Facebook: why people leave, their experiences, and opinions towards (other) social media.

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ABSTRACT

With the ongoing negative presence of Facebook in the news this past year, it made Facebook an interesting case to study, as many more people seem to quit this social media platform. This paper examines what reasons young (previous) Facebook users gave to quit Facebook, how they experienced quitting Facebook, how they now look at other social media platforms as well as the rules they have applied to their social media (and the Internet in general) usage. Even though research has been done on the reasons to quit before and how people experienced it, this study focuses on a younger generation, aged 16-25, which was a recommendation from Baumer et al (2013). Fourteen participants were interviewed, from which nine were male and six were female. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic analysis. It was found that the participants were very aware of the reasons why they quit Facebook and these reasons seemed to be of big importance to them. By growing older, they noticed they became more aware of the effects Facebook had on their lives, often negatively and this related to their reasons to quit. Often, the experiences, both positive and negative, were related to their reasons to quit, where first some felt Facebook was disconnecting them with their friends, they now felt they started connecting more. However, others felt it was disconnecting them even more. Also, after quitting Facebook, they became more aware of the negative effects of Facebook. Most of the participants started, or tried, reducing their other social media use after quitting Facebook, or some even before, when they realized how much impact other social media still have on them. Even though seeing the negative effects of social media, most of the participants still were using other platforms, as they also saw the positive effects social media can have. For some, after quitting Facebook, they became more reliant on other social media platforms, such as Reddit or Youtube, but it was seen as less worse. By quitting Facebook while simultaneously growing older, they became more aware of how they should use the Internet in general. Instead of wasting time, they were trying to use it more productively, but they also posted less themselves. They considered each platform to be quite different from each other, where Instagram for example is more one-sided, and Reddit is more anonymous, which are the reasons why they look at these platforms differently even after quitting Facebook.

Keywords: Facebook, social media, non-use, technology refusal, reasons, motivations, experiences, opinions

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1. Introduction

Media use has been embedded in our daily routines and we use it practically 24/7. As Deuze (2011) states, "more of our time gets spent using media, and that multi-tasking our media has become a regular feature of everyday life" (p. 137). He actually implies that us and the media are inseparable. This "media life" however has also been criticized, especially when looking at the negative impacts (social) media can have on our lives (e.g. Carr, 2011; Giroux, 2011; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Roberts & Koliska, 2014), think about addiction (Carr, 2011), or concentration loss (Giroux, 2011). Facebook is the social media platform that has been criticized the most, both when looking at statistics as well as based on knowledge from the inside. Facebook started in 2004 as a way for college students to keep in touch after classes ended. In order to use Facebook a profile needs to be made by adding some personal details on the website. After signing up you will be able to e.g. post updates, share updates from friends, post links, message friends through Facebook messenger, or post certain statements. You will be able to friend people by searching for them, e.g. family, friends, colleagues, old friends, and be able to stay in touch with them (BBC, 2012).

In 2017, during a Stanford Business School event (The Guardian, 2017), a previous Facebook-manager named Chamath Palihapitiya however criticizes Facebook's existence and he feels guilty about the job he did for Facebook. He states: "I think we have reached the point that we have developed things that are ripping apart the social fabric of society. If you feed the beast, the beast will destroy you." (NOS, 2017, paragraph 2, line 1-4). Consequently, Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, announced their plan to change the way they work so that users as well as the company will both start improving their relationship (AD, 2018a). As even someone who had such a high job for Facebook criticizes its existence, makes Facebook an interesting field to study.

However, even though Zuckerberg announced the plan to change the way they work, more backlash was received quite soon after his announcement regarding the scandal surrounding Cambridge Analytica came to light. This news came forth in the middle of writing this study, making it even more interesting. Cambridge Analytica, a data company, has apparently misused Facebook in order to gather data from millions of Facebook users. This data was then used during Trump's presidential campaign in 2016, where Trump had paid them in order to get more voters. It seemed Facebook already knew about this misuse in 2015, however Zuckerberg never spoke about it and kept it a secret (AD, 2018b). This led to much frustration and anger among Facebook users and even led to the hashtag #DeleteFacebook on Twitter,

where it seemed like the last straw for many people to take the step to delete their Facebook accounts (The New York Times, 2018).

Facebook thus is receiving backlash from multiple sides. Facebook still is the biggest and most used social media platform, even though more recently more people have quit. However, quite some current active users have said to once have taken a break from Facebook in the past for a period of a few weeks or even longer than a few weeks (Pew Research Center, 2017). Facebook therefore is an interesting topic to investigate as it has been receiving backlash from the inside but also by its users taking active breaks or even quitting Facebook totally. The large numbers of users who have taken a break for a period of at least two weeks asks for a focus on this phenomenon. The users' refusal of Facebook makes an interesting element of social media that needs further research. Refusal here entails users that have either taken a break from Facebook and/or quit Facebook totally. The focus of this study will lie with the reasons and experiences regarding the refusal of Facebook as well as (past) users' opinions towards other social media.

In order to study this phenomenon, this study will focus on three research questions as well as one sub-question related to the first research question. The first research question will deal with the reasons of "young people" (Giroux, 2011), which I define as people aged 16 to 25 years old, to quit or take a break from Facebook. The focus on "young people" is because Giroux (2011) states those are the people that quit/take a break the most, as well as that Baumer et al (2013) give a recommendation of focusing on a younger population. They recommended this as their work was focused on academics, and did not include "particular populations, such as teens" (Baumer et al, 2013, p. 8). Thus the following research question has been designed:

RQ1: What reasons do young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) give to quit or take a break from Facebook?

I define quitters as people who have given up using Facebook completely, through either completely deleting their Facebook account or deactivating it. However, they might still be using Facebook messenger as a way to communicate with their friends. Also, participants who have taken a break were only included if their break lasted for at least a few weeks (Pew Research Center, 2017).

A sub-question related to this research question has been formed as well, dealing with the reasons of relapsing, or returning to Facebook. This question is thus only meant for the people who have returned to Facebook afterwards.

SQ1: For the users who returned, what reasons do/did they give to return to Facebook?

The second research question will explore the experiences while quitting or taking a break from Facebook.

RQ2: How do/did young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) experience their refusal from Facebook?

Lastly, the third research question will focus on how the respondents perceive other social media, or their opinion towards other social media, their behavior on social media and the kind of rules they applied to reduce their social media use. This could add some interesting knowledge surrounding aspects such as whether their reasons to quit or take a break were sincere and how they reflect upon their other social media use.

RQ3: How do young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) perceive (other) social media after quitting Facebook, their behavior on these platforms and what kind of rules do they apply to reduce social media use?

