies have demonstrated that using technology whilst multitasking, especially social networking sites, contributes to a decrease in how productive and effective users are in an academic situation. The impact of multitasking has also been specifically researched in regard to grade point averages. This study had results showing a negative relationship between using SNS simultaneously amongst American students. The students perpetuated that the differences between the continents might illustrate that European students were less prone to disruptive multitasking in general (Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott & Ochwo 2012). This study was based on academic and not real-life social engagements and accomplishments. Social accomplishment might be harder to measure. Nevertheless, it is not to be trivialized that social media production entails effort at least on some basic level. This level of effort can be varying, but the implementation of social media production in social situations can still be quite substantial in both positive and negative ways.

One example of repercussion of social media production that is often addressed is the concern about cellphones in general deteriorating “real” life. The feelings connected to new technology and social media have been described as paradoxical. MIT psychology professor Sherry Turkle (2012) argues that social media is taking us places we do not want to go. Small devices we use have become psychologically powerful; they do not only change what we do, but who we are. Smartphones create a society where individuals are together but are alone. Smartphones allow people to customize what parts of the conversation they want to participate in and only pay attention to the parts that interest you. She describes that people have an assumption that they should want to be with others, but would rather just do things on their phones. She creates a divide between the communications online with authentic communication. These social behaviors create a relentless solitude and people become alone together (Turkle 2012).

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate the significance of social media in Norwegian culture and society, first by including some relevant examples from popular culture and then more concrete statistics to show specific Norwegian pattern of usage that reflects the relevance of the selected group for this study. I also wanted to use research about social media that did not directly involve social media in social interaction but could demonstrate the social significance of social media activity and online connections. In the next chapter, I wish to establish a more comprehensive overview of social media research in general and a deeper understanding of relevant previous research that ties into this thesis on a more thematic level.

3 Social media in academic literature

As a relatively new phenomenon, the relationship between social media and social interaction is not yet explored that extensively in the established academic literature. The continuous development of new technology and individual usage has created a subsequent need for ever newer understanding. The social impact of social media is still disputed. Ida Aalen expresses some frustration over the polarization of social media research in the afterword of her book *Sosiale Medier*. Her contention stems from her experience that research often takes a stand by choosing between two extremes. Either social media is society's savior, or it is sending everything to hell (Aalen 2015:251). Research on the issue is often related to personal and societal benefits of social media. The focus of established literature often revolves around the analysis of the *content* on social media and not as extensively the *effects* on social interaction and individual emotions. The perspectives can be categorized as having a more macro and meso perspective rather than micro.

The next chapter contains a general overview of the academic literature related to social media, that I found could contribute to a comprehensive summary after doing a systematic search of academic databases. The general social media literature will be followed by a more comprehensive discussion of literature that is particularly relevant for this study.

3.1 General overview of academic literature about social media

The fact that most social media research includes a definition of the concept is an indicator that it is still in its infancy. Social media is often described relative to other established forms of media and technology (Enli & Moe 2013). The blurred lines between consumer and producer separate social media from traditional forms of media which have clear boundaries between the creators of the content and those who receive it (Burns 2007). A substantial section of the literature, therefore, does in turn focus on how social media is shaping the way people communicate and shaping communal discourse. Communication changes with social media. Mass communication, telecommunication, and data communication are combined in one medium, the Internet. The structure and technology of social media create *network societies* that integrate several levels of communication. New technology alters the nature of human communication by making information more available, easier to save, and by raising

individual interaction to the scale of mass media. At the same time, social media fosters new discussions on control, authenticity, and personal security (van Dijk 2005) concerning the large amounts of data that can be saved and redistributed by others. Individuals are more exposed, but can also expose society at large. Some studies have focused on how social media can contribute to changing the premises for the public sphere. When individuals are able to broadcast their personal and political beliefs in a public way, they can have a new and considerable influence on actual policies and popular opinion (Habermas 2006; Rasmussen 2016). The negative analysis points out that social media often create a social space of “echo chambers” where opinions are amplified by interacting with compatible individuals. These concerns are mostly related to those users who exhibit strong xenophobic opinions (Enjolras, Karlsen, Steen-Johnsen, Wollebæk 2013:131-133). The political expression can be categorized as an individual need to contribute and have an impact and connecting with others that share their opinions. Such needs are often explored in academic literature to understand the popularity and individual purpose of social media.

The need for socializing is a common explanation for social media use. The concept of *social grooming* involves tending to the needs of social relations by the use of language (Dunbar 1996). Social media can be seen as an optimal form of social grooming, even compared to other forms of communication since this grooming is shared (Donath 2007). These interactions become public displays of connection and thereby strengthen social relations that might otherwise be neglected and become insignificant. For example, users can keep in touch with old classmates on Facebook. The social norms regarding when it is appropriate to contact others are less defined compared to other forms of communication. The possibility of responding to what many consider mundane everyday activities might create added pressure to actually respond. I experienced that social media is also analyzed as a social mirror in addition to social grooming of relations to others.

The use of social media is often connected to social constructions of the self (Enli & Thumim 2012:88). Individuals use social media to represent themselves in the way they most prefer. Users of social media can legitimize themselves or create and present a flattering image. The users gain insight and understanding of their own identity by using social media and by comparing themselves to others. Social media becomes a practice of self-affirmation (Toma & Hancock 2013). These studies of identity construction build on the noteworthy understanding of the significant other and the social self (Mead 1998). Erving Goffman's

theories on impression management and *front stage and back stage* (1959) are also popular in analyzing how individuals create profiles of themselves on social media. Goffman's theater metaphors depict the social world as a stage where the way you act is shaped by setting, context, and the social frame. Social media is often categorized as a front stage where even the more "real" moments are quite staged and included for specific purposes. This research includes the more deliberate purposeful staging that occurs on social media, but also analysis of social media staging of private life as a more general subconscious practice in online culture. The effect of meticulously curated online personas is also analyzed in regards to how private life becomes more staged and preformed and might create unrealistic ideals and pressure. These contributions often focus on certain effected groups that maintain a particular image for example teenagers, or people with specific goals, like finding a romantic partner or advancing their political career (Ellison, Gibbs, & Heino 2006, Ahn 2012).

Other works have had a focus specifically on different forms of content, examining aspects of social media related to what is published online. These works have often focused on analyzing semiotics and narrative structure in online content. Content can be categorized to discover trends, online norms and social media specific communication (Krogstad 2014). There are also interpretations of what can be perceived as certain demographics capital online. This kind of research often refers to theories of self-representation, identity and conveying group affiliation (Farquhar 2012; Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; Tskhay & Rule 2014). There have also been works dedicated to understanding the cultural significance of the "selfie" and how digital communication influences self-image, sexuality, and gender (Prøitz 2016). Comments and other content response are also used to understand social norms online. The structure of the social media platform in question is also a premise for how these responses matter and if the content is shared and redistributed by other users (Aalen 2015:147), these are what I perceive as the most dominating traits in the current social media research.

In Norway and Sweden, in particular, there has been relatively little exploration of social media in social situations and interaction Academic database searches and general internet searches produce a number of Bachelors' and Masters' theses, which mainly focus on social media as identity construction and self-reflexivity (Bostedt 2013; Reichart & Sanderson 2015; Eliasson 2015; Tømte 2009). I do not postulate that this research has a lack of focus on the social significance of social media because content and communication on social media

can be characterized as fundamentally social, but there is little to no research that focuses on the subject of how social media production impacts social situations directly.

3.2 Relevant literature

The research presented here constitutes the foundation of my thesis and has inspired me to fill what I perceive is a gap in social media research: social media in a micro-interaction perspective. Especially significant here is 1) the social effect of social personalized media, 2) the interruption of social interaction, 3) emotional effects of social performativity. I will connect the presented research to their social media significance.

3.2.1 The social effect of personalized media

New technology and new media must be incorporated into everyday life if it is to be successful and used continually over time. As previously discussed the technology of smartphones shapes the material circumstances to make use of social media easy. The novelty of social media leaves us with norms and rules for how it can and should be amalgamated with daily life being not quite established, or at least not completely clear (Aalen 2015:37). Can you stop a conversation for a selfie? Is it socially acceptable amongst friends to demand the chair at the restaurant with the best light? These questions might never be answered with concrete rules and regulations, but there are several theories that can be applied to advance understanding.

To understand the influence new technology could have on social life the media have reported some quite severe diagnoses (Aalen 2014). This style of reporting about social media may be a result of an attempt to boost the number of readers by sensationalizing it. Nonetheless, there have been accusations of technology taking over, corrupting and harming the youth, and stealing time away from valuable physical activities and generally being the catalyst for an impending dystopia. Therefore, it is important not to approach the concept of social media by contemplating how technology “controls” humanity (Aalen 2015:40). Considering technology’s control over humans could be seen as *technological determinism*, in which media technology shapes how individuals act, feel and interpret their surroundings. Technology is considered an impact on society and its influence advances throughout the stages of technological progress (McLuhan 1962). Academic literature and research about how technology is incorporated into everyday life is particularly relevant if the epistemology

considers individuals and technology not as separate entities to achieve understanding. The relationship between the two is not an ideological war of technology taking over or radically changing people's lives, but one of mutual influence on each other. How new technology is controlled and "tamed" has been explored excessively with domestication theory.

3.2.2 Domesticating social media

Whether and how technology becomes an integral part of human culture is subject to reflection and analysis. Does technology factor into popular discourse? Does the increasing use of personalized media create a homogenous culture consisting of individuals that are passive and addicted to it? As mentioned social media and technology research and media coverage can sensationalize the possible negative outcomes. In their contribution to the book; *Making technology our own? Domesticating technology into everyday life* (1996), Merete Lie and Knut Sørensen address these issues. The authors advise the inclusion of approaches that explore the symbolic aspects of technology as well as the practical (Lie & Sørensen 1996:2). The authors do not have a focus on social media in particular since the book was published prior to the current level of social media use. But their sentiments are quite relevant to understand how social media production influences social interaction; because the increase in use can be attributed to the aforementioned material technological advances like smartphones and social media sites. By implementing an action perspective, the micro-relations between humans and technology are emphasized. This perspective contemplates the way humans integrate technical artifacts into their everyday life by using them and observe and react to them. They describe this as the outcome of the process of *domestication*.

Domestication is a metaphorical term that describes how individuals tame the surrounding technologies in everyday life. This change is reciprocal. The meaning that is applied to technology is a result of use and human reflection. The authors also problematize the a priori and common distinction made between use and design. This distinction had the unfortunate implication of presenting the users of technology as passive and the designers as active (Lie & Sørensen 1996:8). I find this point even more relevant when it is applied to personalized social media through personal computers and smartphone devices. The users contribute to shaping and creating their own profiles on different platforms. Tech companies are also gathering enormous amounts of user data in order to adjust their designs and algorithms. The users themselves also often create the content by sharing images and stories about their life.

The traditional view that the consumption of technology is passive whilst the production is active is therefore not as dominant with domestication theory. The divide between consumption and production should be transcended because “consumption is always production” (Lie & Sørensen 1996:10). Consumers are actively constructing their life by how they choose to incorporate social media into their social interactions. Consumers of media and social media are not passive consumers, compliantly posting forced selfies. Production and consumption are not identical, but the personal preferences, social norms, and worries connected to new technology contribute to shaping it and society (Aalen 2015:39).

Domestication theory divides the process of assimilating new technology in four phases. (1) *Acquisition* of the new technology; this could be exemplified by a new user creating a profile on Instagram. (2) *Objectifying*, the user gives the new technology visible space in their life and creates individual norms for how to use it; the new Instagram user deliberates if it is acceptable to interrupt dinner to capture the moment for their latest post. (3) *Incorporating* the new social medium into your everyday life and routines, this is dependent on factors like technological premises, time, and interest in the new social medium. (4) *Conversion* is an unremitting process. These phases change with how a social medium is defined, what are its proper use and social norms (Aalen 2015:39). That social media norms can change is visible in how the most popular content on Instagram evolves over time and is shaped by its users. How social media is supposed to be used in social situations is therefore not an established and fixed social norm. The rules and routines might change over time and with the users and cultural trends. Deciding to produce content for social media in social situations can be viewed as an interruption but can also be a necessary social break. It is thus fruitful to explore a study that analyzes the importance of social breaks.

3.2.3 Interruption of social interaction

Dag Album investigated the relationships between patients in Oslo in his work *Nære fremmede: pasientkulturen i sykehus* (1996). One of the essential terms in his book is Erving Goffman’s *frame*. The frame of a social situation is equivalent to the definition of the social situation. The frame gives meaning to the elements in the situation, as well as a possibility and guidance for how to act and react. The frame commits the individuals that participate in it to a certain set of expectations. Is it ok to post a photo right now? Should I tell him to put away his phone and stop taking selfies? The term allows for the study of a social situation

independent of what set patterns they are a part of (Album 1996:22). The frame can also shift; suddenly it is ok to document the dinner on your Instagram, or not. The social frame is, therefore, a micro-perspective of interaction because it only concerns face-to-face interaction, between the people who are in the social interaction. The social frame and its rules give a new set of conventions that can be used as symbols and meta-communication (Album 1996:23). Since Album's study revolves around patients in a hospital and their relationship to each other, the patients are strangers to one another and consequently have a significant amount of care and compassion to be polite and considerate (Album 1996:29).

The patients are secluded to spaces where they are in each other's physical space but do not interact. The patients do not pay attention to more personal aspects of the other patients. This inattention is not a manifestation of passivity by the patients, but rather an active social decision. Civil inattention gives other patients a social break by allowing them the freedom to have personal aspects of their own health out in the open, but not commented on (Album 1996:44). This can be a similar strategy when dealing with social media production in social situations: Understanding the needs others in the social frame have to produce content and defer from commenting on it. Album also describes patients commenting on their own appearance to clarify if they are for example not wearing their slippers (Album 1996:43). This strategy can also be implemented when interrupting a social situation with social media production. Clarifying the intention or making fun of one's self, can justify the action.

The patients also communicate when they are available or unavailable for social interaction. Taking a walk in the halls can be a symbol for availability, or listening to a Walkman can be a symbol for unavailability (Album 1996:49). The patients create a practical consciousness about what is ok and not ok in the way of interacting (Album 1996:50). To be able to regulate their togetherness is important for the patients' welfare. But it is also is a way to demonstrate proper etiquette. The patients are aware of how to act and can present themselves as socially competent and worthy. These practices can also be a ritualistic practice (Album 1996:60). To sustain these rituals for social interaction secures the patient's self-worth and respect. This is a common project for the patients and requires mutual participation (Album 1996:136). Social media production can likewise signal unavailability in a social situation. This aspect is dependent on the social frame. If the setting includes individuals that do usually participate in the production of social media it can signal that the individual producing content is unavailable if there are people present who also want to produce content it can be a signal of

availability. These categories of social groups are not mutually exclusive. The social frame can shift, and norms and rules are not set in stone.

This perspective shows the necessity for being able to handle challenges in social situations with set social frames and social rituals. New technology can also have a significant impact on social interaction. But how does the production of content for social media affect the actions the producers are documenting? How does the performativity in everyday life affect the emotions? Not being able to stay “in the moment” can be to the detriment of a social interaction between friends or at least change it substantially.

3.2.4 The emotional effects of social performativity

In *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochschild explores how emotions are suppressed in what she calls *emotional labor*. In her examination of flight attendants, she finds that their emotional appearance is a part of the service they are offering (Hochschild 2003:5). Showing their commitment to the work, and seemingly loving it is a part of the job. The flight attendant does physical labor like serving food, but also emotional work by managing emotions and even suppressing feelings to please the passengers (Hochschild 2003:7). Freud used the term *signal function* about how humans perceive the world is comprehended through emotions they feel (Hochschild 2003:17). A flight attendant is required to “love the job” as part of the job. Hochschild describes this as a commercialization of human feeling. And when the divide closes between the private acts of mustering up a positive feeling to the public act of pleasing a customer, the private way we use feelings becomes *transmuted* (Hochschild 2003:19).