The social relevance of this study is fixed within the ongoing negative appearance of Facebook in the news the last year. Also, it can be found within the large set of reasons that can be connected to a user refusing to use Facebook, but also by the presence of Facebook in the news these last couple of months. These reasons as well as the experiences related to this can be influenced by many factors. A study focused on the users' motivations behind the reasons and experiences will benefit from the users' expressions and discourses as well as that it will create access to a topic that is still quite under-represented. This study will delve into the reasons and experiences in order to find its importance. By doing this, the sources of the refusal of Facebook will be found which potentially could give insight into the use and non-use of Facebook. As Facebook has addictive features and also other concerns, such as privacy, it is of importance and interesting to also look at what happens during quitting or taking a break from Facebook. Being a social media platform, it may benefit society by offering

insights why social media use and non-use could have negative and/or positive influences on our lives and how one could deal with this and what thus happens while taking a break.

The academic relevance of this study foremost lies within the fact that reasons and experiences regarding quitting or taking a break from Facebook have not fully been covered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which means this adds something new to the field. The reasons to quit have received quite a lot of attention, however what exactly happens during quitting or taking a break needs to be elaborated in more depth. Secondly, the combination of reasons to quit or take a break from Facebook, its experiences and the users' opinions towards other social media after quitting is also new to the field. This is of interest as one will evaluate its social media use while also possibly linking it back to their reasons for quitting/taking a break from Facebook. It will serve as a deeper understanding behind their reasons, possibly linking it back to previous researches but also by finding new concepts and deeper meanings.

For this study a theoretical framework will foremost be needed, which will provide an explanation of the concepts discussed in the research questions as well as an overview of the previous studies done on Facebook and the reasons to quit or take a break from it, the experiences this brings along as well as rules to reduce social media use. Furthermore, the research design will give an explanation as to why a qualitative research method was chosen, why interviews were chosen to collect data, as well as an explanation of the data analysis that was applied. Chapter four will be the biggest chapter of all as it will present the results of this study regarding the reasons to and experiences of quitting or taking a break from Facebook as well their opinions towards social media. Finally, the conclusion will be presented where my research questions will be answered and combined while also presenting some of the limitations of this research and some suggestions for future research dedicated to this topic.

2. Theory

Research regarding motivations to quit/take a break from Facebook, its experiences as well as the opinions towards social media after quitting Facebook are limited, especially the combination of these three. In this research, all three will be looked at, as they can all tell something about each other and can thus relate to each other. Certain reasons might give different experiences, as well as that reasons and experiences from leaving Facebook might change someone's attitude towards social media over a span of time and the way someone uses social media. Therefore, the theoretical framework is divided into six sections which will explain the concepts related to this research: social media, social media impacts, refusing social media, motivations to quit/take a break from social media, experiences while leaving social media and people's attitudes towards social media.

2.1 Social media definition

Social media have been embedded in our lives (Deuze, 2011). As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define it, "Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (p. 61). Applications in this definition also has a connection to platforms, as a platform refers to "the base on which software *applications* are run" and "they afford an opportunity to communicate, interact, or sell." (Gillepsie, 2013, p. 409). The Web 2.0 referred to in this definition takes us back to the year 2001. As O'Reilly (2005), key researches for the Web 2.0, explains: "the bursting of the dot-com bubble in the fall of 2001 marked a turning point for the web" (paragraph 1, line 1). O'Reilly (2005) minded the term Web 2.0 as the new Web in 2005. With this turning point for the web, O'Reilly (2005) means that during the Web 1.0 there was little room for users to create content by themselves (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Ritzer, Dean & Jurgenson, 2012). During the Web 1.0 the Internet was mostly used to acquire information and was passively used (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011; Blank & Reisdorf, 2012). Since the Web 2.0, users have been empowered to produce their own content (user-generated content, or UGC) on the web through websites such as Wikipedia or by publishing blogs (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012). Active users, which count for about 1% of all the online users (Carron-Arthur, Cunningham & Griffiths, 2014), are now thus participants who contribute to the web by making their own content (van Dijck, 2009; Kietzmann et al, 2011; Blank & Reisdorf, 2012). Not only do active users create and upload their own content, they are also understood to log into their social media accounts at least once in a month (Statista, 2017).

When looking again at what Facebook exactly entails, it is right to say that Facebook, as a social media platform, fits perfectly under the concept of the Web 2.0 with its possibility to produce UGC through the web. Through Facebook, users can post and share updates and upload content such as pictures and videos (BCC, 2012). Facebook is also part of the so called "social networking sites" (SNSs), which have been well explained by main researchers boyd & Ellison (2007). boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 211) define social network sites as

"web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connection and those made by others within the system."

Social networking sites also make it possible for people to share user-generated (UGCs) (Kim, Jeong & Lee, 2010; Obar & Wildman, 2015). Facebook thus is also part of the SNS's as all three of the concepts in boyd and Ellison's (2007) definition can be applied as well as that Facebook has the possibility to share and post user generated content (Kim et al, 2010; Obar & Wildman, 2015). Communication is key for SNSs, and the technological development of the smartphone has made this even easier, as you can be available constantly 24/7 through your device in order to be active in social activities (boys & Ellison, 2007).

Simultaneously, not only have technical interventions changed the way society works and uses the Internet, such as the way we now communicate, society also at the same time shapes technology. This is known as the Social Shaping of Technology (SST), as established by MacKenzie and Wajcman (1985). "The 'success' or 'failure' of different solutions highlights the scope and extent of relevant groups and forces that shape technologies." (Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz, 2012, p. 1599). Choices are made with new technological interventions or new technological products, and these choices related to technology will have an effect on the social as well as technological outcomes (Williams, 1997). In other words, the success or failure of a (new) technological product will influence the shaping of (new) technologies. Technology changes us, but we also change technology, and this can also be seen with social media and the way it effected society.

It was needed to give an explanation of what social media entails in order to understand what Facebook actually is and what it is or might be useful for. Due to the Social Shaping of Technology and its importance for social media, as it changed the way we communicate for example, both the positive as well as negative impacts of social media will be discussed, where the unanticipated effects, or impacts, (can) change technology.

2.2 (Social) Media impacts

There are a lot of users active on social media and Facebook in particular, who has over 2.2 billion active users and therefore is the biggest social media platform and biggest social networking site to this day (Statista, 2017; Statista, 2018). However, a question remains as to how social media impact us, as we devote much of our time to it (Deuze, 2011) and as established by MacKenzie and Wajcman (1985), technology can shape society and the other way around. This can be explained by both positive as well as negative consequences that arise from using social media. Both these positive and negative consequences could have an influence on the reasons to leave a social media platform and that in turn can influence and shape (new) technology, which is why they are discussed. These impacts can be related to both the platform itself, but also to the user's own use of this platform. First the two most relevant positive impacts are discussed, with the first containing the most important discussion related to quitting Facebook as well. After, multiple negative impacts are discussed, where the social impacts are the most relevant for this study.