As previously mentioned, social media research has examined how social media contributes to fulfilling certain needs, needs like networking, self-exploration and social acceptance. On social media profiles, the purpose is often to perform your life, by showing your daily life in an interesting and appealing way. To achieve this the users need to integrate or even interrupt their “real-life” actions to have them documented and published online. This real-life publishing creates a paradox of interrupting actions to create the appearance of actions. Therefore, the digital performativity of social life might change the individuals’ connection to their actions. The signal function of the action is thus compromised. To obtain a high status on social media, life must be performed in a certain manner – but this might prevent the real-life actions and feelings connected to them to actually take place. For example, a man could

be documenting a quite unpleasant dinner party on his social media account but then “hashtag” the photo with “#goodtimes”. There can be a discrepancy between the private ways we use feelings to shape the public image we want on social media.

In this chapter, I have written about common traits in the academic research about social media. I have also reviewed certain research that explores the themes this thesis will explore. I will now present the primary theoretical perspectives that supply the framework for the subsequent analysis.

4 Theoretical perspective

This thesis has originated from the ambition to explore how social media is relational to social life, specifically in person-to-person interaction. This choice concentrates my thesis within the domain of micro-sociology, contemplating the minor yet momentous human social experiences. There are several perspectives within this tradition that structure how interaction and the feelings related to it is examined. I have sought after perspectives that consider the substantial significance of social interaction for social and individual reality. There has also been placed an added value on terms that I found applicable to the social situations described by the participants. I have primarily incorporated the works of Erving Goffman on the concept of social framework to grasp the basic premise for social interaction and the ways the individual organizes its perceptions of society. I was inspired by the ways in which Dag Album (1996) applied these theories in his research. To achieve a greater understanding of the social concepts that transpire in the interactions represented in the data collected, I will also explore Goffman's theories on face work and spontaneous involvement/misinvolvement. Additionally, to these theories, I wish to include George Simmel's effort on forms of social interaction with an emphasis on sociability and exchange. Social forms might supply a greater comprehension of the value of concrete descriptions of typologies of social situations and the understanding of the social situations that are discussed in this thesis. There will also be a short explanation of how I understand and apply the terms *legitimization* and *criticism* in this thesis throughout and an exclusion of other similar peripheral theories. First I shall include a general overview to establish a basis of the said theories of *micro interactionism* and *symbolic interactionism*.

4.1 Micro interactionism

Every individual lives in a realm of social encounters (Goffman 1967:5). A social gathering can be defined as a social organization where the elements are individuals. This organization can be separate from individual relationships and be an isolated entity for the participants in it (Goffman 1961:9). These social encounters are hence a substantial element in social life and deserve to be acknowledged with established theoretical perspective. Micro interactionism was partly a theoretical counterpart to Talcott Parsons' functionalism. Functionalists believed that sanctions and role expectations contributed to the internalization of cultural norms and values for the individual. This perspective can be argued to be a bit too structurally orientated

and continue to have an over-socialized understanding of the actor. The assessment of society is one of an overarching and macro dependent relational order. Micro interactionism is characterized by having a greater focus on the individual actor and the exploration of face-to-face-interaction. The social actor is analyzed in regards to how they construct social order and maintain meaning in an active and creative fashion. The understanding of the individual as active and creative is fundamental for all micro interactionism (Aakvaag 2012:64). Within micro interactionism, there are two prominent directions, the *symbolic interactionism* that pertains to how individuals solve everyday life issues, whilst the *phenomenological sociology* explores how individuals create an environment that allows them to orientate themselves in an understandable world (Aakvaag 2012:76). In my study of the action of social media production in social situations has made the perspectives from symbolic interactionism the most relevant to include.

Symbolic interactionism has its roots in pragmatism. The ambition of the pragmatic philosophy was to adhere to the fundamental presumption that humans act. Humans are not completely rational animals, but use language, knowledge, and symbols to deal with their surroundings. This perspective is different than the more intellectualistic one that observes humans more situated in thinking and knowledge as a separate entity from action and not as a result of the need for action. Human creativity is creativity is, therefore, an important element for how the action is implemented and accomplished in human life. Symbolic interactionism is a continuation of the pragmatic objective to understand that linguistic-symbolic communicated meaning is both a prerequisite and a consequence of human practice (Aakvaag 2012:65). Symbolic interactionism was an attempt to make pragmatism sociologically productive; it illustrates specifically how competent actors take advantage of their intellectual capabilities and constructs a meaningful and systematic social reality (Aakvaag 2012:66). To understand the premises for the order of social interaction I will introduce some of the key terms in comprehending micro interactions.

4.1.1 Social frame

Although Erving Goffman never classified himself as a “symbolic interactionist”, his focus on the reflective actor and a society composed of social situations could place him within the realm of micro-sociology (Aakvaag 2012:71). One of his fundamental ambitions was to understand the interaction order and describe the area that exists between individual actors

and the more overarching social structures. The social structures that stand in relation to the interacting individuals can be defined as social situations. These social situations have according to Goffman different phases that structure the order of interaction (Aakvaag 2012:72). Social situations are defined as

[...] any environment of mutual monitoring possibilities, that lasts during the time two or more individuals find themselves in one another's immediate physical presence, and extends over the entire territory within which this mutual monitoring is possible (Goffman 1967:167).

There is also a need to establish a principal communal understanding of the social situation itself. A social situation needs to be opened, followed through and closed to not harm or violate each other during the interaction (Aakvaag 2012:73). The social interaction does not always succeed in an ordered sequence of events (Goffman 1967:169).

The social framework is a common definition of the social situation (Goffman 1974:10). This definition is essential to the achievement of having an interaction order that is meaningful for the participating individuals. Goffman uses the picture frame as a metaphor for conceptual guidelines for the individual. Frames encompass theoretical perspectives, social norms and other elements that impact experiences and they structure how social situations are defined and experienced. For a social interaction to be successful there is a need for a collective agreement on what the particular social frame signifies and what actions a participating individual is allowed to adhere to (Goffman 1974:24). For example, if one participant understands the social framework as casual and relaxed and another has the contradictory assumption of the situation being more strict and controlled, there would arise conflict based on these common misconceptions rather than a successful social interaction.

Social framework is an attempt to construct a general statement to describe the structure, or form, of experiences individuals have at any moment of their social life. The social framework shapes how the individual approaches a social situation and how they present themselves (Goffman 1974:27). In this thesis, I include the term *social frame* to understand how the participants understand their social framework, both in regards to how the participants comprehend the real-life social situation and how social media use and production appears in the social framework when it occurs. I also explore how social media itself could be viewed as a separate social frame, independent from the real-life social

framework. I argue that social frames can be regarded as separate, but also as ranked by individuals that operate within them, creating a hierarchy of social frames where often real-life social framework reigns supreme.

4.1.2 Face-work

The individuals' understanding of who they are when facing a social situation creates a premise for how the social situation transpires. This understanding is based on the evaluations of the participants and view of the social situation. *Face* is a term that describes the way the individual has constructed accepted social qualities and conveyed them to create a positive self-image (Goffman 1967:5). The same order constructs the face of oneself and the others in the social interaction; the common conceptions of the social situation create and structure the feelings in regards to the face. Face is something the participants possess and need to maintain during a social encounter (Goffman 1967:6). A person can be in wrong face or out face when communicative measures are added to the encounters that are not applicable to the significant realm of a certain circumstance. This experience can create a feeling of being in the wrong and cause humiliation because the activity is the responsibility of the participant and can affect their reputation as such (Goffman 1967:78).

To lose face is the expression that reflects the individuals' accountability as a participant in the occasion. The participants are conscientious to the flow of events that transpire in the social situation. The expressive order is what controls this flow, regardless of the social magnitude of the event, so that what is expressed coincides with the participant's face (Goffman 1967:9). Goffman does concede this understanding of face work in social situations with the supposition that status is not irrelevant to how the face is perceived by all participants. Who you are can contribute to how your social value is presented (Goffman 1967:10). Participants in the encounter tend to want to maintain the face of all the other participants, including themselves. The mutual act of maintaining face is based on the rules of self-respect and consideration. Reciprocal understanding of shared social worth in a social situation does not, however, imply equality in society at large (Goffman 1967:11). By face work, Goffman assigns the individual to have actions that are in compliance with face. Face work should obstruct whenever an instance that has symbolic implications that can damage face (Goffman 1967:12).

The avoidance process can save the face where face-threatening action is avoided altogether (Goffman 1967:15). The corrective process engages remedial strategies on the parts of the participants (Goffman 1967:19). The participants could use humor or ironic distance to maintain the face; this strategy would deflect the face-threatening behavior from the individual. Face-work can correct the threatened face; the participants who not only want their own face, but the face of others to be saved share the effort. If there is a participant who neglects these efforts, the other participants attempt to compensate for their shortcomings. The individual adjusts their level of face-saving in relation to the other participant's level of commitment (Goffman 1967:27). The established rules of conduct affect the individual by two subsequent means: by being directly obligated and the specific moral constraints, and by indirectly comprehending the expectations of the moral constraints of others (Goffman 1967:49). These established rules lay a premise for a functioning ordered interaction, but there are specific instances that can cause alienation from interaction for the individual.

4.1.3 Spontaneous involvement and misinvolvement

When interacting with others, there is a certain expectation that the participants will give their attention to the other participants. When the conversation in an encounter is engaging, the participants might become immersed in it, incapable of doing other things. Goffman describes this mutual immersion as a *socialized trance* that carries the participants away. A fully engaged encounter demands that the participants are committed and involved with the subject matter at hand. *Spontaneous involvement* defines the act of participants simultaneously engrossing themselves in the talk and excluding other interferences. The participants can engage in minor distractions, but not something substantial enough to lose the main focus that is the encounter. Spontaneous involvement is characterized by the impulsivity and naturalness of the immersion. Goffman acknowledges that the individual can become involved in unsociable solitary tasks. The conversation itself can be seen as a minor social system that is based on commitment and loyalty and is defined by boundaries that can wither, be maintained or be fragmented (Goffman 1967:113).

The boundaries of a conversation create *involvement obligations*. These are the difficult and delicate obligations to uphold the aforementioned spontaneous involvement in the conversation (Goffman 1967:115). The individual does not only have reasonability for the standard of their own involvement but also the appropriate involvement of others (Goffman

1967:116). The possibility for a decline in standards is rooted in the prospect of alienation. Joint involvement can be fragile and subjected to decay. According to Goffman, there are different forms of alienation that create *misinvolvement*: (1) External preoccupation, (2) self-consciousness, (3) interaction-consciousness, (4) other-consciousness. These forms of alienation can be the cause of damage to an interaction order, the social framework and the participant's face. *External preoccupation* is when an individual is preoccupied with an unrelated element to what is being discussed, and could additionally be isolated from the other participants in the conversation, or in a way that excludes them as participants. (Goffman 1967:117). Misinvolvement could also be based on the participant's conscious observation of themselves, the interaction itself or the other participants.

Self-consciousness is when a participant becomes preoccupied with himself or herself. They focus on their own activity and how they are faring in the conversation so that it distracts from the actual conversation and interaction itself (Goffman 1967:118). This form of alienation can illustrate how the social framework and boundaries can be an element of distress and the participants become occupied by trying to adhere to them. *Interaction-consciousness* is when a participant experiences what can almost be described as a meta-social trance. The interaction itself becomes the point of attention and the individual is not focused on being spontaneously involved in the official topic of conversation (Goffman 1967:119): *Other-consciousness* is similar to self-consciousness, but instead of being distracted by self-involvement, the individual is distracted by another participant (Goffman 1967:120). Another participant might display exterior distractions like being exceptionally beautiful, having a peculiar tic, but also distract in the vain of being misinvolved and displaying it to the other participants. The distracting participant might not convey any particular obvious distracting qualities at all and still cause other-consciousness because it is a property held by the participant who experiences it. Distraction from spontaneous involvement can also be a mutual offence (Goffman 1967:124).

Social encounters are not always a crucial juncture for the participants. The impact on the individual is based on the level of commitment and importance bestowed upon any given interaction. All encounters, no matter their actual significance, signify the ways in which individuals can obtain spontaneous involvement, and this can contribute to their sense of reality. The sense of reality is not to be considered superfluous or trivial, regardless of the encounter on which it is based. "When an incident occurs and spontaneous involvement is

threatened, then reality is threatened” (Goffman 1967:135). If the said threats are not corrected and the participants do not achieve an appropriate amount of involvement, the way in which the individuals perceive the reality is compromised and the encounter is not ascribed to a proper structure of interaction and the participant’s experience becomes disheveled in the social order (Goffman 1967:135).

Goffman’s concepts create an analytical framework for the understanding of the necessary commitment to a social encounter for it to be perceived as valuable for the participants. The social aspects of an encounter can be further explored by presenting analytical tools that divulge the communal and shared forms of social interaction.

4.2 Forms of social interaction

Society occurs when there are individuals interacting. Interactions are based, in particular, on motives and individual properties. These interactions become significant in that they reflect the purpose and impulse of individuals to come together and unite (Simmel 1971:23). Simmel underlines the individual impulse and agency necessary to form a society. The level of unity achieved by an interaction is dependent on the premises for the interaction; the connectedness of the participants and the social form they are observing. A social form is decided by the social content, what the participants want to achieve through their interaction (Simmel 1971:24). Simmel’s social forms are more specifically descriptive of what kind of social situation is occurring than the social framework in general. The individual ambitions in an interaction are determined by several social factors. The activity of taking a selfie when you are with your friends might encompass a multitude of social forms. Simmel (1971) outlines five social forms: exchange, conflict, domination, prostitution, and sociability. These social forms are ideal types that simplify several aspects with social reality. An ideal type is not based on actual empirical realities, but a unified analytical construct (Weber 1949).

I have chosen to explore the two forms that I find most relevant for social media production in social situations: exchange and sociability. These are points of contention in the social situations described by the participants, and one could argue that there could be domination in how one uses social media in social situations. I perceive that dominance, conflict, and prostitution could be elements in the social situations, but not the premise or their social form. My experience when generating data with the participants was characterized by them

expressing a desire to get along and have a good time together with their friends. Thus, the presence of dominance, prostitution, and conflict could arise in the social situations included in this thesis, but the ambitions and the motivations of the participants were presented as wanting to socialize and strengthen relationships.

4.2.1 Exchange

Exchange is the most common and prevalent form of social interaction. Relationships are often based on exchange (Simmel 1971:43). A conversation requires the *giving* of positive attention so the participants can *receive* a stronger social relationship. An individual would supply their effort in a social exchange. There is not a transfer of concrete objects, but a transfer of energy that does not imply a diminishment of the energy the individuals possess. The exchange obtains a greater sum of values for the participants after it has commenced because there is collaborative effort. Interaction is the more abstract and broader perspective, but interaction often materializes in forms that can be seen as exchange. Exchange is an analytical tool that exemplifies the naturally occurring events in human existence, which fluctuates and creates unremitting change for the individual (Simmel 1971:44).

The value of an exchange is determined by its reciprocity and relativity in social interaction (Simmel 1971:57). The value of a social object is based on its desirability; how much do you want to have a substantial social relationship decides the level of effort in a social interaction. There is also the determining factor of the scarcity of the object; how rare is it? If an object is scarce there is more of a considerable social effort to obtain it (Simmel 1971:68). This form of interaction signifies how individual properties cannot be examined independently from each other. The economic value exists only within the realm of *reciprocal relationships* that occur when “several objects on the basis of these properties, each determining the other and each returning to the other the significance it has received therefrom” (Simmel 1971:69). The value is determined through social interaction.

4.2.2 Sociability

Society is a constellation made up of the sum of individuals. A common need for individuals in a society is to unite with others, without accomplishing any particular goal beyond uniting. Simmel defines the satisfaction of associating with others as an impulse to *sociability* in man. Sociability concentrates the experiences of social life and actualizes the pleasure derived

from the process of being social as valuable. He adds the nuance that achieving a social connection with another individual might not grant a sense of triumph for all individuals if relating to others is psychologically perceived as a burden (Simmel 1971:128). Sociability is dependent on “good form”, where the participants are in agreement of what they define themselves as, and subsequently, sociability cannot depend on the overarching specific motives of the individual participants because the interaction itself is the most important element. Whilst imploring a rationalist perspective, sociability could be idle if it does not achieve a content specific goal. The objective of sociability goes beyond the superficial content and has a significance that reflects the symbolic order of social life (Simmel 1971:129).

Sociability in its purest form is not based on motives or goals but is comprised of the participant’s personalities. The dependence on the participants limits the sociability to their abilities and personality properties. Individual personality cannot be exceedingly aggressive or prominent because this can be at the expense of the good form of the sociability. Objective individual achievements like particular abilities, but also more personal qualities like mood, must be eliminated from sociability (Simmel 1971:30). Sociability illustrates how social interaction can have a value independently of personal affiliation. There is an intrinsic valuable social character that can be examined in the act of being social itself. The social activities of individuals can, therefore, be said to adhere to different forms. How individuals act is not only relational to common understandings but also their own perceptions of what is right and wrong.

4.3 Legitimizations and criticisms

In the analysis, I use the terms *legitimize* and *legitimizations*, and *criticize* and *criticisms* to describe how the participants normatively explain their own social media use and level of production. These terms are used in this thesis as a simplified understanding of the expression of the rules, norms, and values the participants maintained. Sociological pragmatism includes a more thorough and in-depth assessment of the term *legitimization* (Larsen 2013:43). Luc Boltanski and Laurant Thévenot’s principal work *De la Justification* (1991) includes orders of worth that become evident in public discussion. In this research, they explored how points of view are defended and criticized by actors through six different orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot 1991). I use the terms in a similar fashion, but I do not explore extensively what

orders of worth the participants are imploring but operate with the assumption that their normative viewpoints are shaped by several factors.

In this chapter, I have imparted the theoretical framework for the subsequent analysis. Micro interactionism can contribute to the grasping of how the participants find social media socially significant in general and how they normatively define use and production, while also exploring the specific descriptions of social media production in social situations. In the next chapter, I describe the method used to find participants and develop data.

5 Methods and data

In this chapter, I depict and discuss the implemented methods in this study. First I want to briefly explain the reasoning that supports my methodological approach. Subsequently, I want to describe how I decided on who might be relevant and potential participants. Then the data generation and the pertinent epistemological issues will be examined. Furthermore, I share an overview of the participants and divulge how the data were prepared for the succeeding analysis. Finally, I discuss the implications of the relationship to use, the role of the researcher and other ethical contemplations.

5.1 Methodological approach

Whether the researcher is aware of it or not, there are continuously underlying attitudes and assumptions that shape their approach. It is thus important to identify and define these factors that can shape your approach (Cresswell 2007:15). To determine the methodological approach the researcher's method should correspond to the research question (Silverman 2011:7). Qualitative research is preferable to quantitative research when there is a need for an understanding of phenomena that are not available elsewhere (Silverman 2011:17). Qualitative methods lay the foundation for a deeper understanding and meaning of a specific topic (Thagaard 2011:17).

I wanted to understand how the participant's own experiences and their meaning, especially how they used social media's social significance to describe how social media production was legitimized and criticized in their everyday social interaction. My approach could be understood as phenomenological where the participant's own meaning is the primary focus (Creswell 2007:57-58). These questions indicate a qualitative method as the most relevant. The data were generated through interviews with ten participants. I wanted to avoid observation of the social media production in social situations because it was difficult to facilitate a social situation with social media production that was initiated by the participants, and not designed by the researcher (Fangen 2010:12). I was concerned that it would be difficult to find willing participants since the social phenomena were not particularly unique, ascribed or adopted by one specific group. Individuals might not see how their experience could be relevant to my study, especially the ones who did not partake in social media production in social situations or social media at all. Therefore, I decided that it was most

suitable to create data that were derived from the participants who had the necessary requirements and also were able to discuss the topic voluntarily.

In regards to the issue of *reliability*, this thesis would be difficult to replicate because of its qualitative nature (Thagaard 2010:198). *Internal reliability* is thusly more relevant for this study than *external reliability*. The researcher being thorough and transparent in data collection and analysis achieves internal reliability. Transparency entails giving comprehensive descriptions of the entire research process and the theoretical framework for the analysis so the study can be sufficiently evaluated. It is required of the researcher to make things clear if there are any problematic issues that arise (Blaikie 2010:2). It is also important to attempt to generate or collect data that is as concrete as possible, this involves differentiating as clearly as possible between what are the actual interview transcripts and the participants' opinions, and what is the researcher's analysis (Thagaard 2010:199).

5.2 Finding participants

Essential to this study was to define who could be participants. As previously described, Norway is a society with high-frequency users of social media. The surplus of social media users in Norway resulted in a substantial number of possible participants. The actual group was determined by their exposure to the subject. The assumption being that if the participants were in the age group that was reported as the most frequent group of users, they would naturally have had encounters with either themselves or others creating content for social media in social situations. The group that had the largest percentage when it came to the use of Facebook and other social media when they were online was 16 to 24-year-olds. In second came individuals between 24 and 44 (NMB 2015). These measures of use based on age were particularly relevant for finding participants with little to no use that would have exposure to and perhaps opinions on the subject of social media production. The least active participants would have experiences with social media even though they did not use it themselves. I shied away from including teenagers that are often characterized as the most active on social media and veered more towards established independent adults. The exclusion of teenagers was in order to look at motivations outside of the standard peer pressures that steer a lot of adolescent behavior. It was also a pragmatic choice to only include consenting adults over the age of 18 to the age of 30.

The specific content that the participants who were the most active on social media published was also a guiding factor in selecting them. The content could not be shaped by a particular interest or hobby that would account for the majority of the social media content. For example, if somebody ascribed their social media production to connect about being a musician or promote their band commercially, those factors would dominate rather than the social and relational factors that the study was focused on. If the user produced a lot of content to connect with others with a specific hobby, this would greatly determine their use. The published content had to be “personal profile” related. This means that a preponderance of the content was rooted in the individual’s personal and social identity, and the frequency in publishing could not be attributed to a particular hobby. They had to be mostly motivated by sharing and showing content about their everyday life. The participants who were not on social media, or did not produce any content through social media, also had specific criteria. Their reason for their lack of use had to be a conscious choice or a lack of interest, rather than that they were unable to use the media even though they wanted to, or they were simply not aware of the concept (if that were possible). I found it most interesting to gather perspectives that would vary in regards to how social media production effects social interaction within the largest group of established adults that use social media.

I crafted a Facebook post that was shared on my social network (Appendix A); this was an effective way to recruit participants that were active on social media. The real challenge was to find individuals in the age group of highest users that did not use social media at all. In these cases, I needed to pursue other means of communication in my recruitment. I obtained contact with these individuals by asking helpful people in my network that had commented on my post to introduce me; often participants would know or know of others with similar patterns of social media use. The assessment of types of users was based on the participants’ own definition of their personal use.

The categories I established based on their own characterization of self-use were; (1) little to no use, (2) average use, (3) above average use. If there was a majority of participants who described themselves as average producers of social media content, I would continue to search for participants that were either very active or not at all.

5.3 Data creation and epistemological concerns

After recruiting some preliminary participants, who mostly described themselves as average users, I made contact with several more participants with varying degrees of use. The data generation was focused on interviews. It is important to show how this method can contribute to a substantial understanding of the research question. After discussing some epistemological concerns, I will describe the specifics of the data generated through the qualitative interviews with the ten participants.

There are two different analogies for the interviewer, one as a miner and one as a traveler. These metaphors can demonstrate two diverse theoretical perceptions about the interview method (Kvale 2001:19). I find it particularly relevant to present my understanding of which metaphor is the most fitting for my research approach.

The data created in this study, I believe, is precisely that; *created*. Even though the participants described their experiences of a relatively frequent social phenomenon, I view their answers as something we constructed in concert through intellectual “travel”. This perspective is contrary to the concept that the data about social media production in social situations was waiting to be gathered like diamonds from a mine. These different approaches are the reason I chose to describe them as *participants* rather than *informants*; this implies a more substantial mutual cooperation. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants generated the data in a collaborative effort with me.

There is consequently no naturally occurring data as the basis for the analysis in this study, which Silverman defines as “the one real strength of qualitative research.” (Silverman 2010:17). Imploring research interviews establishes activity that creates data that would not exist without the measures or the interference from the researcher. These kinds of data can be described as researcher-provoked data. These data can be seen as more problematic in regards to how a potential researcher might be more of an interloper on the participants’ social experience, more than actually capturing authentic meaning. Naturally occurring data originates from social phenomena not influenced by the researcher. That being said, no data can ever with unblemished conviction be classified as completely without human intervention (Silverman 2010:274). The criticism of the value of interview data could, thus, be somewhat classified as more similar to more traditional approaches. Even though naturally occurring

data have their strengths, it does not exclude researcher-provoked data from being considered as legitimate. The value of interview research, or any research, is determined by how the generated data's status is defined (Silverman 2010:199).

Another sound argument is that the recognizable characteristics of social occurrences are so familiar that it would be “thoroughly suspicious of methodological formulations that even appear to attach particular kinds of authenticity to it” (Atkinson & Coffey 2003:12). The position of categorizing some aspects of human action as superior to another ascribes an implicit authenticity that can be contiguous to naturalism (Atkinson & Coffey 2003:13). I subscribe to these notions that the data that can describe the experiences of the participants are not inferior or less than data that is derived from the observations of the actions in question. Therefore, the researcher-provoked data created in the interviews with participants can be classified as a legitimate method of data creation. The social situations and experiences could be quite different and coincide with the variations of use, and it would be impossible to observe every social situation described so the research would be limited to the most predominant occurrences. Observing social media production with the limitations and research question in thesis study raises the issue of ranking social experience, which was problematic with few participants. To the greatest possible degree, I wanted to use the contributing participants' own words to describe their experience. Consequently, I found that the experience of social media production was more important to capture than the actual behavior itself.

5.3.1 Interview

As previously mentioned, semi-structured interviews were held with ten people who were recruited through my social network on Facebook and some through the snowball method (Thagaard 2009:56). The first participants had described themselves as predominantly average users, the less and more active users were consequently recruited. The least frequent users were often only available on text message; if I was able to obtain an e-mail address I would send the participants some information about the project (Appendix B).

The interviews were mostly conducted in cafés at locations that were practical for the participants. I would start the interviews by talking about the project in my own words, and after completing the preliminary questions about use, I would try to put an emphasis on the

aspect of social media production over the actual content that is produced. The topic of social media did not to my knowledge provoke any embarrassment or discomfort to other people present during the interviews that were done in public. Some of the participants would even remark that the neighboring tables were displaying the social phenomena we were currently discussing.

I used a semi-structured interview guide during the course of all the interviews (Appendix D). I created the interview guide based on my research questions and themes of interest. I started the interviews with simple demographic questions. Then I mapped their own social media use and how they perceive use among their acquaintances to establish their use and perspectives on social media in general, before the ensuing discussion.

The interview participants often discussed their more reflective opinions about social media production in general and social media production in social situations before I asked them about it explicitly. They would also distinguish social media from other aspects of social interaction in social situations before the last question was asked. A lot of the questions were altered or discarded if the participant had little to no use or did not produce content in social situations, but all the participants had observed or experienced others producing content for social media. The interview guide was thus applicable to all the different users. During the interview, I tried to clarify, interpret and communicate the participants' meaning before the recording was over (Kvale 2001:89).

Quite often the participants would stay a while after the recording device was turned off and we would keep talking about social media. I thanked them all for their generosity and reminded them that they could contact me at any time to make subtractions or clarifications to what they had said. Most of the participants also remarked that it had been an interesting conversation about something so common and perhaps something they had regarded as inconsequential to their lives. I experienced at a certain point when I had interviewed participants from all the self-proclaimed categories of use that the answers were quite similar and no particularly new information was emerging. I decided that I had come to a point of saturation and there was relatively little that could be gained by interviewing more participants (Christoffersen, Johannessen & Tufte 2011:104). The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and made ready for analysis.

5.3.2 Coding and Planning for Analysis

The data that was created in the interviews was transcribed using the OTrancribe software. I coded the data without software based on the points that I found most relevant for analysis of the interviews while transcribing them, including codes correlating with the research questions. I wanted to use a micro interactionism theoretical approach but tried not to ignore the answers that implied the significance of social media on a more macro level.

5.3.3 Outline of the Participants.

As I have illustrated in the introductory chapters, social media use implies a certain level of privilege. My limitations on potential participants also excluded several demographics of society. None of the user's activity was to be attributed by themselves to their *possibilities* of being active on social media, this would include not having the time, or not being able to afford a smartphone but by their own *choices* or *interests*. Considering this, I tried to have a certain amount of variation among the participants, and also within the classified categories of use.

The majority of the participants were female students. I found this to be congruent with the statistics of social media use, but also of Oslo as a student environment. The students in this study were consciously recruited from different institutions and concentrations. Females dominated the group that categorized themselves as above average users in this study. I experienced males as more reluctant to participate and recruited them more aggressively to achieve more variation and substantial representation. All of the participants had completed secondary school and many of them were either in the midst of or had obtained higher education. The fact that the majority of the participants had higher education, could also impact the variation of my selection of participants. I have presented the demographic data in Table 1, to give a more comprehensive outline of the generous participants. The participants are presented in order of their self-classified level of use.

Participant	Type of user	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Little to no use	M	25-30	Secondary School	Laborer
2	Little to no use	F	20-24	Secondary School	Student
3	Little to no use	M	25-30	University/MA	Public Sector
4	Average use	F	20-24	University/BA	Student
5	Average use	F	25-30	University/BA	Public Sector
6	Average use	M	25-30	University/MA	Public sector
7	Above average use	F	20-24	Secondary School	Private sector
8	Above average use	F	20-24	Secondary School	Student
9	Above average use	F	20-24	University/BA	Student
10	Above average use	M	20-24	Secondary School	Private sector

Table 1: Outline of the interview participants

5.4 The relationship to use

The participants were not a homogeneous group, and neither are the social media users in the largest age group in general for that matter. That the participants had different levels of use often made their arguments about social media production in social situations quite diverse. But I was not concerned about this reflecting a specific ambition to convey a certain point of view that made their level and way of use seem the most appropriate. The reason for this is that I was interested in capturing different ways users criticized and legitimized social media production and I selected participants with varying degrees of use, in the hope that this would contribute to how they arranged their understandings of social media.

My relationship to the participants was always pleasant. Although some of the questions did not apply to the least active users, they often expressed gratitude for being included in a study about social media and that their experiences were also regarded as relevant and valuable. Often the participants would use the last question to relay more positive remarks, pronouncing that they might have sounded a bit negative towards social media and wished to comment on the positive elements of social media. Adding positive nuance was particularly relevant for the participants with little to no use, this might be because of their relationship to the social phenomena in question. One of the participants commented after the interview that when I was trying to interpret what she had said, my follow-up questions had felt a bit “leading”. I tried to adjust this behavior in the subsequent interviews and ask more open-ended follow-up questions.