2.2.1 Positive impacts

Related to this study, two main positive impacts are discussed, which could have an influence on the outcome on the research questions. These impacts show the way how technology can shape society.

2.2.1.1 Social capital

Social capital was established and defined by Bourdieu (1985), a sociologist, in contrast to economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu (1985, p. 248) defined it as following: "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition". In other words, the size of someone's social capital is dependent on the size of connections one has, and it is not a natural given. As Bourdieu (1985) argues, one has to invest in increasing one's social capital. Social media brought new ways of social capital.

As Straubhaar, LaRose and Davenport (2016) argue, "social media can enhance social support and help to accumulate social capital" (p. 440). This social support and the social capital can be comprised of both strong and weak ties. Strong and weak ties and their importance have been grounded by Granovetter (1973). Granovetter (1973) discusses the

importance of *both* these ties, as they can connect an individual to more varies resources. Where strong ties include those in your close circle, such as close friends and family, weak ties include individuals such as acquaintances (Granovetter, 1973). Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) saw how Facebook in particular helped maintain social capital. As argued in their paper, "Facebook provided a way to keep in touch with high school friends and acquaintances", both old and new (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007, p. 1162) and thus strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). Social media users consequently have opportunities to enhance their relational and social ties, by networking with and communicating with people in their social network online (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann, 2011).

Through social media, people can communicate more often and do not always have to meet in person anymore to keep in contact with their strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973; boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann, 2011). This then also is of importance for people who live far away or people who move away from home, in order to stay in contact (Steinfield, Ellison & Lampe, 2008), as Facebook makes this both easier as well as cheaper (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Besides, people are also able to increase their network as individuals who are strangers can also meet online (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann, 2011), meaning they invest in increasing their social capital (Bourdieu, 1985; Lin, 1999) and by enhancing both strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). This social capital in turn can increase the feelings of connectedness online (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Tolan, Marrington, 2013).

What thus can be said, is that Facebook has the possibility to enhance and maintain both strong as well as weak ties, in order to stay and feel connected.

2.2.1.2 Social identity

Besides social capital, through social networking sites as Facebook, individuals are also able to foster and construct their identity as well as their social skills (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2008; O'Keeffe and Clear-Pearson, 2011). "Identity is an important part of the self-concept" (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2009, p. 1817), where identity is the part "by which we are known to others" (Altheide, 2000, p. 2). The construction of one's social identity is a "public process" (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2009, p. 1817). Since the Internet, identity construction has changed, where one can now interact with others online without having to show their true characteristics and in a sense thus one can re-create and reinvent their identity, which can differ from their actual real-life identity. It was further argued that Facebook users engage with people differently and present themselves differently as well, depending on who they are trying to target. This means that users have to find a balance in how to behave, as

their friend list on Facebook will include both strong and weak ties (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2009). As Zhao, Grasmuch and Martin (2009) thus found, users on Facebook do not always portray their "true selves" or "real selves", but rather seemed to be the more desirable identities people wish to have offline, depending on who they were trying to target (p. 1830). Also, Facebook was seen as being more used to show, instead of to tell; lots about the self was not described on their profiles (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2009).

Here, through Facebook, one can boost their self-identity by re-creating and reinventing oneself, with a specific targeted audience in mind.

2.2.2 Negative impacts

There are also negative impacts regarding social media use that are worth discussing, as they again could have an influence on the decision to quit using social media and the way technology is shaped.

2.2.2.1 Cognitive

Related to cognitive impacts, Carr (2011) discusses that multiple risks are associated with the use of the Internet and social media. Even though we are creating new tools as well by using the Internet, we lose certain old skills. For example, our memory skills will not be as strong as they used to be, as social media and the Internet cause for many interruptions, which thus equals concentration loss and thus scatters our thoughts (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Carr, 2011; Giroux, 2011).

Extensive social media use was also found to have an impact on academic performance, as a higher Facebook use can lead to lower academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Junco, 2012). What is more is that the Internet and social network sites in general can have an addictive affect (Carr, 2011; Giroux, 2011; boyd, 2014). As found by Cabral (2011, p. 6), Generation Y, who she defines as the people "who have grown up understanding the power of the Internet" and are born between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s, are addicted to social media, mostly unconsciously. Consequently, there is a societal pressure to constantly be connected. She found that to Generation Y, social media use is a high priority and that in order to be satisfied, they need more usage. However, even though they feel the need to use it more in order to be satisfied, they also felt there was a need to decrease their use, however were unable to make it a reality, which the participants in this study were able to do by quitting Facebook. boyd (2014) further argued that it is often said that teens lack control. She argues that teens mostly use it to connect more to their friends, where they seem it is often

impossible to have face-to-face interactions. Even though this is part of a positive impact, to maintain relational ties, they became addicted to this connection; they felt the need to connect constantly, meaning that even sleep would be disturbed (boyd, 2014).

Even though the thought behind using Facebook then is positive, it leads to addiction to always wanting to be connected and this can lead to more negative impacts on life.

2.2.2.2 Social

It has also been studied that Facebook actually increases loneliness and depression, where social media will make you feel lonely as well as isolated and will lead to anxiety-related behaviors and stress (Kraut et al, 1998; Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, 2009). Mostly the ones that are addicted to the Internet will show these type of behaviors (Young & Rodgers, 1998). This is explained by the fact that Facebook can not only foster new relationships, but also make them shallower, which could make people eventually feel lonely (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012), or they may be pathogenic (Davila et al., 2012). Kraut et al (1998) further emphasize in their newer study that the new relationships fostered online are indeed weaker and are replacing the stronger offline relationships with friends and family. Still, people are combining both the online and offline, where they can use the Internet in order to "keep up with people from their off-line lives and calling and visiting people they initially met on-line" (Kraut et al, 2002), meaning they still connect to both their strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1975).

As the social impact of social media is a little bit paradoxical, where it could lead to shallower relationships but also could enhance the way we communicate and connect with people, it is interesting to see what the participants in this study thought about this connection.

2.3 Refusing (social) media, #deleteFacebook

Both the positive, but mostly the negative consequences of social media and Facebook in particular made people think more deeply about their choice to be on Facebook. In 2010, a movement, or a campaign, came about against Facebook, namely the Quit Facebook Day (http://www.quitfacebookday.com/), which multiple researchers have acknowledged (e.g. Stacer, 2012; Baumer et al, 2013) and was started by two Twitter users. They found that Facebook did not have the best intentions regarding privacy as well as what kind of influence Facebook has on the future. They expressed desire of a more open Web (Quit Facebook Day, n.d.).

More recently, since the scandal surrounding Cambridge Analytica's misuse of personal information, the hashtag #deleteFacebook also went viral, as Cambridge Analytica got personal information from Facebook's users. These personal data were involved in the 2016 US elections from Trump to target certain advertisements. It is said Facebook had known about this misuse for around two years, but did not do anything about it. This for quite some users was the last straw (NRC, 2018). The #deleteFacebook hashtag was initially started by users, after the former Facebook employees turned their back on the company and started spilling more dirt. Brian Acton, one of these insiders and cofounder of Whatsapp, also joined in with #deleteFacebook (Gilbert, 2018).

Facebook is the biggest social media platform with over 2 billion active users (Statista, 2017). However, the Pew Research Center (2013) reports that 61% of the current active American users have said to once have taken a break from Facebook in the past for a period of a few weeks or longer than a few weeks. A further 20% who now do not use Facebook have said to have used Facebook in the past but now do not so anymore (Pew Research Center, 2013). This makes the users' non-use of Facebook an important area to study (Pew Research Center, 2013). According to Giroux (2011, p. 24) "there is an expanding list of complaints from users of the new media, especially with respect to young people".

Morrison and Gomez (2014, p. 1) have described the phenomenon to refuse social media as a "pushback" phenomenon. Stacer (2012) however describes this resistance as media refusal and acknowledges that not every non-use is a form of refusal: "it's a kind of conscious disavowal that involves the recognition that non-use signifies something socially or politically meaningful about the non-user" (p. 1042). According to her, media refusal only relates to people who have used the media platform in the past and now do not so anymore, and does not relate to the non-use of people who have never used it before in their life (Stacer, 2012).

Through the refusal of Facebook, even though Facebook is still the biggest social media platform, Facebook has been in quite some trouble where they need to find a way to keep its users. This is part again of the Social Shaping of Technology. Even though first a success, people are now rejecting it, which means technology needs to change in order to keep us satisfied. The reasons why people quit, will have an influence on the way it will shape future technology. Therefore, the following section will delve into these different kinds of reasons, based on previous research.

2.4 Research on quitting Facebook and the reasons people give to quit, how people experience quitting Facebook and rules people apply to reduce time spend on social media

2.4.1 Research on the reasons people give to quit Facebook

The reasons to refuse Facebook are relevant to discuss, as they formed the basis for the topic list and can have an influence on how users experience quitting Facebook as well. Reasons to quit furthermore can be related back to the impacts social media have. The researches discussed below have mostly included a form of mixed methods, surveys or a form of content analysis. This section will be based on the frequency of explained reasons to refuse Facebook from earlier research, as this will show the reasons that are most important to users to quit. Baumer et al (2013) give the most extensive detail on the reasons to quit, as well as the most extensive set of reasons for one paper, meaning Baumer et al (2013) will be the ones shown throughout this section the most.

The most mentioned reason for users is connected to privacy (Baumer et al, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas 2013; Guo & Goh, 2014; Morrison & Gomez, 2014). Privacy is firstly related to the idea of always being on display, which makes users feel uncomfortable. One can go through each other's profiles and go back years to find certain details, and this decreased a certain authenticity between their relationships (Baumer et al, 2013). Second, Facebook is able to monitor users and can share this information with other companies. This feels like a violation to a personal space for many users as it is unclear what Facebook will do with all that personal data, as they can also sell this to advertisers for example (Baumer et al, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014). Baumer et al (2013) further also added "data use and misuse" (p. 7) as a reason to quit, related to privacy, where there is a lack of transparency regarding Facebook's privacy settings, meaning it is unclear how they collect the users' data and how they can use it.

The second most mentioned reason that was established in previous research was banality, where users perceive "Facebook as banal: trivial, uninteresting, and a waste of time" (Baumer et al, 2013, p. 7), or as "meaningless and unnecessary" (Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013, p. 140). Users then become dissatisfied with the use of Facebook and feel like they should take back some control (Guo, Goh, Ilangovan, Jiao & Yang, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014). Sometimes users have other interests, such as sports, and rather spend their time on other activities, or they can do the same things somewhere else, thus making Facebook banal or useless (Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013). It is further added that political and religious

discussions could be banal too. The inauthentic relationships furthermore also add to banality, where people solely "lurk" (Baumer et al, 2013, p. 7) into each other's life without having rich contact and actually talking to people (Baumer et al, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014).

Contradictory to Facebook being seen as uninteresting, Facebook is also seen as being *too* interesting, where safeguarding their own productivity is another reason for users to take a step back. Where Facebook is seen as too interesting and too time-consuming, the ability to concentrate on work for these users often decreased, which means their will to concentrate also decreased as they were distracted. This motivation is mostly related to the need to concentrate and to be able to be productive, which Facebook decreases, as it is seen as too interesting (Baumer et al, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014; Schoenebeck, 2014).

Also, social networking sites are considered to be very addictive. Users often consider themselves to be spending too much time on Facebook and feel like they are too dependent on it. They therefore want to take a step back, also when they feel that it takes over time that should be spend on studying instead (Baker & White, 2011; Baumer et al, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Turan, Tinmaz, & Goktas, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014; Schoenebeck, 2014).

Some users also felt they had a preference for other communication forms (Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013; Guo & Goh, 2014). Here, the users for example prefer face-to-face conversations instead of social media conversations, email, MSN or they prefer to use another social media platform instead (Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012).

Cyber-safety was also found to be a reason for users to quit Facebook (Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013). Cyber-safety then relates to threats online, e.g. cyber-bullying (Guo et al, 2012), which could make users feel depressed (Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013).

There were also feelings of social and professional pressures which made people leave Facebook (Baumer et al, 2013). Sometimes users felt stalked or tracked down, by both friends but also by possible companies they would like to work for. Concerning social and professional pressures the pressure to join social network sites can also be considered to be part of this, which is related to the fact to be different from others, being one of the people who is not on Facebook anymore to take a stance (Stacer, 2012; Stieger et al, 2013).

Two motivations that have not been named often in previous research, but can be of importance to the study is for one, that social media is not real life. For users then real life is seen as more important than an online social media life, even though social media often distracts us from real life (Schoenebeck, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2013). Second, some users felt emotionally dissatisfied, where certain expectations were not met and which then left them unsatisfied with the platform (Morrison & Gomez, 2014).

As can be seen, there are quite a lot of diverse reasons for people to refuse Facebook and to quit. The most mentioned reason with privacy therefor seems to be the most important, which will be interesting to see in this study, if that is the case here too. Quite some research has been done on the refusal of Facebook, however research on the experiences this also brings with is lacking. Reasons to quit can bring along certain experiences, and by looking into the experiences it can be seen if these reasons have been solved yes or no. Thus, the following section will explain the experiences quitting Facebook has brought along.