Surprisingly, the question of my own relationship to use of social media was not of any particular interest to the participants. The participants did not request to know about my activity or how my activity compared to theirs. I attribute this to a mutual understanding of the fact that it was their particular experience that was of interest to me, and my own use and potential personal opinions were of little to no significance for their answers. I also believe that the participants understood my interest in social media on the basis that I was writing a master’s thesis on the subject. Despite a participant’s lack of interest, in the beginning of the interview, I shared that I was active on social media and had myself produced and observed others producing content to social media. I disclosed this to prevent an overwhelming asymmetric relation and to encourage awareness and understanding (Thagaard 2010:96

5.5 Ethical deliberations

This study has been registered with the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD), and has followed the general guidelines when dealing with participants and the data created with them.

Essentially, a researcher is bound to the principle of informed consent. It is important to make the participants aware of the implications of their contributions and their rights to resign from the study if they so wish (Thagaard 2010:26). I presented all the participants with a consent form (Appendix C) that they all signed, but I made sure my contact information was available

if they had anything to add or wanted to be excluded from the study after the interview was concluded.

During the interviews, I was aware that several of my questions pertained explicitly to the participant's feelings. Although I mostly expected reactions of mild annoyance or excitement over social media production, the informants shared feelings that could be considered more sensitive than that. When describing their own activity, the informants would often get embarrassed or display pessimistic feelings about social media in general and its implications for everyday life and social interaction. The personal nature of social media should, therefore, not be underestimated, and I tried to ask some follow-up questions that were more positive if the informants had overwhelmingly negative feelings that could cause them distress (Thagaard 2010:110). I still appreciated how open the participants were about their personal and sometimes painful feelings, even though I wanted to avoid them experiencing any anguish.

All of the participants have been made anonymous. The participants have the right to have all the information about them made confidential (Thagaard 2010:27). My main concern was that the people in my social network who had introduced me to participants would be able to recognize their acquaintances; because of the project's nature, the questions might provoke data about social situations they themselves were involved in. For this reason, I have made the more elaborate and detailed stories about social media production in social situations more general. For example, a "cabin trip with my sister and her best friends" would be reduced to "a trip with friends". I have also changed the aliases of the participants every time I used something they have said so it would be more difficult to identify them instead of the number used in Table 1. In other words, the alias "Nora", for example, does not reference the same actual person every time it is used.

My ambition is that the participants will experience that their viewpoints have been adequately represented. It is not ethically responsible for conveying anything that the informants are not themselves aware of communicating (Thagaard 2010:110). The analytical categories should reflect the meaning and understanding supplied by the informants rather than premeditated overarching theoretical perspectives (Thagaard 2010:111). I want to protect their integrity in the analysis and generated data (Thagaard 2010:112). In the next chapter, I will analyze the data using the micro-interactionism perspectives.

6 The social significance of social media and social media production

This analytical chapter first describes how the participants experience use among themselves and others. These general descriptions are used to understand how the participants construe social media as valid social framework. The following analytical chapters are not presented in an order to argue that general understandings of social media use and production determine specific use and normative opinion. I am aware of the mutual relationship between understanding and use, but the chapters are presented in the following order to achieve a better understanding first of how social media is socially relevant and understood by the participants in general, and then, through the participants' own descriptions, explore how these understandings manifest themselves in specific social situations. The third analytical chapter will discuss how the participants normatively criticize and legitimize their own and other's social media use and production in these social situations.

In this chapter, I explore how the participants believe social media use and production is socially significant. The interviewees communicated how social media has been an *encompassing presence in social life*, and I argue that social media can be considered an *extension of social life*. I wish to use these insights to discuss how social media can in and of itself be a social framework for the individual. Social media can exist in a social framework, but also be considered as a separate social framework with its own social rules that are socially significant for the individual. I use the abbreviations *little to no use (LNU)*, *average use (AU)*, and *above average use (AAU)* when quoting the participants.

6.1 The encompassing presence of social media and common use

It is a natural part of social life, the first thing you ask when you meet a new person is if said person has Snapchat or Facebook (Per, AU).

Considering that the participants were in the age group with the highest number of users it did not come as a surprise that they hardly knew anyone who did not have a profile on social

media. The participants knew social media users that included grandmothers, colleagues, friends and romantic partners. The participants often related the feeling of being surrounded by social media use. Bearing in mind that the participants had varying degrees of use, the standpoint they took on the prominence of social media in social life was diverse and neither exclusively negative nor positive. To convey these various emotions and opinions, I have gathered descriptions about social media's encompassing presence. First, I will explain how the participants experienced their own use, and then how they perceived the social media use of their friends and acquaintances.

6.1.1 Use amongst the participants themselves

When describing their own social media use the participants had different experiences. Understandably, when describing personal use, the most ardent users had the most to say about how they used social media. Thus, it is important to consider the experiences shared regarding the participant's own personal use as influenced by familiarity with the issue. Less frequent users had little to say about their own personal use. I still argue that their experiences are relevant to this thesis because they supply an experience of social media use and production socially that the other informants did not have because of their use and activity. The least active users were, however, rarely able to avoid social media completely and could have had a profile they did not use, or use the less public functions on a site like Facebook Messenger. The average users divulged that their activity centered mostly on following others on social media and not producing a substantial amount of their own content. The most enthusiastic users explained that the content they shared, and the frequency in which they posted was dependent on what platform they were going to use.

Snapchat and Instagram story are simpler because they are only a few seconds and then they disappear after 24 hours. On Instagram, it is more socially acceptable to share more, but if you are sharing things on Facebook several times a day then you might be considered a "showoff" because it is mostly friends and family. (Gegers, AAU).

There was a considerable difference in what kind of other users and followers existed on the different social media platforms. Facebook was considered a place to post significant life-events and use the messaging service. Facebook was also the platform where the participants experienced that older generations were the users producing the most content. Instagram demanded a higher level of esthetic values, partly because it was mainly a photo-sharing

application. The images were often less personal than Facebook and could, and *should*, be more visually pleasing. Instagram had a temporal flare in its function of Instagram stories where images would disappear after 24 hours, similar to Snapchat stories. According to the participants, by choosing specific recipients Snapchat use could be customized, and was less profile based because all of the content would eventually disappear⁶. Therefore, the images and content shared on Snapchat were often described as informal and not necessarily aesthetically enjoyable. For example, several participants said that they would share that they were at a party in the hope of getting friends on Snapchat to join them. The differences in the platforms could be seen as part of how use, the level of production, and content was constructed for the users.

The participants had a common understanding of what was appropriate social behavior on social media. In varying degrees of understanding of content, the participants knew how they wanted to present themselves on social media.

6.1.2 Use amongst friends and acquaintances

Although the least active users opinions about content were mostly based on speculation, the social media production they had witnessed made them envision different content.

Perhaps there is a lot of trivial content, I am sure there is a lot of nice things as well, people post pictures of all kinds of things. I do not feel like everything is as necessary. (Hjalmar LNU).

This was a sentiment echoed in all the different self-proclaimed categories of users. The least active users found any content to be for the most part fundamentally unnecessary but could understand the motivations others had for posting it. The least active users understood it could be fun to share social events with others that were not present, but felt that more often than not the postings would serve a purpose of narcissistic indulgence rather than social media socializing. The opinions the least active users had about the content were less based on the content itself and more on the actual publishing of it online. The act itself was unnecessary and devoid of social significance for the least active users.

⁶ Technically users can take screen captures of the Snaps and Snap stories, so although Snapchat photos might disappear, they can be preserved.

The least active users contended that important news could be shared with friends and significant acquaintances by other means than social media. Consequently, any reservations they had regarding content could be attributed to their general disregard for and occasional aversion to social media production. The least active users were not particularly interested in the online content or the process behind making it. The more active users had more content specific opinions when describing what others posted. Their perspective of social media production's substance could, thus, exclude the least active users from sharing a common understanding of the social framework of social media.

Goffman's (1974) term social framework has traditionally been used to understand the common and shared expectation for a social setting, but could also be applicable to social media in several ways. As I argued in the theory chapter (4.1.1 Social frame), social media can be seen not only as a part of the social framework in the social situations but as its own social frame with similar and different rules from the real-life social situations. The least active users' disregard for social media as a valid social framework would in addition to the exclusion from sharing a common understanding, also exclude them from contributing to shaping the social framework on social media – but not the way social media is discussed in real-life social situations and the real-life social frame. For example, a participant without an account could not comment on an Instagram photo if they found it disagreeable, but they could express their dismay in real-life social situations about it being posted.

The average users, as mentioned, did not habitually share their own content much and more often than not, used their profiles to follow others. The main sentiment echoed about the content shared by friends and acquaintances was namely that it was a practical way to keep up with their lives. Following others on social media facilitated keeping track of people that were not a more natural part of their everyday life. Keeping up with others seemed to be the main value of other's online content. Their dismay with others' activity on social media would stem from both a cavalier and a noncritical sharing of sensitive or even offensive material, or particularly uninteresting content. Unlike the least active group of users, these misgivings were more based on the actual content but were enhanced by the fact that they were being shared.

When I see people sharing everything about their personal life, I think that maybe they should keep it private (Helene AU).

The average users had more content-specific descriptions of what they thought was either too personal, offensive or boring content, but would remark that the fact that it was being shared made it more irksome to behold. The average users displayed the same amount of indignation over offensive content and boring content because the context was the same; people should know better since their content was public. The average users also said that they had different levels of tolerance for different people and age groups, namely older users would not have the same online competence and hence share inappropriate content. The group with the most active use experienced that they had a multitude of different groups to relate to online that fostered quite an array of content.

The above average users were of the assessment that different platforms were not only for distinctive types of content or types of use but for different people. Facebook was a platform where they would have more tolerance for more trivial statuses from family members, but on the more customized platforms like Instagram and Snapchat, the content others shared became more tailored to the participant's particular interests.

On Instagram and Snapchat I am quite strict about whom I follow, this leads to me seeing content that I mainly enjoy (Hedvig AAU).

Often other users with similar frequency of use would have the same interests and esthetics as the most active participants. On Facebook, the users would often be the people whom the participants had a strong real-life social bond, but these contacts did not necessarily have the same preferences of social media production or the same comprehension of what content was particularly suited for each platform. The most avid users' interpretation of the social media content was dependent on who had produced it. Some people were not similarly into esthetics or understood the culture in the different applications. Posting too often or posting content that was not appropriate, the most avid users considered as an example of this kind of behavior. The most avid social media users were sympathetic to the fact that others were not as astute concerning the social codes of social media as they themselves were, and this fact would be reflected in the form and look of their content. Again, these shared understandings of others' social media content can contribute to the argument that social media activity could be understood as a separate social frame. All of the participants, including the ones with little to no social media use, could observe and reflect on how people should act when publishing content online. But the different patterns of use were also relative to how they understood

social media as a social frame. The participants' personal use and the use they witnessed of others would shape their more general feelings about social media as a concept in modern society.

6.1.3 Social media pressure and absurdity

The encompassing presence of social media was felt in the pressure of social media. The least active users said they had little interest to be on social media and equated it to a certain level of frivolousness. Even though they did not wish to be active on social media there was an experienced pressure from others to have an online profile.

I ask people about events that are posted online, and then I get told off and asked if I just cannot make a profile to keep up with others. People point it out all the time. (Hedda LNU).

The least active users were not the only ones who felt the pressure that derived from feelings associated with social media use. All the participants displayed feelings of pressure either relating to or deriving from social media. Pressure to publish, to pay attention, keep up a certain level of quality and also respond to others and their content and maintain online relationships. These activities were not only a source of stress and pressure but of immense enjoyment as well. On social media, the participants could share their lives and observe others. The social form of sociability illustrates that there is a great social value for individuals to be able to come together in a purely social manner without achieving anything in particular. The participants also expressed that they would give each other positive attention and develop stronger social relationships through what I argue could be considered the social form of exchange (Simmel 1971). The possibility of maintaining relationships with people, who were not physically present, were a positive social value attributed to social media by all the participants. There were also possibilities to meet people with similar interests. Often the users, particularly the most active would connect with other compatible users on social media with either similar ascetics or sense of humor. The most engaged social media users felt an opportunity to meet people they would not have met in their daily life if it were not for their own social media activity.

There was also a great sense of empowerment and self-expression that I will go deeper into in the following paragraphs. The final point I want to mention about social media use, in general, was one regarding the general absurdity of social media use. There seemed to be an

implicit expectation for the participants that everyone should be online, but the participants said that writing about his or her life on different social media sites and applications could be considered completely absurd. When criticizing particular content, some of the participants even remarked that any ranking of online content could be considered arbitrary, because all content was essentially not in the strictest sense necessary for anything in particular. This contradiction was interesting, because of how social media could be deemed socially irrelevant, but still have significance in social situations.

Social media and social media use were relevant to the lives of all the participants, even the ones with little to no use. The participants could all describe content, but any particular issue they had with the content was not always the content itself, but the implications of posting it. There was a substantial display of awareness of social media use and greater consequences for the individual. The sense of unavoidability of social media can support a realization of how participants can view social media as an extension of social life.

6.2 Social media production as an extension of social life

To understand the relevance of social media production in everyday life, it could be argued that the participants characterized social media production as an extension of social life. There are elements that contribute to social media being consequential for the individuals in this study. As previously mentioned, social media research has focused on social media as identity construction and as communication. However, I wish to highlight some of the key factors that can illustrate how social media can be an extension of social life through identity construction and communication for the participants in this study, to substantiate my argument for applying social frame to the realm of social media. Social media can be used as a confirming tool in identity construction and is applicable to shaping the online self. The ability to communicate with others and maintain online and real-life social relationships with social media was the social value that was highlighted the most by the participants. The significance of social media can, therefore, have implications for real-life social situations when it is experienced as such by the participants.

6.2.1 Confirmation and relational exchange

Social media can be a source of instant gratification; you post something and hopefully get likes within minutes. Because of the limitations of this project, the content of interest was

what participants posted about their everyday life, and not for the purposes of commercial promotion or speaking for any organization or interests other than their own lives. The project's limitations made the content they published irrevocably connected in varying degree of significance to the active users own social identity. The issue of "likes" and responses to published content could illustrate how social media might be a source of confirmation for the participants. The participants that were active on social media often described the feeling of getting a like on their social media posts. A "like" was not only a "like" if it came from a certain substantial individual, meaning it was not always the quantity but the quality of likes that was significant. There was also a risk that a post might not receive any, or "enough", likes. The anticipation of receiving likes was an especially vulnerable situation if the content was more explicitly an expression of the user's person or personality.

When you post a selfie photo, you really want a lot of likes, so if you do not get many likes you consider it to be negative. It is actually quite an unsettling thought that people need likes to feel good; there is something not quite right there actually. (Rebecca AAU).

The extent of one's personality conveyed in the content was thus a relevant factor for how important the confirmation was for the user. Considering that this project was limited to content about the participants' lives, I argue that all their content, when liked could be confirming to their social self. This production of content and the receiving of likes could constitute a social form of exchange on social media. As introduced in the theoretical framework (4.2 Forms of social interaction), Simmel (1971) used the term social form to describe how real-life social interaction was characterized by different motivations and content. I argued that the content on social media could similarly shape the social form on social media. The social form of exchange is, as explained above, where the goal of the interaction is not driven by competition, but acknowledging each other. This exchange, in turn, strengthens relationships. Since the value of the exchange is determined by its desirability, the value of a like, and by extension other forms of interaction on social media, is determined by who is giving the like.

If I have posted a humor post and someone who is known for being good at humor likes it, it makes me happy. It hangs higher if someone like that likes or comments rather than if my aunty comments, although it is nice when aunty does it too (Hedvig AAU).

Selfies, in addition, were significant for exchange because they were entirely self-made depictions of the users. The image could be viewed as one of the most intended portrayals of how the users wanted to convey themselves on social media, and this could be transmittable to identity construction in social life in general. Although selfies were literal depictions of the users, there was also other significant content less based on appearances and more in being able to convey an interesting personality. Social media can be considered an extension of the users' physical image and appearances and also an expression of their personality. The way the users discuss the importance of being able to shape this public image can be viewed as another instance of how social media is manifested in social life.

6.2.2 Self-expression and the face on social media

For the participants, the expressive nature of social media was a significant aspect of the dichotomy between the constructed and the authentic self. Being able to represent yourself online in the manner in which best suited your understanding of yourself was both powerful and limiting for the participants. Although the freedom allotted by having a personal platform for sharing meticulously curated information about everyday life was inspiring, this freedom could also make the presented images more susceptible to accusations of artifice.

On social media, it is easy to make a façade of your identity, show your most attractive attributes. That is why it is important to be aware of the façade (Gina AAU).

The professed “façade” was, therefore, a natural occurrence online, and even expected by the participants. The comprehension of pretense could be a hindrance when seeking confirmation from peers. A dilemma occurs when wanting to construct a social media self that accurately depicts the everyday self, but the act of producing and documenting fundamentally intersects and changes said act. Paradoxically the production of social life online disrupts or alters the real-life social life itself. This paradox is a significant and unique aspect of social media production as a social activity in contrast to other activities that could be perceived as misinvolvements from the social interaction, like not paying attention or just reading the news on your phone. Social media production has social significance and is expressive about real-life social interaction, but can still be a distracting element in real-life social situations. The participants, especially the ones with a substantial level of production said that the solution to

the artificial way of being real on social media was to be aware of the pretense of social media production and understand it as flattering representations.

The way the users presented themselves to others on social media could be comparative to the face in social situations, the individuals construct of the self, based on accepted social norms like the face in real-life social interaction. Whereas Goffman (1967) applied the term face in real-life social interaction, the social media face can arguably be considered as even more of a meticulous construct by the individual than the real-life social face in social situations. The social media face is dependent on what social media framework and what social media form the content is being produced in. The social media users are able to choose how their face is presented in the social frame of social media down to the slightest detail; for example, what words they use or the angle of their actual physical face in photos. In real-life, there is a social frame that one cannot manipulate in this scrupulous a manner; it is consciously negotiated with the other participants in the social interaction. One way in to maintain the social media face was consistency.

What is appropriate content to post depends on what your followers want. You have to understand that they have followed you because of the type of content you are posting. If you suddenly became radically politically outspoken after you mostly have posted selfies, it would not be appropriate because of your previous activity (Aase AAU).

This quote signifies that the self-representation is dependent on consistency to be perceived as authentic and receive validation – the output of a social form of exchange. The active user's understanding of what other users they were reaching out to shaped the images and words they shared. The professed façade on social media can be viewed as the personification of social expectations, or the face in a social media social interaction in social media framework. Hence, I would argue that face work is not only relevant in real-life social situations but face work can be a necessary social practice on Facebook and other social media. The relational aspect of social media is another indication of how socially significant social media can subsist.

6.2.3 Communication and social media sociability

Communication through sharing and commenting was an important factor for most of the participants. The active users were able to stay in touch with people outside of their imitate

social circle and maintain friendships that might have diminished without the accessibility social media allowed. Several participants argued that most of their content was created to communicate with others, and not necessarily to seek confirmation or convey any particular image of themselves. The active users said that friends and acquaintances appreciated that they shared important events from their lives, like graduations, engagements or pregnancies. The motivation to share underlines the connectedness of social media. The users were not singular entities and did not only wish to communicate *about* themselves but *with* others. I would argue that the social form of the communication based on connecting was not only one of exchange that would strengthen relationships and have positive social value, but also communication for the sake of communicating or commenting for the sake of commenting. This social content could represent a social form of sociability on social media, where the interaction itself grants the value of being social. In real-life social interactions, the content decides the social form (Simmel 1971). On social media, the social form is also decided by the content produced by the users, similar to participants in a real-life social interaction. In the instances of social media sociability, the relevance of likes and comments was less prevalent and the act of sharing itself was the most important for the participants. Maintaining real-life social relationships by producing content for social media was thusly highlighted, but creating new relations based on social media interests was relevant for the group with the highest use.

I have actually made several close friends on social media, and our relationship has developed into a real-life friendship (Gregers AAU).

The users' freedom of expression allowed them to connect with other users on social media that shared their sense of humor and/or their visual aesthetic. The significance of social media relationships illustrates how social media is not only an extension of social life, but also a social framework in and of itself. Substantial relationships could be formed independently from real-life face-to-face interaction. Some of the participants considered social media relationships as more trivial than real-life social relationships. Ranking real-life relationships as more significant and sustainable, and social media relationships as based on the need for confirmation, often correlated with the level of the participants use. One user with little to no use remarked;

Why do you need to share your life with everyone? I feel like the people in my life that need to know how I am doing, know how I am doing (Torvald LNU).

The less active users found that the act of sharing was not as based on mutual affinity, but rather a need for attention. This quote emphasizes how different use related to the experience of social media as a substantial social frame. Social media production could be trivial for certain participants, but quite essential for others, no matter how they substantiated their motivations for use. I argue that social media can in and of itself be understood as social framework where individuals can become spontaneously involved and misinvolved with each other. The participants could post content that would be socially substantial for the recipients of their content, and this could be an interaction independently of being engaged in a real-life social situation. I also argue that, not only the real-life social situations described by the participants capture the different social forms, but exist on and throughout social media as well.

In this chapter, I have gathered the most prevalent ways in which a social media production and social media is experienced as socially significant in general to better understand social media as social framework. The different users all experienced how social media is an encompassing presence in modern day life. The frequency of social media activity was relational to how the participants considered their own content and use and the use and content of others. This use had direct implications for how social media could function as an extension of social life. In the following chapters, I will use this understanding of social media as a substantial social framework and an arena for social forms, as a foundation for the next chapter to better understand the responses and reactions to social media production when they occur in specific social situations. In the last chapter about how this activity is legitimized and criticized by the participants in this study, I will also include these general understandings about social media.

7 The social media production process effects and responses

When entering into a particular social interaction, individuals are fundamentally vulnerable. The way in which individuals implement face-work and handle different elements in the interaction are crucial to how it is experienced. In this chapter, I specifically discuss how the participants reacted and responded to social media production during the actual social situations they were participating in. The participants with little to no use only had reactions and responses connected to the use displayed by others, the remaining participants who were active users could additionally share how they handled others' responses to their social media production. How do the participants cope with selfies and authoring clever captions whilst being a part of the interaction they are in? And how do they handle others' reactions to their production process? The production process can have several social implications that impact the social situation in which they occur. To better understand social media production in a social situation, I first wish to explain how the active users described the process of production.

7.1 Social media production and emotions

Whether one was a person that was active online seemed to be related to personal interests, but also partly a consequence of the encompassing presence of social media. Often the participants would say things about their social media production as; "I do not really know why I posted that, I just did", or; "I just posted it, I did not think about it". When it came to social media production whilst being social or incorporating social media in socializing, the participants had different reasons for why they would or would not produce. I argue that the kind social form or the purpose of the interaction would influence the level of production. If the social form were exchange, there would be a particular purpose to transfer energy through reciprocal relationships, and the real-life interaction and social media would reflect this. Sociability would be relevant if the social content was socializing for the reason of being social. Often it would be relationally dependent; the relationships to the others in the interaction would shape behavior. The situation and its nature would also be part of the contemplation over whether to post content or not. In addition, it was considered how much each participant deliberated when he or she was producing content. Social media production

is a process, the duration and how introspective this process is, varied between the participants, but it was indeed a process.

7.1.1 The process of social media production

The least active users had little to say about their own production process but would comment on others. The central observation was that people would often spend quite a bit of time on the content they were producing. Descriptions of the social media production included the content producer asking the less active users about what they thought about something before they posted it and asking if it was ok to post. Including others in the production process was relevant for some of the participants that actually produced content, but not all. Some of the participants really did not consider their content in detail and spent little time on posting, but for most of the participants, the production was a lengthier process. The kind of content they were producing was as previously mention dependent on what social media site or application they were using, less serious for more temporary applications and more aesthetically thought out if it was more permanent content.

I use a lot of time on an Instagram photo, I might take 30 photos and then I go through them and mark my favorites and then I go through the ones I have marked as favorites and finally I find the one photo that I might use. It depends on the light and the elements in the photo and then I spend a lot of time editing it. Then I could use 5 minutes to half an hour editing a photo, and I will save different edits to see which one is the best. Some people might not even see the difference, but I do. So, there is a lot of time put into it. (Nora AAU).

This description of the production process might sound quite lengthy when described in these terms, and Nora remarked that this type of production was not one that she would usually do in social situations. But I believe it illustrates the care and consideration that is included in social media production in general. And this further constitutes that social media can be seen as social framework, where the social rules are different, especially for the most avid users. The expectations and need for consistency from their online relations could constitute an expressive order that should coincide with a certain face, similar to the face in real-life social interaction. On social media, the face is also determined to set of social codes that require careful planning and editing. The presented social media face might not always be reliant on aesthetic conditions, but as mentioned being humorous or sharing political beliefs could also be a certain social media face. But the preparation behind a post and then actuality posting it

is not the entirety of the social media production. Production does not end after publication; this is when the checking for likes and comments begin. The confirmation and reactions to the post contributed to shape the experience and as stated certain likes were more notable than others. Producing content was sometimes a lengthy and demanding social process that required attention from the users. Social media production could, therefore, elicit different effects and responses if the users chose to publish content on social media in social situations. There could be different forms of alienation that could create misinvolvement for the participants engaged in the interaction.

7.1.2 The act of social media production in social situations

The act itself of publishing content on social media whilst being social with others was not something all the participants did. It was an act that some of the participants reserved for certain people and particularly certain situations. Relationships with the other participants in the real-life social frame often decided if taking a photo and publishing it and talking about comments was unacceptable, acceptable or even in some instances an expectation. Thus, the production process was inherently determined by the participant's level of use and interest, but more importantly the real-life social relationships they were trying to maintain in the social situation. As mentioned, the more severe production processes were reserved for less social situations because it required more attention.

What I try to do is to take photos and then wait until the next day to edit them. I see a lot of people at parties that take a photo and sit and edit it and post it right then and there. I have a theory about that it might actually give you more likes if something is posted "in the moment". (Hedvig AAU).

The different social mediums themselves and the types of content they elicited was also determining for whether if it was something that happened in the moment of the social interaction or not. For example, Snapchat being more temporal and having a culture for silly photos taken in the moment, was the most utilized app for actual social media production in social situations for the participants. Even the most avid users would hesitate to post more permanent posts like Facebook statuses or Instagram photos whilst they were with others that were not positive towards social media or social media production. Sometimes the first part of the process of taking the photos but not posting them was customary to maintain the established boundaries of the real-life social frame they were engaging in. It was also

sometimes acceptable to ask others about whether the content should be posted or not, or give each other help in choosing, for example, the caption or the filter for a photo. Other times the last part of the process, the receiving of comments and checking for likes was more acceptable to do whilst with others. All the participants agreed that the real-life social situations had substantial social value. Real-life was universally considered a valid social frame, whilst social media was not.

The act of production was, therefore, not unilaterally monotonous. There were different degrees in which the participants had experienced others producing content and what they themselves were comfortable with. What the participants conveyed was a diverse understanding of the legitimacy of social media as social framework. The legitimacy of social media as social framework contributed to the relevance of how the face of the participants was maintained in the social interaction. The way in which the participants perceived the social media production was dependent on their perspective on social media's social significance. How substantially the participants could recognize social media shaped how they were affected emotionally and their reactions to social media production.

7.1.3 Emotional experiences of social media production

The real-life social situations described in this study by the participants could explain the account of the participants becoming spontaneously involved with each other, people coming together and excluding other interferences. Categorizing social media production as interference is problematic, it was not clear-cut, but rather context, or social frame, dependent. Goffman's (1967) terms spontaneous involvement and misinvolvement could be relevant in different ways in this study because of the participant's diverse experiences. I would argue that the ambiguity and the disagreement over the social validity of social media demonstrated by the participants would make several understandings of social media in regards to being social interference more relevant. The participants had different boundaries for their conversations that created dissimilar involvement obligations. Social media was not only a distraction for the participants but occasionally an addition to the social situation or even a separate social situation to become spontaneously involved in. Thus, I will present the participant's different emotional reactions to social media production in social situations. For the least active users and most of the average users and some of the most active users, the most common feeling when someone else decided to produce content for social media when

they were spontaneously involved in a real-life social interaction could be described as misinvolvement.

I feel like I'm not interesting enough, that their phones are more important than the people in their lives. What does your phone have that I do not? (Torvald LNU).

Determining what kind of alienation could create misinvolvement is dependent on the comprehension of social media as a legitimate social frame to engage in. The participants that did not understand or accept social media as a corresponding social activity to real-life social situations could be said to have experienced the act of social media production as external preoccupation that created misinvolvement where the individual is preoccupied with something not related to the interaction. The preoccupation element might be one of importance, and the level of significance can affect how offensive the preoccupation is experienced by the other participants (Goffman 1967:117). In the instances of social media production, some of the participants did not classify social media production as an element of importance, and this would amplify the involvement offence. The form of alienation would be perceived as if the participant was not upholding the involvement obligations and was occupied with something external that was not related to the conversation. The form of alienation that created misinvolvement could even be classified as self-consciousness on their own part. If the participants experienced that other participants had become disinterested in their interaction, and this made them overly self-aware and not able to focus on the interaction and only their own behavior.

A participant that had a higher regard for social media's social significance might argue that if any misinvolvement was taking place during social media production, it would rather be self-consciousness or other-consciousness; being distracted by themselves or the others in the interaction, because they are arguably spontaneously involved in two social interactions with different social framework. One could also argue that the participants that valued social media production could become excessively occupied with themselves or others in the interaction because they wanted to produce content for social media about it. The participants that were engaging in spontaneous involvement with other participants who did not value social media could, therefore, become misinvolved by focusing only on the social media production about the interaction and not the real-life social interaction itself. Producing content to social media could arguably in these instances be viewed as part of the social

interaction, or supplementary to another separate social interaction by the active participants. The most avid users also remarked that they themselves had also felt neglected by people they were interacting with in a social situation, even though they had acted in similar ways.

I have a little bit of a double standard, but I can get irritated as well because you feel like you are the second or third priority. It is very easy to forget how you are yourself in a situation like that. I can easily get annoyed and then I will be posting my own content 20 minutes later. (Gregers AAU).

This quote demonstrates another feeling experienced by the participants that actually produced content whilst with others in real-life socially; feeling compelled to post or even automatically posting without considering why they needed to do it during the social situation. An external preoccupation is not necessarily intentional on the part of the participant that displays it. One average user commented that she posted a photo at a sporting event, and then she remarked that she did not know why she had not waited until after the game. This feeling of “posting guilt” was a common one amongst informants and they did not always understand their own behavior. If their behavior was pointed out as inappropriate they could perhaps become alienated through self-consciousness. The guilt the active users felt might illustrate how all-consuming self-consciousness can be. Often, they would experience that they had spent quite a bit of time on posting something and then “come back” to the real-life social situation. One could argue that the material premises for social media production made it easy for the informants to act in this way. Several of the informants would argue that the simplicity of the technological devices implemented to produce content to social media contributed to them posting immediately.