2.4.2 Research on how people experience quitting Facebook

Research show mostly negative experiences related to leaving Facebook, where positive experiences are only related to feelings of relief, peace and contentment (Roberts & Koliska, 2014), without further explanation about the motivations behind these experiences, or, the reasons why people felt these feelings after quitting. This is also the case for the negative experiences, even though more different negative experiences have been stated before in Roberts & Koliska (2014). This study will give more insight into the motivations behind the experiences, as well as a bigger diversity of experiences, but first, the negative experiences of quitting Facebook will now be discussed.

It has been argued that users, after leaving Facebook, felt that they were too dependent on some social media platforms because of the addiction they had. There were feelings of disconnectedness, as well as urges to log in and check Facebook for what they had been missing (Roberts & Koliska, 2014). Connected to this, participants felt they were missing content posted online, such as pictures or posts by friends and family (Baumer et al, 2015). Roberts and Koliska (2014) further add that this can lead people to feel isolated and disappointed, as they are feeling left out by missing this content. Not only are they missing content posted by friends and family, they are also missing to post content themselves and share that with their social contacts, which increased feelings of anxiety (Baumer et al, 2015). Friends and family often wondered where they had gone or sometimes were even worried

about them as they are not present anymore on Facebook, which could lead to some tension (Roberts & Koliska, 2014).

After a while, users would also spend time usually spent on Facebook on other social media sites. Consequently, some participants also start to reflect upon their other social media use (Baumer et al, 2015).

The way people experience quitting Facebook and not using it anymore, might influence their opinion towards (other) social media as well as the way they behave on them and the ways to reduce social media. As opinion towards (other) social media *after* quitting Facebook has not been discussed before, only the rules to reduce Internet use will be discussed below.

2.4.3 Research on the rules to reduce social media, or Internet, usage

Related to the rules to reduce social media use after quitting Facebook, it was established there are multiple ways in which users try to limit their technology use. For example, people try only using it at specific times or use other (communication) technologies such as email. This is seen as the most rational and efficient way to create a better balance of life. Secondly, there are behaviors connected to limiting media use, for either by only using it a specific period of time or by using it differently. This is connected to for example not taking your phone into a meeting. Thirdly, there are people reducing their media use by a technological intervention. An example can be to use a "dumb" phone instead of a smartphone, where users are then forced to limit their technology use. Fourth, some start dropping out of all of the technology, meaning going off-line altogether or barely using any technology (Morrison & Gomez, 2014).

However, there are also (past) users who have the opposite reaction, and do not change anything about their behavior and social media use, meaning they do not apply any rules to reduce their usage. They claim nothing is wrong with their social media use or social media itself (Morrison & Gomez, 2014).

Summary

In the theoretical framework I have first provided an overall description of the definition of social media, to understand what Facebook actually is part of. Then, an overview was given regarding the positive and negative impacts social media can have on someone, which could be related to the reasons to refuse social media and could have an effect on the shaping of (future) technology. To delve deeper into the backlash Facebook has been receiving, social media refusal was discussed as well as the #deleteFacebook hashtag that went viral this year

in 2018. Subsequently, the reasons for refusing Facebook were presented based on previous research, followed by the experiences as well as rules to reduce social media use. Opinions towards social media in the context of quitting Facebook have not been discussed, as no research is found yet based on this. This leads to the following section, where the method will be discussed and how this study has been conducted.

3. Method

This research aims to answer the following three research questions: (1) What reasons do young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) give to quit or take a break from Facebook? (2) How do/did young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) experience their refusal from Facebook? (3) How do young (previous) Facebook users (16-25) perceive other social media, their behavior on social media, and what kind of rules did they apply to reduce social media use? A sub-question was also formulated: For the users who returned, what reasons do/did they give to return to Facebook? This section then will explain the choice of a method as well as its usage for the three research questions. First, the choice of the research method will be explained as well as the reason why it was chosen. Second, an explanation will be given regarding the collection of the data. Third, a description will be given of the unit of analysis, or the participants, and the sampling method. Fourth, a table will present the sensitizing concepts for this research. Fifth, a detailed description of the data analysis is described. Last, the steps taken to ensure reliability and validity of this research will be explored in detail.

3.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

A qualitative research method has been used in this study. Based on previous researches (e.g.: Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012; Stacer, 2012; Baumer et al, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013; Turan, Tinmaz & Goktas, 2013; Morrison & Gomez, 2014; Schoenebeck, 2014) we already know a lot about the reasons why people decide to quit or take a break from Facebook. Whereas Baumer et al (2013) focused on a survey including both open and closed question, Morrison & Gomez (2014) for example focused on a content analysis.

However, an overarching theory based on why these reasons are important and what these reasons mean to people, has not been studied before in-depth and is thus missing in theory. That is why in this study a qualitative method was used, in order to search for underlying reasons, experiences and opinions. So to not solely stay on the surface, but to explore in-depth what the reasons are and why these are of importance for people (Hermanowicz, 2002; Bryman, 2012). In order to do this, it was chosen to use semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather data.

Kvale (1983, p. 174) defines interviews as a way "[t]o gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Interviews give participants the chance to speak their mind and discuss about their reasons, experiences, opinions and explain the why of these all. I was also able to go deeper into the motivations from the interviewees regarding their reasons and thus have an

actual conversation with them. With the interviews I was able to go deeper into topics that have not been discussed before in previous studies and find the underlying motivations behind the reasons to quit/take a break from Facebook.

As the interviews were semi-structured, they were very flexible and open to new inputs from the participants, meaning the topic list that I made for this study was not always followed strictly. With this I mean that I tried to be able to get close to them by having semi-structured interviews, but I had a topic list to not dwell off and still keep the interview in line and structured. This way I was therefore able to gather as much data as possible. The interviews were conducted between April 17 and May 3, 2018 and lasted between 33 minutes and 92 minutes.

3.2 Participants

For this study, a non-probability sample method, namely a purposive sampling method, has been used. Bryman (2012) describes eight approaches to the purposive sampling method, where the criterion sampling is one of those eight and this has been used in this study. Bryman (2012) described the criterion sampling as "sampling all units (cases or individuals) that meet a particular criterion" (p. 419). As this study specifically deals with people that have quit or taken a break from Facebook, my unit of analysis had to include people that have actually quit or taken a break from Facebook and thus fit that criterion.

Reddit (https://www.reddit.com/), which was founded in 2005 in the United States of America but is used all over the world, was used to find interviewees. Reddit includes User-Generated Content (UGC), where the users are the ones providing content on the site, which could be through a post, a link, or through pictures. As Reddit itself describes: "reddit is a source for what's new and popular on the web" (Reddit, n.d, paragraph 1). Reddit consists of certain pages related to specific themes where you as a user then can make a new post. A post regarding this research was posted on three Reddit pages: *simpleliving, nosurf & antifacebook* in order to gather enough participants. *Simpleliving* (https://www.reddit.com/r/simpleliving/) is dedicated to making life more simple and easy, which is suiting as quitting Facebook could make life more easy, and as previous posts regarding quitting social media were found on there. *Nosurf* then (https://www.reddit.com/r/nosurf/) is dedicated to try and make people stop using the internet for mindless browsing, which is suiting as Facebook is part of the internet being a social media platform and a social networking site. Lastly, *antifacebook* (https://www.reddit.com/r/AntiFacebook/) is dedicated to the problems surrounding Facebook

and thus is suited as people that are anti Facebook could have had Facebook in the past and have now quit or might be on a break.