It is like having a sophisticated computer in your pocket; you have all the editing applications for photos, and with a good data plan you can post anytime and right away (Regine AU).

The phones themselves were thusly attributed some of the reasoning for posting whilst with others, but the practicality of the technology did not hinder the social media producers in feeling guilt. The producers described feeling like they were being pulled in two directions socially, and could not satisfy either social situation. The social media producers could become misinvolved in both or their valued social frames by trying to be simultaneously spontaneously involved in both real-life and online social interactions. These complex

emotions connected to social media production demonstrate that the different levels of use would often correlate with a different experience of the social situation.

The more active users would have a stronger affinity with social media and find social value in producing content and become spontaneously involved in two parallel social interactions. The less active users would have more of an issue with the production, and their experiences could be described as feeling that the others were becoming misinvolved, because of the lack of significance of social media and social media production in their lives. One of the most pressing aspects of the emotional reactions was the feeling of guilt, which could be attributed to the higher ranking of real social situations over social situations on social media, and even not considering social media a significant social situation at all. Feeling that a legitimate social activity like social media production was considered trivial for others would illicit specific coping strategies when producing content. Although the participants had different ways in which they reacted emotionally to social media production, they had similar ways of responding to each other and saving each other's face.

7.2 Coping strategies and responses

The internal emotional effects of social media production fostered several different reactions. I contend that, even though the participants had renditions about their feelings being hurt or experiencing hurting others' feelings, this does not imply a hostile environment or relationships of conflict. The participants all relayed the ambition of wanting a pleasant social interaction when they were engaging in social situations with others. One could utilizing Simmel's (1971) terms, classify the social forms as either one of exchange or sociability. The participants wanted to strengthen relationships by coming together, or just come together to socialize. The participants did not express any intentions of malice when producing content to social media, nor did the participants that signified the social media production as trivial socially. I would, therefore, argue that the participants in the social interactions described in the data material have the ambition of maintaining the face of themselves and others in the social interaction. As previously mentioned, all of the participants had experiences of misinvolvement that could potentially threaten the face of some or all of the participants in the interaction. I wish to present the most prominent of the face-work that the participants either had experienced or done themselves.

7.2.1 Face work

During the course of the interviews, I experienced that the participants had all demonstrated some form of trying to cope with an individual producing content to social media in the social situations described. Either on the part of those actually publishing social media content, or the participants that experienced others doing it. I would classify this acting as face-saving face work done by the participants. With the term face work, Goffman (1967) explored how the face could be threatened and saved by the individuals participating in the social interaction. Because of the social ambiguity of social media production and the varying legitimacy of social media as social framework, it was indefinite if social media production in social situations would indeed threaten the face of individuals in the interaction. If the social media production were considered a significant social practice, the participants would not feel that the individuals producing content had become misinvolved. Consequently, social situations that had participants with individuals that only considered social media production as socially significant, were not as inclined to do face-saving face work. The absence of face work in these social situations would also be dependent on the participants being knowledgeable of the other participant's relationship and understanding of social media production. If an individual was uncertain of another participant's feelings towards their social media production, they might implement face-saving practices and this could, in turn, threaten the face by merely acknowledging social media production as possibly threatening to the face of the individual. Social situations with one or more individuals that were not positively inclined towards social media production and considered it misinvolvement, would make all the participants more susceptible to have their face threatened.

The participants with the perception of social media production as not socially significant, would as mentioned feel ignored or excluded if others produced content in their presence. Sometimes they would not even respond because the act of pointing it out might potentially save their own face, but threaten the other individuals by creating a negative mood or provoking a discussion. Some of the participants, who did not produce content to social media whilst with others, also acknowledged that social media could be significant and important for others, and did not wish to make them feel trivialized. So, the participants would often avoid remarking, even though their own face could be threatened in the social interaction. If any participants ever tried to save face by indicating any annoyance or hurt feelings caused by any other participants choosing to produce content, it would hardly ever

take on the form of a direct and aggressive confrontation that might demonstrate the entire scope of their emotional reaction.

I will say something like “Oh, you could have been paying attention to me!” Like in a playful way and not a direct confrontation. (Per AU).

This quote demonstrates a rather soft approach to trying to correct the actions of the others in the social interaction. The method of being mindful when commenting on social media use and production could be viewed as an attempt to do face-saving face work, without threatening the others face by causing direct offence by pointing out how their actions that could create misinvolvement were causing them to feel trivialized in the social interaction. The individuals producing content would similarly try not to offend the others in the social interaction. If they were uncertain or knew that others in the social situation were not keen on them producing content, they would either avoid producing content whilst they were in the social situation, or they would act like they were not involved with social media production to the degree in which they were. The participants described acting like they were paying attention to what was going on in the social interaction, but really being more focused on choosing a filter for their Instagram photo.

I have learned how to reply to comments without even looking at my phone! If I were having lunch with you, you would not even notice. I know where everything is on my phone, especially the share button. (Gregers AAU).

The more active participants would try to avoid threatening their own face and the face of others by trying to conceal the act itself. Hiding social media production could be difficult if others were especially susceptible to feeling that social media production was a form of misinvolvement, and in doing so the participants were demonstrating that they were not interested or did not value the real-life social situations they were engaged in. All of the participants, especially the ones that did produce social media content in social situations stated that the reasoning for social media production was hardly ever to demonstrate boredom or lack of engagement in the real-life social situation, but understood that this was the most likely interpretation. I did not get any sufficient answers about if the social situation was substantially less engaging, would the content producers be more inclined to start posting? They stated that it was not dependent on how engaged they were, but how much the social

situation allowed for it, and how pressing the need to post something on social media was. As mentioned for the most active users the social significance of posting content could be independent of the real-life social interaction. Pretending was thus a prominent coping strategy that the participants used to save the face of themselves and others in the social situations. Another strategy was to vocalize a distance from the act of social media production.

7.2.2 Face-saving ironic distance

Another aspect of the responses that were actually vocalized by the participants, was confronting the issue of social media production with humor. Sometimes the participants would mock the absurdity of social media production in social situations. Mocking was a strategy the participants who described experiencing others producing used. In the instances of dealing with others producing the participants would make fun of the situation. This form of response could be considered more explicitly confrontational because it acknowledges more that the act of social media production can be disruptive in social situations. The participants still emphasized that when pointing out that social media production itself could be considered silly to someone who was producing, they would relay their message with their tongue planted firmly in their cheek. The goal of mocking social media was not to severely embarrass the person in the social interaction and threaten their face but to relocate some of the embarrassment felt from being ignored or set aside for social media and save their own face.

I might say something like “good thing you took twenty photos, those likes are important!”, because it really is ridiculous how obsessed some people are with likes (Regine AU).

In these instances, the participants did not express malevolence for the individual producing the content to social media and mocking their person directly, but social media as a concept. This ironic distance was a strategy that could lessen the threat to the individuals' face, by directing the blows towards social media as a concept in general. This tactic of ironic distance was also used when the users defended their own social media production. Often participants that frequently produced would make fun of themselves; even though they posted the content they were making fun of producing. The active users in social situations said that when they became aware that themselves or several others were producing, they would try to

make it clear that they were aware that their actions could be considered unsocial or even socially disruptive.

People might say things like “now we are having fun you guys” or “great party”, because everyone is sitting on their phones (Aase AAU).

This formulation can also be described as a way to save face in social interaction. The participants acknowledged how social media production was present in their social situation. The awareness of how the real-life social moment is engrossed in social media production could demonstrate that the participants wanted to show how they still were present in the real-life social situation, or at least recognized its disruption. Using humor to point out that everyone is sitting on his or her phone could be considered a tactful way to deflect the responsibility for the social interaction from the individual to the action itself. The participants save their own face by stating that what is happening could be considered silly, instead of defending their social media activity with others. The display of self-awareness shown by the participants that produced could also contribute to the other participants experiencing that they are still spontaneously involved in the real-life social situation and uphold the involvement obligations of the conversation.

In this chapter, I have analyzed the social media production process and the participants' emotional responses and their reactions to the act when it occurs in specific social situations. I would argue that the way participants experienced the process of production was dependent on their understanding of social media's social significance and legitimacy as a social frame. The participants that one could argue valued social media as a social frame with certain expectations and rules, could spend quite a bit of time on the social media production, and also incorporate it into their social interaction. The users that viewed social media production as insignificant compared to the real-life social framework, experienced social media production by others as a misinvolvement for the spontaneous involvement they were engaging in. These emotional effects elicited coping strategies and responses to save each other's face, including the participants in the interactions that were producing content whilst with others and the ones experiencing others producing content. The active user pretended that they had not become misinvolved if they were producing content and had an ironic distance to the production if it was pointed out. When losing face, the participants that felt

ignored in the social situations would also try to jokingly point out the absurdity of choosing to produce content and not engage in the superior socially significant real-life social situation. The participant's justifications for these reactions and responses and their personal use are significant for how they value social media in social interaction. In the next chapter, I will explore how the participants implement their understanding of social media to normatively explain their and others social behaviors.

8 Criticizing and legitimizing personal use

In this final analytical chapter, I implement the ways in which the participants criticized and legitimized their own and others personal social media use and production in social situations. I will utilize the understandings of social media's social significance in general from the first analytical chapter, and the described reactions and responses to the actual social media production when it occurs in social situations from the second analytical chapter. These understandings and behaviors are relational to the normative criticisms and legitimizing the participants used. The presented criticisms could also be described as legitimizing little to no personal use, and the same could be said for the arguments legitimizing being active on social media and social media production in social situations as criticizing inactivity. For a more comprehensive and coherent analysis, I will present first how the participants argue that social media use and production in social situations is not positive for social interaction. The criticisms are therefore limited to the criticisms concerning *active* personal use. Then I will present the arguments from the participants about the positive social significance of social media; these legitimize active personal use and not inactive personal use. Finally, I will argue that one of the main points made about social media production and how the participants presented their experience of it is its public aspect.

8.1 Criticizing social media use

When criticizing active personal use, the participants would not only criticize others, but also themselves. As mentioned, some informants would admit to being quite critical of others behavior, and then later experiencing themselves becoming misinvolved with the real-life social situation by producing content. For the informants who did not use social media at all, or the participants who actively abstained from social media production in social situations, there was little criticism of their own personal use. One of the participants with little to no use remarked that he might just be "kind of weird" because he had absolutely no interest in being active on social media. The participants that mainly criticized others often experienced this as being overly negative towards others and social media. Consequently, they would often point out that this was their particular social preference and did understand that others might find social value in social media, whilst some informants argued that objectively, social media had less social significance and social value than real-life social situations.

8.1.1 Abstaining from social pressure

As mentioned in the chapter that discussed the participants understanding of use, pressure was a significant experience during social media use, for example being worried about the number of likes a certain post receives. But the participants also underlined a substantial amount of pressure to actually produce and get involved on social media as well. Participants who were not active on social media experienced being confronted with their inactivity by others. The participants with little to no use understood that they could be considered the odd ones out, but did not feel that social media should be ranked higher than real-life social situations in regards to its social significance.

When you do not participate on social media, then you do not always know what is going on and you become more easily outraged. You are not allotted a voice in reality either, so you often have to sit and listen. (Hedda LNU).

This is an interesting perspective because the participants who abstained from use acknowledged thusly that social media was prominent in social life, but not its social value. I attribute this to these participants' understanding of social media, not as its own social framework, but an element in the real-life social frame. The pressure to participate would often make the informants who did use social media or produce content aware of negative social consequences. This quote signifies how not only the participants who were not involved on social media could also become misinvolved in real-life because of their lack of social connection to others online. I find this particularly relevant to the argument that social media can be considered socially significant for everyone because of the overwhelming presence of social media in social life. What is interesting about this understanding of the possibility of alienation in real-life social situations because of inactivity on social media, is that the participants who described it did not consider themselves as the individuals that were not partaking in the social situations. The least active users argued that their exclusion from some information that was distributed on social media was an illustration of their active decision to not be involved online.

For me, I do not see any other value than information about what is going on, it is no way to actually socialize for me (Torvald LNU).

These participants did not consider the social media activity as a valuable social activity and rather contested that their abstaining from it, even though they experienced pressure was indicative of them making a positive social decision and not actively excluding themselves. Social media was not socially relevant for some of the informants and, therefore, criticized by the participants that did not consider it as a social frame. The pressure to become active on social media and being excluded because of it in real-life contributed to criticism towards it and did not encourage more use.

8.1.2 Not experiencing the moment

The criticism that the individuals doing it can categorize social media production in social situations as misinvolvement, underlines how social media is ranked socially. The informants often described the “moment” without having any set definition, but in the case of this thesis, it could be understood as spontaneous involvement and a mutual social trance. The participants would contend that social media production was a distraction from the real-life social moment they were engaged in, and not a significant social activity in its own right. The participants did thus not only consider social media as less significant, but also as disruptive and destructive to more valuable real-life social moments.

It is quite annoying, and I just do not understand the point of it, because some people exaggerate compared to what is actually reality. I mean, on Facebook and Instagram it looks so great and nice, but in real-life it was nice, but then you took your phone up and had to take a bunch of pictures and make me feel uncomfortable. (Helene AU).

Helene’s experience was not unique amongst the other participants in this study. The description of moments being pleasant until one person or several people would introduce social media activity into the social situation and this would be disruptive in nature. This can be attributed to real-life social moments being ascribed more value and being a primary social frame for the interaction, where one of the rules is not to create misinvolved by alienation through external preoccupation. In this instance, social media would be classified as an external preoccupation and not as a part of the real-life social situation. This disruption could also be interpreted as interaction-consciousness, self-consciousness or other-consciousness where the participants become so occupied with the interaction itself, each other or themselves and producing content, that they do not uphold the involvement obligations and become misinvolved. The ranking of the social frames could be described as

a hierarchy of social frames, where the real-life social frame reigned supreme for some of the participants in this study. For the “moments” to be socially valuable, some of the participants understood the proper social frame as being spontaneously involved with only the individuals present in real-life social situations. Another interesting aspect is that the sometimes superficial and exaggerated way in presenting the current social situation on social media, added to the experienced social provocation. The participants felt that the performativity of social media made the real-life moments comparatively less pleasant because they could not compete with the presented experience of the real-life social situation on social media.

My friends always yell out “Group photo!” and then you have to stand there and join in. I think that there is no use for it. We could rather live our life through our eyes and not our camera phones. It takes a lot from the day. (Hedda LNU).

This quote exemplifies another way in how the performativity of social media creates a false experience of real-life social situations. There was in Hedda’s perspective no need to pose for a group photograph and post in on social media, and the activity then becomes misinvolvement by becoming alienated in form of external-preoccupation or even interaction-consciousness. The valuable social moment is pointed out and documented and the participants are made aware. The moment is also exaggerated and, therefore, it loses its value. By making the participants conscious of their pleasant social interaction made the participants misinvolved from their spontaneous involvement and mutual social trance. This misinvolvement through interaction-consciousness can be detrimental to the social relationships that are being developed in the real-life social frames. The social form of the interaction is also portrayed jeopardized in the criticism of personal use.

8.1.3 The value of real-life relationships and connection

When describing the “moment” in real-life social situations, the participants additionally explained why they were unique to real-life social situations and devalued by social media production. The participants argued that a criticism towards social media use and social media production was that it could not compare and was inferior to socializing in real-life. Thus, using social media in real-life social situations could not be seen as socially valuable because it was second-rate and destructive to the superior real-life situation that they were engaged in. The real-life social situations moments were described as having a distinct property that created a higher form of social connectedness than social media. The way in

which individuals were when they were face to face, was experienced as exceptional and even irreplaceable.