Between all the reactions left on these posts, 14 participants were eventually chosen to do the interviews with. I made sure it would be as equally divided as possible between male and female, resulting in 9 male participants and 5 female participants, as mostly male users left a comment on my Reddit post. I was able to keep in contact with these users though their Reddit accounts, and some also sent me their email. As participants come from all over the world, it has been decided to use Skype as the way to conduct most of the interviews, where one preferred Google Meetup. These Skype interviews have been audio taped in order to be able to transcribe the interview and use all of the data discussed during the interviews. In advance, a consent form was sent to the interviewees, explaining the ethical issues and asking permission to audiotape and using their names. The participants read and signed this consent form before sending it back to me before the interviews. It was also possible for them to consent orally, which one of the participants did. For the one underaged participant, the consent form was signed by his mother. Half of the participants also did not want their identity revealed, meaning a pseudonym has been used for 7 participants, and from the other 7 permission was given to use their real name. A further description of the participants can be found in the Appendix (II).

3.3 Sensitizing concepts

Sensitizing concepts were derived from previous discussed theory in the theoretical framework, meaning the concepts form a starting point for the analysis. Sensitizing concepts then are referred to as "those background ideas that inform the overall research problem" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 259), where those background ideas then come from previous research. The main topics, or concepts, discussed in the interviews were motivations/reasons, experiences and attitudes towards social media.

Table I shows the oversight of the sensitizing concepts, as well as the sub-concepts and their indicators. The sub-concepts for the main three topics and concepts in order to answer the research questions have been related to previous discussed researches in the theoretical framework. The sub-concepts for the reasons/motivations are the main reasons found to quit or take a break from Facebook in previous research, as these concepts then inform what kind of answers to expect. This is the same for the concept of experiences and attitudes.

Table I: Sensitizing concepts with sub-concepts and their indicators.

Concept	Sub-concept	Indicators
Reasons		
	Privacy	Being on display, authenticity decreased, sharing information, personal data, data misuse
	Banality	Uninteresting, waste of time, trivial, dissatisfaction, take back control, other interests, inauthentic relationships online
	Too interesting	Productivity threatened, time-consuming, distraction
	Addictive	Dependent on, withdrawal, time that should be spend on other platforms, or should be spend on different tasks (such as homework)
	Social/professional pressures	Tracked down, pressures to join Facebook
	Not real life	Real life more important
	Emotional dissatisfaction	Expectations not met, dissatisfaction
	Cyber-safety	Online threats, cyber-bullying
	Preference for other communication forms	Preferring face-to-face communication, other social media accounts, e-mail
Experiences		
	Social relationships	How friends and family reacted and how it impacted their relationships
	Disconnectedness	Feeling an urge to log in, feeling left out, loss of contact
	Isolation/anxiety	Feeling left out, disappointed, depressed
	Missing content	Photos, posts and videos posted on Facebook which people missed
Possible ways to reduce social media use		
	Limit social media use	Using specific times slots, using other technologies, creating better life balance

	Technological intervention	Using "dumb" phone, limiting technology use
	Quit social media altogether	Going offline, dropping out of technology use
	No change	Nothing is wrong with social media, so no reason to change opinion or behavior and thus no rules needed

Three pilot interviews were conducted before the actual interviews, in order to be able to test the topic list and to prepare for some possible expected answers. These three interviewees were selected with the same criterion as the other fourteen, based on their age (16-25) as well as that they had to have quit Facebook for at least a couple of weeks. Through these pilot interviews, small changes were made to the topic list regarding the formulation of questions as well as deleting some unimportant questions regarding this study.

Regarding the interviews, three main topics were discussed; the reasons, the experiences and the opinions towards social media, where I also looked at behavior and certain rules to reduce social media use. It was made sure though that each topic from the topic list would be discussed, however by still keeping it a friendly conversation. To engage the participants in a discussion, some introductory questions were first asked. These questions related to when they started using Facebook, since when they have quit or have been on a break and when their opinion towards Facebook started to change. Here, I did not yet discuss their opinions towards other social media, but only towards Facebook, as it would guide them into the first main open question regarding to topic of reasons to quit, which was asked by one open questions and some follow up questions regarding the sub-concepts if they were not named by the participants. The second topic of experiences was discussed in terms of certain challenges participants faced after quitting Facebook or certain positive effects they noticed on their life. Next, opinions towards other social media were discussed in terms of after quitting Facebook. If there was a change in opinion over a period of time, I probed for details and explanations as to why this was so. This was also accompanied by questions regarding certain rules they might have set to reduce social media use, as well as their behavior on other social media platforms.

3.4. Data analysis

The data retrieved from the interviews has been analyzed using a thematic analysis, which is described as a method to discover and identify certain reoccurring patterns, or themes, within the data. As I was looking for reoccurring concepts as well as differences discussed by the participants, this method of analysis was chosen. Themes in thematic analysis represent an important part of the data that will help answer the research questions, where the themes preferably are seen in multiple interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss 6 main phases for doing a thematic analysis, where the first one is to get to know the data in depth. First of all, the interviews were transcribed, which is the start to get to know the data better, as you pay close attention to the speech and text when transcribing. During this phase, ideas for coding themes were already noted.

The second phase is to generate the initial codes. Codes are not the same as themes; themes are mostly broader and include interpretation, which does not happen yet during the coding stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With coding the data is organized "into meaningful groups" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 18). Coding can be data-driven as well as theory driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 18). Data-driven coding means the codes and themes will depend on the data, theory-driven coding means you already have certain aspects in mind to code around. In this study, a combination of both will be used, where certain aspects of the data can be related back to concepts discussed in other researches and are thus theory-driven, and some aspects might be new, and data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The third phase is to look for the themes. All the data then was coded already, and these codes then were sorted into themes. The codes are thus compared and sometimes combined to form overarching candidate themes. In this phase it was also of importance to start looking at the possible relationships between these codes and the overarching themes and sub themes. At the end of this phase then, the significance of the themes started to make sense (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the fourth phase the themes were reviewed and refined. Some themes could be set aside, some themes might have been too much alike and some themes have to be broken apart. Here, I produced a thematic map of the data, which basically is a map or a table including all the themes and sub themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the fifth phase the themes were named and defined with a detailed analysis. At the end, you know exactly what your themes are and entail, and what they are not. This sets way for phase six, which is reporting the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are important aspects of doing qualitative research, as this will ensure the quality of the research (Bryman, 2012). In order to ensure reliability, I paid attention to giving sufficient information by explaining and describing all the steps I have taken in this study in detail. This was done throughout the whole study, but most attention to this was given in the method section and the result section, as that is where I delved into the actual research.

Validity then is concerned with the fact whether I researched what I actually wanted to research and the degree to which this study was generalizable (Bryman, 2012). Here, my position as researcher played a crucial part. To make sure that I really understood what the interviewees said, I made sure that I also probed during the interviews by asking for elaborations and by repeating what they said to make sure I understood them well. For external validity and generalizability, it is the fact that many of the reasons from theory overlap well with the findings from this study that it ensures generalizability to others who have quit Facebook. The more people are quitting with all the negative appearance of Facebook in the news, the more it adds to the external validity of this research as well. This is so, because this study will also relate to all the new people who are quitting and therefore is generalizable.

4. Results

In this section the results will be presented. First, the reasons for young people to stop using Facebook will be explained. Second, where some have returned to Facebook, their reasons to come back to Facebook will be discussed. Third, I will show how young people experience being away from Facebook, presenting the positive outcomes as well as challenges that the participants have faced. Finally, their opinion(s) towards other social media will be presented. They are discussed in this order because of the possible relation between all of the research questions, where the reasons to quit might have an influence on the type of experiences the participants faced and this in turn could lead to a different opinion towards social media pand different behaviors on social media platforms. Consequently, the topic list was also based on this sequence.

4.1 Reasons to stop using Facebook

From the analysis of the interviews, a range of 7 main themes were picked up for the participants to stop using Facebook, which will all be discussed. All the fourteen participants have used Facebook in the past, from which nine still do not use it anymore.

4.1.1 Banality

The most mentioned reasons from the participants to stop using Facebook is connected to banality, which according to Baumer et al (2013, p. 7) is related to Facebook being seen as banal: "trivial, uninteresting, and a waste of time". In this section, it will be discussed that Facebook was seen as a waste of time as well as that Facebook fostered inauthentic relationships.

4.1.1.1 Waste of time

A majority of the participants explained that one of the most important reasons for them to get off Facebook was because they considered Facebook to be a waste of time as it was taking up a lot of their time because it is so easy to get drawn into. However, they felt they did not get anything useful in return from it.

> "I mean it's just easy to get sucked into and um... You know there's some of the people on it, so you could spend hours going through all the people that you know and looking at all the information that they have up there. And... Kind of like a mindless activity, so um... Really easy to do going through the time." (Julie, 25)

Participants also found that Facebook was not productive in any way as they did not learn anything new from it, which is also why they considered it to be a waste of time. Elizabeth (22) for example also perceives it to kind of be the same as watching a TV show, where life moves slowly around you:

"For instance, if you sit there and watch a TV show, in 30 minutes you can see a day in somebody's life and it's so much entertainment coming to you. And I feel like Facebook is kind of the same way, but you're sitting there and if you like close your laptop, life kind of moves pretty slowly around you. But when you're on Facebook it's easy to get sucked in (…). But then at the end of the day (…) you haven't done anything productive."

From Elizabeth's (22) argumentation can also be read that Facebook is seen as entertainment for the participants. It is an easy way to procrastinate time and to allow yourself not to be bored, as Facebook is filled with videos, pictures and posts from friends but also with games to play. Whereas Facebook was initially started in order to keep in contact with schoolmates after class (BBC, 2012) and where Facebook itself states its mission to be "Give people the power the build community and bring the world closer together" (Facebook, n.d., Mission), for the participants this was not often the way they used it as they saw it more as something entertaining. As Jorine (22) argued, the content shown in her feed is often related to pictures and/or videos, sometimes not even related to her friends, as her friends only liked it, but did not post it themselves. According to Callum (24) and Elizabeth (22) this is considered as easy entertainment. This entertainment content then could be seen as interesting and/or funny, however their time spend is not actually spend in any productive way as those types of content are not extremely useful and fulfilling.

Regarding responses then on why according to them it is possible that they spend so much time on Facebook, they blame it on the way Facebook is set up.

"Because it's only in bite-size chunks, you don't notice it so you know... It's like you'd say another five minutes, just one more article and you scroll down and there's another article, so it's like bite-sized. So, you don't really notice the time, but that's how it impacted my productivity anyway." (Callum, 24)

"The format somehow invited me, or invited me to keep scrolling and somehow click through different pages. And... Then I would end up in places that were... To say, the best only slightly if not at all interesting to me. And I was wondering, okay, it's one and a half

hours later, how did I, or two hours or three hours and how did I spend those?" (Tobias, 23)

The participants often considered time to unnoticeably pass by as information comes in small pieces and information can be found indefinitely as you can keep on "browsing mindlessly" (Yuriy, 18) through all the posts. The fact that using Facebook was a mindless activity was also acknowledged by Julie (25), Elizabeth (22) and Callum (24). Often these pieces of information then indeed were not even of interest to the participants, which made them wonder what they had done with their time.

Even though the majority of the participants agreed that the content was not fulfilling nor useful, it at the same time was also seen as interesting to a few participants while still agreeing to the fact that it was not useful. Tobias (23) defined it as a "strange kind of interesting" and Yuriy (18) as a "time-sink":

"It was interesting. But it was a strange kind of interesting, it wasn't really fulfilling to look at. But... Nonetheless, it has a certain draw on me somehow." (Tobias, 23)

"It was interesting, but it wasn't useful at all. It was a time-sink." (Yuriy, 18)

Contradictory to previous research regarding how Facebook can have an impact on academic performances (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Junco, 2012), during the interviews it was only found that for one of the fourteen participants it also affected his performances at school, as he procrastinated too much:

"It started to change when I found myself browsing mindlessly for hours on my bed, literally. I was just procrastinating pretty hard and it pretty much... It had an enormous effect on my marks in university, so I decided to start regulating it by not using it. And Facebook makes me lazy and I will just stay at home, 24/7. (…) It was distracting me from my studies, I didn't learn actually anything new from Facebook at all. It was not useful for me." (Yuriy, 18).

For Yuriy then Facebook was used as a way to basically not spend time on studying, to procrastinate as much as he could and he noticed that his grades got worse because of that and this was exactly when his opinion towards Facebook started to change.

Another participant, Florian (20), did not think it impacted his academic performances in that sense, however it did impact his internship, where he had trouble concentrating.

Whenever something would come up in his head, he would go to Facebook and look it up, which made him quite unproductive on such a day, as these things on Facebook were not considered to be useful information.