I think it is boring, people staring at their phones taking selfies. If you walk through town you see people staring on each of their phones, instead of sitting together talking and having a nice time that can never be replaced by a screen. (Hjalmar LNU).

This quote demonstrates the value of real-life social relationships. The social relationships are viewed as something that is developed through physical connectedness. The social forms could be described as one of exchange. Hjalmar sees great value in coming together and nourishing a social connection, but the value of an exchange is determined by its mutuality and how it relates to a social interaction. Hence, there is no value for Hjalmar when the individuals in an interaction are physically present but are separately producing content for social media. The social form witnessed could also be described as sociability because the purpose of the interactions could be just to come together and not necessarily strengthen relationships. The social form could again be construed as compromised by social media production. The producing is interpreted as separate from the social interaction and, therefore, the social form emerges as unsocial and the value of being social is threatened.

Social media was arguably accused of endangering real-life social relationships and the social form of exchange, and the experience of being social for the sake of being social. As described in chapter 7, the face could be threatened by feeling that others were misinvolved, and the participants had different ways of doing face work that could save the threatened face of the individuals in the interaction. Some participants pointed out that the production could be a source of social contention not because of how it might be seen as misinvolvement, but because of disagreements over the properties of the actual production process.

When you are with people who are really into social media, you might disagree about what is the best thing to publish, or you want to be able to have the best premises for producing content. I have actually argued with friends over who gets the chair with the best lighting at a restaurant. (Nora AAU).

In this instance, the social media itself is part of the argument and not necessarily that this devalues the real-life social situation that the individuals are engaged in. I find this point of

criticism particularly interesting because it recognizes social media as a social contender and even possibly a separate social form where there are distinct rules and expectations. Social media is criticized by its own volition and because the individuals value how they present themselves on social media. In this instance, social media is not trivialized compared to the real-life social situation, but its validity and social significance rendered Nora critical of the social frame of social media itself. These criticisms could be an expression of how social media is not valued socially. When the participants had experienced social media as socially relevant and valuable they would have arguments that legitimized their personal use.

8.2 Legitimizing social media use

When presenting how their social media use could be construed as socially valid and not necessarily disruptive or even pointing out positive social values even though it could be disruptive, the participants often conveyed criticisms to social media before they combated them. The criticisms themselves, hence, prompted a portion of the legitimizing of personal use for the participants. Thusly, the legitimizing of personal use by the participants could also be interpreted as criticisms against less active use. The dominance of criticism *against* social media is part of the reasoning behind categorizing the arguments that were positive towards active social media use as legitimizations, because for the participants the arguments seemed to stem from a universal assumption that social media often was experienced as not a valuable social activity. Thus, the positive ways in which the participants presented their own activity on social media and their social media production in actual social situations was often first as a defense to their perceived perception of others' opinions and reactions, and their own misgivings about the topic.

8.2.1 The shared act of social media production

As mentioned in the first analytical chapter, social media production was a way for the participants to feel confirmed by their friends and acquaintances by receiving comments. I argued that this could demonstrate that the informants felt spontaneously involved with others on social media and that this became a social form of exchange by giving and receiving comments. The most active users argued that the relationships they had on social media needed to be maintained and could often be as important as their real-life social relationships. The social media production seemed not only to be socially significant in the social framework on social media but for the individuals engaged in interaction in real-life as

well. The participants who actively used social media and produced content whilst they were with others, described social media as a confirming activity.

My friends and I might sit together and choose the best selfie, and maybe the most flattering filter. It really makes me happy when the people around me are interested in what I am posting and say it is cool content to post. (Aase AAU).

This common activity legitimizes social media production not only as confirming on social media itself but also as confirming in real-life social situations. Others present in the social situation can confirm the production process as significant and in accordance with what is socially accepted within the social frame of social media. Social media use and social media production could arguably be viewed in these instances as social enhancement and reinforcement for the real-life social interaction and relationships. The social form of exchange is heightened by introducing the others in the interaction to the confirming element of the participant's social media production. The users could produce the content when they are not engaging with others socially in real-life, but when doing it with others present who appreciate its social significance, they achieve reciprocity and a relationship that is greater than the sum of its parts. Hence, when the individuals in the interaction acknowledge social media as a significant social frame, the social form can be one of parallel exchange, both on social media through confirming comments, but also in real-life through other participants in the interaction confirming and contributing to the social media content and production. A common production process was thus significant for the strengthening of social relationships for the active users in this study.

8.2.2 The value of sharing moments on social media

On social media, the result of sharing and receiving comments is not necessarily only the social form of exchange. The goal of the interaction on social media could be to only be social. I would describe the act of being social in real-life and being able to simultaneously be spontaneously involved on social media without the other participants experiencing it as misinvolvement, as a social form of parallel sociability. The participants were able to share content that they felt that others would be positive to on social media. The mere act of sharing signified involvement for the participants who found it socially significant. There was a value in itself to share moments on social media for the active users among the participants.

The significant moments were not arguably significant because of what was happening during them, but who was participating in the real-life social situation.

I do not only share significant events and cool things that I am doing. I think it is really nice to post about a person you have not seen in a while. (Regine AU).

The participants experienced the real-life moments of being worthy to share on social media. Wanting to share significant moments was an interesting way of legitimizing social media because it attributed social media with underlining the value of real-life shared moments and relationships. The act of sharing is, consequently, a legitimizing practice of the social relationship itself, and a positive way to reinforce social bonds for the participants that found social media and production socially meaningful. In this instance, the act of posting content about a friend is not experienced as misinvolvement for the individual, but expressing pride in the social situation and relationship and being continually spontaneously involved even though they might have to take a moment to produce the content for social media. Therefore, it could be argued that some of the participants experienced the act of posting content whilst with others in a real-life social situation as so overwhelmingly socially gratifying, that their face and the face of others was not threatened, but strengthened in the interaction during social media production. The content was however not always dependent on being posted during the social situation, the production process could happen later and the social media post could still be experienced as confirming. What was particular about posting in the situation, was the enjoyment of producing content together, which could not be shared if the user waited until after the real-life social situation to produce and post the content to social media. The experience of having someone else in the real-life social situation wanting to post content that included the participants that valued social media as a legitimate social frame, was also quite positive.

I think it is so nice when people want to take a picture with me! I feel like you are actually friends if people want you on their social media. Then you are a true friend (Rebecca AAU).

The real-life and social media social relationship could, thus, be considered mutually reinforcing for the participants that appreciated it. The active users also simultaneously experienced a social connectedness in real-life by others posting content on social media. I would argue that in these instances of social media production, the real-life social

relationships became validated when shared on social media. The participants that valued social media as a social frame were therefore obliged to accommodate and maintain the face of others both in the real-life social situation and on social media.

8.2.3 Simultaneously maintaining parallel social relationships

By examining the criticisms against active social media use and the ways in which the active users legitimize this use, the importance of social relationships could be considered a prominent factor. I would argue that the participants that did not value social media as a legitimate social frame, experienced social media as misinvolvement and threatening to their face in the interaction. The participants who found social media as an extension of social life and socially valuable might experience that social media production was a positive social activity that could strengthen their relationships in real-life and on social media. The social frame of real-life social situations was that some experienced social media production as positive whilst others did not. The more active participants would not always be in social situations where the other individuals appreciated their social media production, but would still want to maintain and reinforce valuable social relationships on social media by producing content. The experience of being in a social situation that did not exclusively include individuals that valued social media as a social frame, could make the participants who wanted to produce feel like they were pulled in two social directions that sometimes conflicted with each other. But when surrounding oneself with more compatible individuals in social situations, the issue of saving face during social media production could subside.

I think that social media is a so integrated part of everyday life, that my friends and I do not make it into a unique thing that needs to be pointed out (Nora AAU).

This quote depicts social media production in social situations as more of the natural state of interaction. Not even necessarily mutually confirming as the other descriptions, but just present and unnoticed by the individuals present. In these instances, where social media production neither is maintaining nor threatening the face of the individuals in the interaction, social media, and the real-life social situations are not separate parallel social frames, they are integrated. The participants stressed this point further by pointing out that social media is a powerful social platform, but ultimately it is socially insignificant compared to real-life social situations.

We live life with social media as a natural part of it, when we are not together and when we are together. But if we are able to not replace our interactions with social media, it could be a valuable tool that gathers all the services and functions we can use in one place, and we can easily get in touch with each other. (Per AU).

Therefore, social media was not always negative or disruptive when considered as less significant socially than real-life social interaction. Social media use and production in social situations would thusly not be a considerable threat to the participants face if it were considered inconsequential to their more valuable real-life social interaction. Although social media could be a possible threat to the participant's face if social media was given a more substantial social significance than real-life social situations. The ways in which the participants legitimized personal use could arguably communicate the more overarching perceptions about social media.

Why was social media production such a prominent subject in social life? In the last part of the analysis, I want to explore how the material reality of social media as a public space could be relational to how social media use was legitimized and criticized by the participants. The acknowledgment of social media as separate from private social real-life interaction can also contribute to understand the participant's general opinions about social media use and how they specifically react and respond when social media production occurs in social situations.

8.3 The public aspect of social media

Social media content is shared with others. The material and structural implementations of social media were, hence, relational to how it was used, thought of and integrated into social situations. The participants in the study often used the material structure of social media itself to describe why they had certain notions about social media production in social situations. As mentioned, the act of sharing itself was partly why some of the participants did not enjoy social media content and use and social media production in social situations. Often when I would ask about if they did not like social media production, the informants would first talk about the lack of privacy when their interactions were shared online, before I had to clarify that I wanted to know how they felt about the actual real-life social interaction in the social situation that they were engaged in. The issue was with private moments being public. Then

again, as mentioned, one of the most confirming aspects of social media production for some of the participants was that themselves and others demonstrated that moments were worthy enough to share publicly. I believe that these criticisms and legitimizations of personal use are suggestive of social media itself being used as grounds for use for the participants. There were other arguments that were similarly formulated by the participants that attributed social media itself as criticism against personal use and to legitimize it.

8.3.1 The transparency of social media artifice

As mentioned, the social performativity of social media was a point of contention for some of the participants. The active social media users agreed that the performativity was part of its appeal, spending time on the production process made it enjoyable. The content the most active users posted was thought out and adhered to the social framework of social media. The production process was relative to how they considered social media production as socially relevant; if they felt social media was important, they wanted to put their best face forward on social media. The level of performativity in the presented face on social media could arguably be seen as higher than the one in real-life social interaction, because of the possibility to edit and produce the most flattering image of social reality. The understanding that social media production required artifice on the part of the active users producing, could be part of why the less active users found social media content and the production of it as more superficial than real-life social situations. This criticism of the issue of artifice of active social media use, is interesting because like the issue of sharing private moments in a public space, it can be said to solidify the arguments against social media more as a concept and not to the individuals using it. Whilst considering the criticism of the superficiality of social media use and production, some of the more active participants argued that the performance aspect of social media that was required in the social frame of social media was prevalent in real-life social situations as well.

I think that either if you are at school or at work, you want to show yourself from your best side. If you are on a date you want to show your best side, in a way that is what you do on social media, what you see of a person is not the way you see them if you really know them, not like when you meet them on the first date. (Aase AAU).

In this comparison, social media is related to real-life social situations where you want to make a good impression. The perspective of real-life social life also including artifice adds

nance to the understanding that the face is perhaps maintained in social media and in real-life social situations with similar amounts of face work, proving that Goffman's theories are relevant for examining social media. Even though the superficiality of real-life social life is used to legitimize social media content and use in this quote, there is a distinction between the two social frames. Social media is constantly on the surface of human interaction and in real-life you get to know people beyond the façade eventually. The comparison to a romantic relationship places social media in the "first date" interaction, but in real-life you can really get to know someone. What "really" knowing someone signifies, is difficult to determine, but again a more substantial social significance is attributed to real-life social interaction. On social media, the face work is constant and never-ending, in real-life the social frame can allow for more face-threatening practices when individuals get to know each other.

The real-life social situations allow for a less artificial interaction when social media does not because the real-life social interactions can be more private. The public aspect of social media makes it impossible not to include others that might not be included in a substantial social connection and relationship. The social form of exchange on social media might strengthen relationships with certain individuals that interact on the social media platforms but not with all the users that are consuming the content that is produced. The potential exchange could be more significant in real-life social situations were social media functions only as complimentary to the real-life social relationships, and not substantially as a social form on social media. Therefore, one could argue that the social form of exchange on social media is more supplementary to real-life social situations, and the social form of sociability is more relevant considering social media as an independent social frame for some of the participants. In these instances of legitimizing and criticizing social media as a concept, the participants did not accuse their friends and acquaintances of being superficial, or that they did not comprehend social reality. The participants seemed to often understand social media use as more of a modern reality and trend, and not necessarily indicative of bad social graces.

8.3.2 A cultural symptom

When describing their own use, some of the participants described it almost as compulsory behavior, saying that they often did not know exactly why they produced content or considered it socially significant. The participants would often legitimize their actions by connecting social media and social production with elements in society. As mentioned some

argued that the artificiality was more indicative of how individuals, in general, want to present themselves in the best way possible. Why some of the participants used social media at all was connected to that it had become increasingly relevant in their lives and easily assessable. Even the participants with little to no use had a similar understanding of why so many others were consumed by social media production even in real-life social situations.

I think it is a trend as well, of course, it is. You are supposed to share it all, you are supposed to do those things. You are supposed to fit into a pattern. (Hjalmar LNU).

Hjalmar's understanding of social media is also compassionate towards other individuals with behaviors that could be interpreted as misinvolvement and external preoccupation. He connected this behavior to more of an automated action in modern society. The comprehension of social media use as more habitual does not necessarily support technological determinism, but the structures of social media itself seemed to be part of the social comprehension both in regards to participants that found social media socially significant, and those who did not. I would argue that this does make social media as a social frame seem more relevant socially for the participants, but more as a part of the social frame of real-life social interaction. Social media was in these instances socially significant, but the significance was determined by how it was used and how it related to real-life social interaction and real-life connections.

In this chapter, I have attempted to include how the participants legitimized and criticized social media production because of its material form. That social media was shared and public, made it both legitimatizing for real-life social relationships, but also a source of contention. The content described by the participants was exclusively based on individual users' personalities and their lives, and often the participants would take umbrage with how elements of social life were shared with more people that were not actually present for the real-life social situations. These arguments for and against social media production are more removed from the social interaction itself and revolve around using social media itself and how social media is structured. Social media was also portrayed as more of an overarching cultural symptom and not necessarily indicative of issues related to social interaction. Social media was upheld by some of the participants at the same level of superficiality as real-life social interaction. The fact that artifice and elaboration of personal and social life were

occurring on social media was not exclusive to social media but symptomatic of human nature for the participants. The more macro-level implications of social media production in social situations could be part of how the participants experience social media as socially significant, how they experience social media production in social situations and how they respond and react to it, and also how they legitimize and criticize personal use. The way in which social media itself was a platform was often attributed to more of the social responsibility than the actual individuals in the interaction, which could be indicative of how further research into social media and social media productions social significance should be fashioned.

9 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored how social media use and social media production in social situations is experienced as socially significant. Initially, I described how social media use and social media production manifest itself in the lives of modern individuals. Social media is often described in terms of being an equalizing influence on more traditional media, by allowing more participants to be visible in the public sphere and what they themselves consume. Social media use is also a point of contention and is not yet become a natural and incorporated part for all individuals. I presented facts about specific social media use in Norway, which would support the argument that Norway is a society of social media users. I argued that the liberal and social democratic ideals that are prevalent in Norwegian's society and the economy could also be relevant to why and how social media is thought of, implemented, and utilized in everyday Norwegian life. Current research regarding social media use depicted social media as social expression, gratification, and individual freedom, but also as distracting in social situations and detrimental to human connection. I would argue that these studies did not specifically explore how social media use and production is experienced in the situations in which they occur.

Preliminarily to the analysis, I explored research explicitly concerned social media and social media use and included research that concerned more specifically social interaction and technology, social frame-work, and the significance of activity in social life. Even though the more specific research did not explore social media, I found them more applicable to this study than the previously existing more content-based social media research. After elaborating on methods, data and the theoretical framework for the analysis, I analyzed the data collected. In the analysis, I found that social media use, in general, was understood by the participants as 1) an encompassing presence in social life, and 2) an extension of social life relational to how they could perceive social media as a legitimate social frame. The participants' descriptions of the specific social situations where social media production occurred, illustrated how the participants experienced it as socially gratifying and socially disruptive, and how they employed different face-saving mechanisms to deal with social media production. The normative ways in which they legitimized and criticized personal use was relative to their experiences in the specific interactions and their more general understanding of social media in the hierarchy of social frameworks.

9.1.1 Summary of social media use and production in social situations

Social media was socially significant for the participants in different ways. I argued that the participant's opinions about social media and social media use, in general, were relative to their own level of use, but also their understanding of social media as a valid social frame. The participant's general descriptions and understandings of social media content often correlated with their own level of use. If the participants had little to no use, their opinions of content and content production would not necessarily be content specific. The least active users would find the entire concept superfluous because they did not consider social media a valid social frame. The other more active users had issues with certain content that did not adhere to what they perceived as appropriate or good social media content. I argue that the descriptions of content demonstrate that social media as a social frame has specific rules for the users that experienced social media as socially significant. The least active users could not participate in the social media framework but they could contribute to how social media, in general was perceived in real-life social situations. Even the most active users argued that social media could be considered an absurd and arbitrary activity, even though it could have social value.

I argued that social media was an extension of social life for the participants that considered social media as a significant social frame. The social form of social media might be one of exchange, where the content would help strengthen the active users' relationships. The value of these social exchanges would be determined by the desirability, meaning that likes and comments from certain other users would be more valuable than others. The least active users did not experience the social form of exchange, and classified activity on social media as more solitary expression, and active users wanting attention, not relationships. The more active users said that social media had a certain level of implied artifice, that no matter how authentic any active user would wish to be on social media, the act of production fundamentally obstructs authenticity. Social media production was interference; therefore, the active users argued that awareness and acknowledgment of artifice were the only ways of truly being authentic on social media. I argue that on social media the face is even more meticulously constructed than in real-life social interaction, but this is a part of the accepted social framework on social media, that does not necessarily coincide with the social framework of real-life social interaction.

Another prevalent social form on social media was sociability; the participants did not really have a goal other than to be social on social media. They were connecting for the sake of connecting, not strengthening relationships. I would argue that these possible social connections were sometimes independent of real-life social interaction. Consequently, the social forms that were shaped by the content in real-life social interactions were not always the same as the social forms that were shaped by the content on social media.

The specific descriptions of the social media production in social situations demonstrated what I perceived as different levels of accepting social media as a valid social frame and face work relative to this understanding. The production process of social media content was multifaceted and would become manifest in a real-life social interaction in different ways for the participants. Social media production in a social situation could be experienced as misinvolvement, and different forms of alienation from their real-life spontaneous involvement for the participants who did not consider social media a social frame. The real-life social frame was ranked highest for the participants, and the most active users that enjoyed producing would experience guilt. The most active users felt that they were pulled in two directions and that their face could be threatened in the real-life social situation and on social media. In real-life if their misinvolvement was pointed out by other participants who themselves wanted to maintain their own face, or on social media if they were not able to uphold and sustain an acceptable social media face. Often the participants would use humor and ironic distance to social media; these face-saving strategies were relevant for all the different categories of users. Therefore, I would argue that attributing the possible face-threatening activity of social media production to social media as an arbitrary concept and not blaming the other individuals in the interactions for their actions, was a face-saving practice for the participants.

When legitimizing and criticizing social media use and production with normative arguments, the participants' perspectives would often correlate with their own level of use. Although the participants were quite nuanced and could understand why social media could be seen as irrelevant or valuable. The participants that had criticisms against social media use and production were often characterized by their experience of social media being an encompassing presence in everyday life. Hence, abstaining from social media was for some of the participants considered abstaining from an arbitrary prevalent social pressure. The active participants contested that not using social media in social situations could make them

what I argue less misinvolved and experiencing what they and many others considered the more valuable real-life moments in a simulations social trance. The more active users argued that sharing these moments on social media validated their significance and social relationships. Social media production could also be parallel and unnoticed in the real-life social situations. The social form of exchange could be happening in the real-life social situation and with others on social media, and social media could be an independent social frame where the social form is either similar or different.

The public aspect of social media was a point of legitimacy and criticism. The users that did not consider it a valid social frame, challenged that private real-life social moments were made public. The users, who experienced social gratification and significance from social media production, saw the public aspect of social media as confirming of their real-life social moments. The participants who used social media could experience it as an extension of themselves and their social relationships, but also something greater than these things combined. The palpable social significance for some of the participants might make it easier to understand why they felt the need and the enjoyment of posting even though not everyone in the social situation could enjoy it with them. I would argue that the participants often would attribute their own actions and the actions of others to social media being an overarching cultural trend, and not their own or others personal agency.

What struck me as interesting about the participants' general opinions; specific experiences and normative arguments were how they moved within their different self-defined levels of use. There was also a prominent hierarchy of social frames, where the real-life social frame was superior to social media. The participants had all experienced situations where social media production had been experienced as disruptive, gratifying, confirming, but also insignificant. When social media was not integrated into the real-life social situation, but unnoticed by the participants, the question of face and misinvolvement had become irrelevant to the social interaction.

9.1.2 Concluding remarks

In the study of social media use and production in social situations, I experienced that there could be a multitude of different approaches. I would argue that this study concerns a social subject that is can be thought of as insignificant, unbeknownst or even to natural to consider

substantial socially for many individuals. Social media might be construed as merely a technological tool that is integrated into modern society or even domesticated (Lie & Sørensen 1996).

I believe that there is still significant work to be done regarding identity construction, content analysis and changes in traditional media structure. I feel that this thesis adds to existing research. The participants' answers were in accord with previous studies that present social media as a form of self-expression and identity construction (Farquhar 2012; Enli & Thumim 2012; Ellison, Gibbs & Heino 2006). Studies that have focused on how social media are substantial for social connections have similar findings to this study (Ahn 2012; Donath & Boyd 2004; Oldmeadow, Quinn & Kowert 2012). But I would argue that one of the largest gaps in social media research is the kind that furthers understanding about how social media that is often categorized, as a cultural symptom is relative in *specific* social situations for individuals. Therefore, I believe that this study contributes to the understanding of the more general and normative experiences connected to social media in everyday life by including the more specific social experiences of social media use and production.

The theoretical framework for the analysis was not originally intended for social media research when it was first introduced. Although Goffman's (1956) theories on front stage and back stage have been applied in social media research before (Krogstad 2014; Tømte 2009; Farquhar 2012), I believe that many of his other theories on micro-interaction can be a valuable inclusion in the more macro social media research. The same goes for the ways in which Simmel (1971) understood how the content of an interaction is relational to individual expectations and how it transpires. I wanted to explore social media as a social activity in social interaction. The theoretical framework and the inspiring former research that had applied it (Album 1996), was essential to comprehending the more specific social interactions and the discrepancies in understandings between the different categories of users.

I found it interesting that when interviewing the participants, they would often answer the questions about social interactions with a focus on social media content and privacy issues and not the social interaction itself. I would ask how they experienced social media production in the social interaction, and they would talk about not wanting the individual producing to post an inappropriate photo and nothing about how this activity was perceived in the actual interaction. I argue that the participants' focus on published content

demonstrates how the consequences of content existing publicly on social media was considered more substantial than social media production in the social interaction. The participants were more concerned with what was posted and had not always thought about how it was posted. I also contend that the participants would argue that social media was so sensational as a “trend”, that they did not always attribute social media production in social situations to individual behavior. I found it interesting that in a micro study of interaction the focus would often shift to a macro level.

One of the possible objections to this thesis is the age limitation. I argued the choice of age restriction to include the group that was arguably most exposed to social media production in social situations, but this is not necessarily the case. There could be several interesting possibilities to examine how individuals of a certain age who are not the largest group of users but still chose to produce social media content in social situations. Older people who have not had the same exposure to social media could have interesting experiences of a more laborious incorporation of social media in their everyday lives. At a certain age, more people who do not use social media and might engage in more social interactions where the other participants do not value social media as a significant social frame.

A fundamental aspect of social research is allowing the research to surprise you (Firebaugh 2007:1). One of the most significant surprises for me personally was that social media production was not necessarily disruptive for social interaction. Social media could be successfully integrated, unnoticed, parallel or even a confirming element in the real-life social situations. Even though I experienced that there was a hierarchy of the social frameworks where social media was deemed less significant, it had manifested for several of the participants as a substantial part of their social life. I would like to end this thesis with a quote that I feel illustrates the confirming aspect of social media production whilst engaging in a social situation, but also how the production process impacts this social connection.

It is nice to share moments together on social media because you are proud of what you are doing! The problem is that you almost remove that moment you are having together, but you are creating another moment with and for my friends on the other side of the screen. (Rebecca AAU).

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Word count: 34, 139

All sources used in this thesis have been declared.

Appendix A - Request for participants on Facebook



Solveig Wiland Gruenke

7. oktober 2016 · Oslo · 🌐 ▼

Bill.merket Masteroppgave 🤓 📱 💬

Har du eller noen du kjenner lyst til å bidra til en masteroppgave om hvordan sosiale medier påvirker sosialt samvær?

Jeg ønsker å møte og intervju personer mellom 18 og 30 år som bruker sosiale medier i ulik grad. Jeg håper at uformelle samtaler om temaet vil gi større kunnskap om noe lite som påvirker oss alle!

Interessert? Send meg en mail! solveiwg@student.sv.uio.no.

Appendix B - Information sent to informants

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ”Usosial og sosial på sosiale medier”

Informasjon om prosjektet

Jeg skriver masteroppgave i sosiologi ved Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi ved Universitetet i Oslo. Jeg ønsker å undersøke hvordan bruken av sosiale medier når man er sammen med venner, påvirker hvordan man er sammen.

Deltakerne skal være med på et 30 minutter langt intervju om deres aktivitet på sosiale medier og hvordan de opplever bruken av sosiale medier sammen med venner.

Data vil bli registrert via notater og lydopptak.

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun student og veileder skal ha tilgang til disse. Personopplysningene lagres på datamaskiner og harddisker som er beskyttet med passord.

Alle deltakerne vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 22.05.2017. Alle personopplysninger og opptak vil da bli slettet.

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn.

Aktivitet på sosiale medier

Det er ikke nødvendig at deltakerne er aktive på sosiale medier.

Det vil stilles spørsmål om deltagerne har sosiale medier kontoer og om de er aktive.

Det vil stilles spørsmål om hva slags aktivitet deltagerne har på sosiale medier. For eksempel hva de legger ut eller ikke legger ut.

Det vil stilles spørsmål om hvordan deltagere opplever denne aktiviteten.

Sosiale medier i sosiale settinger

Jeg ønsker å intervjuere deltagere om deres erfaringer med sosiale medier i fysiske sosiale settinger.

Det er interessant med deltagere som har varierende og motstridende meninger om temaet. Dermed trenger ikke erfaringer med sosiale medier å være verken negative eller positive.

Kontaktinfo

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med

Student: Solveig Wiland Gruenke +47 [REDACTED]

Veileder: Anne Krogstad +47 [REDACTED].

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Appendix C – Information

Skjema for samtykke for deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ”Usosial og sosial på sosiale medier”

Informasjon om prosjektet

Jeg skriver masteroppgave i sosiologi ved Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi ved Universitetet i Oslo. Jeg ønsker å undersøke hvordan bruken av sosiale medier når man er sammen med venner, påvirker hvordan man er sammen.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltakerne skal være med på et 30 minutter langt intervju om deres aktivitet på sosiale medier og hvordan de opplever bruken av sosiale medier sammen med venner.

Data vil bli registrert via notater og lydopptak.

Hva skjer med opplysninger om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun student og veileder skal ha tilgang til disse. Personopplysningene lagres på datamaskiner og harddisker som er beskyttet med passord.

Alle deltakerne vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 22.05.2017. Alle personopplysninger og opptak vil da bli slettet.

F r i v i l l i g d e l t a k e l s e

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert

K o n t a k t i n f o

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med

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S a m t y k k e t i l d e l t a k e l s e i s t u d i e n

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

Signatur fra deltaker og dato.

Appendix D – Interview Guide

Intervjuguide

Informasjon

Alder

Kjønn

Utdanning

Yrke

Aktivitet på sosiale medier

Har du noen profiler på sosiale medier?

Hvilke?

Kjenner du noen som har profiler på sosiale medier?

Hvilke?

Legger du ut noe til din profil på sosiale medier?

Hvordan ville du beskrevet dette innholdet?

Hva tenker du om å ha profiler på sosiale medier?

Legger noen du kjenner ut noe på sosiale medier?

Hvordan ville du beskrevet dette innholdet?

Er det noe på sosiale medier du ikke liker?
Hva synes du ikke burde legges ut på sosiale medier?

Produksjonsprosess

Hvor ofte legger du ut noe på sosiale medier?

Hva pleier du å legge ut?

Opplever du at du bruker mye tid på å legge ut ting på sosiale medier?

Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Hvordan opplever du å legge ut ting på sosiale medier?

Naturlig/avbrytende/positiv?

Hvilke følelser gir det deg å legge ut ting?

Hva er det du liker med å legge ut ting på sosiale medier?

Hva er det du ikke liker med å legge ut ting på sosiale medier?

Sosiale medier sammen med andre

Hva legger du ut på sosiale medier når du er sammen med andre sosialt?

Hvilke sosiale situasjoner skjer dette i?

Sammen med familie/venner/kollegaer?

Hvilke tanker har du om å legge ut ting på sosiale medier når du er sammen med venner?

Hva slags respons får du på dette blant de du er sammen med?

Hva slags respons får du på innholdet du legger ut på sosiale medier?

Kommentarer/likes?

Har noen blitt fornærmet av at du har valgt å legge ut noe på sosiale medier når du er sammen med dem? Andre reaksjoner?

Når har dette skjedd og hva gjorde dere sammen?

Er det noen ganger du er sammen med andre og det ikke er greit å legge ut noe?

Har du noen gang angret på at du har valgt å legge ut noe på sosiale medier når du er sammen med venner?

Har du noen gang sagt unnskyld eller brukt en unnskyldning for å legge ut noe?

Kjenner du noen som legger ut ting på sosiale medier når de er sammen med andre sosialt?

Hva pleier de å legge ut, hvis de er sammen med andre?

Hva tenker du om at de legger ut ting på sosiale medier når de er sammen med andre sosialt?

Har du gitt noe respons på dette når det skjer eller senere?

Har du noen gang blitt fornærmet av at du har valgt å legge ut noe på sosiale medier når du er sammen med dem?

Når har dette skjedd og hva gjorde dere sammen?

Er det noen ganger du er sammen med andre og du tenker at det ikke er greit at de legger ut noe?

Hva følte du når de du var sammen med la ut noe på sosiale medier da dere var sammen?

Hva synes du om innhold på sosiale medier der folk er sammen med andre sosialt?

Hva slags respons har du gitt til dette på sosiale medier? Kommentarer?

Finnes det andre ting som vekker tilsvarende følelser som sosiale medier når man er sammen med andre?

Har du noe å tilføye?