Whereas the time on Facebook was considered to be banal by the participants, only a few of them expressed the desire to do something else with the time they usually spend on Facebook instead as Facebook was impacting what they usually did in their free time outside of school and work. One of them even explicitly mentioned that she regrets wasting so much time on Facebook, as she felt pressured to update Facebook as much as she could.

"I just got a little bit of a hassle, like it was taking a lot of time out of my life. I felt like I couldn't um… Really enjoy my life as much as I could before, because I had to always take photos or constantly update you know, my social media pages and stuff. (…) I could have been doing other things and I regret it." (Vanessa, 24).

"I find it a waste of my time actually. I have lots of better stuff to do in my free time on a day." (Mark, 22)

"But I spend less time doing other stuff that I enjoyed, so I felt like it was more... Impacting the quality of the things that I was doing with my spare time." (Tobias, 23)

Vanessa (24) refers to a hassle in her life, where Facebook seemed to make it difficult for her to focus on herself. She expressed that she felt behind in her life compared to her friends, who were all graduating, and that "took a toll" on her "mental health" as she started getting depressed.

For Nicole (22), the reason why it was also a waste of time was because she felt that Facebook portrayed so much of the same things where it seemed like nothing new was showing up:

"Because it was just the same thing, people posting pictures of… Like a lot of them um… School trips or school events, and then posting the same thing where you like the picture and you tag your friends." (Nicole, 22)

Wasting so much time on Facebook also provoked certain feelings in some participants, where they felt sad and angry, and would have been happier if they had not done so. They again rather would have spent their time on other more important things, like family or personal issues.

"There are many things that I could do but then I went scrolling on Facebook again for hours and eventually you feel quite bad about that." (Florian, 20)

"I'm a little, I'm a bit sad and... Angry about it? Also, because I believe that I could have actually found ways of dealing with problems that were in my life at that time, if I hadn't been so busy distracting myself." (Tobias, 23).

"I could spend that time for my studies and for my family and my friends and I would be much more happier I think than now." (Yuriy, 18)

Thus, most participants considered Facebook to be a waste of time, as it is very easy to be drawn into and it they do not gain anything useful from it. This was also established by Baumer et al (2013). The reasons that was given why it is so easy to be drawn into is because of the way Facebook sets up their feed, as you can "browse mindlessly", as Yuriy (18) explains. Also, it was seen as having too much of the same content. For a few participants Facebook was also seen as too interesting but still a waste of time.

4.1.1.2 Inauthentic relationships
Participants also felt that the relationships on Facebook were not seen as authentic, which was the case for six of them. The participants felt that they did not actually learn anything about people online and that they were not actually connecting to people, but more disconnecting. This to them feels inauthentic and they are not true connections, as they did not actually engage with people that much and engaged conversations but solely lurked into their lives thinking they knew what friends are up too.

"I think it's not connecting people, it is actually disconnecting them." (Yuriy, 18)

Even though it sometimes felt like the participants got to know people more through content on Facebook, however reaching out to friends or family online was often limited:

"I don't think Facebook fosters healthy relationships, I think it's really easy to log on, then scroll through your friends and family. But you never actually reach out to connect to them. Or they feel like, because they see that you post something, that they're still involved in your life, but they're not. (…) I felt like I was keeping up with them, but I really wasn't." (Elizabeth, 22)

According to Elizabeth, Facebook does not foster healthy relationships as she does not actually reach out to people and talk to them about their lives. According to her, it is not the way someone usually connects to people, as you usually physically talk to someone in order to find out what is happening in their life, which is why to her it is not seen as a healthy.

Participants also described these relationships online as a one-sided relationship:

"You're forming one side of a relationship, where you feel like you're still up to date with the person. But you're really, sure you know objectively what's going on, but that's... That's the same thing as reading a tabloid and knowing what's going on with a celebrity, like... You don't actually know them anymore." (Elizabeth, 22)

"It's not really a true, like... Social activity? I guess. Because you're not really connecting with them, you're just.. kind of like a one side of way of connecting." (Julie, 25)

According to them, it is considered to be a one-sided way of connecting as they did not actually connect to their friends and/or family as they did not actually reach out to them or talk to them. They felt they only knew them on a surface level, by looking at their profiles and pictures, but they do not consider that to be an actual social activity where you know or get to know someone personally. Even if Facebook could potentially be used to increase your 'social' network and to meet people online (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann, 2011), according to the participants those would not be real connections and would be "false feelings of connection", as participant Julie, 25, said.

Furthermore, for one of the participants Facebook even impacted his offline relationships with friends. As Callum (24) explains:

"Facebook was actually impacting real life uh, social relationships. It was like offline Facebook was damaging society, it wasn't this like personal thing where it's like I'm wasting time. It was like Facebook is now a genuinely, seems to be replacing, you know... Real life social relationships." (Callum, 24)

For Callum, Facebook split up his friendship group and thus damaged society. Instead of having real life connections and conversations, some of his friends had an argument on Facebook about the lack of responses within the group on people's posts, meaning the online world impacted their real life, which he felt was a very bad thing.

To conclude, Facebook is seen to be a waste of time as participants did not feel they were gaining anything useful from using Facebook. According to the participants, Facebook was

also disconnecting people instead of connecting them and enhancing social ties, as Facebook users do not actually reach out to their 'friends' but only objectively lurk into their lives. That these relationships were not considered to be rich, was also acknowledged before, for example by Baumer et al (2013), Stieger et al (2013) and Turan, Tinmaz and Goktas (2013).

4.1.2 Privacy

Privacy was the second biggest reason with twelve out of the fourteen participants naming it as a reason to quit Facebook. With this, privacy was also the reason that was explained in most rich detail by the participants, with four themes ranging from the term privacy, which will all be discussed, with the first one being that Facebook has access to too much information regarding its users.

4.1.2.1. Having access to too much information

"But people don't realize that, do they really want people to know all the intimate details of their lives?" (Elizabeth, 22)

This theme is related to the fact that according to the participants Facebook has a lot of information regarding its users, meaning they collect a lot of user data, ranging from what you "ate" and where you are "location wise" as Elizabeth (22) discusses, which according to the participants is considered to be too much information. Davey (19) even wondered how someone could not find privacy to be an issue, as a lot about yourself is on someone else's server. By gaining so much information from all its users, Facebook is very powerful. Jorine (22) added to this that Facebook will even know to what other websites she goes to as long as she was still logged into Facebook. According to them, there seems to be no limit in how much data Facebook will (try to) collect and that scared them as they have no idea how far Facebook eventually will go.

Callum (24), who has worked in the advertising industry, said Facebook will always find a way to find out more about the users so advertisers will know who to target. It seems that a lack of privacy is almost considered to be a norm, as he said, and that made him worry:

"It just kind of seemed like there was no limit to, like you just kept feeding this in. You'd always be asked to feed more and more data" (Callum, 24)

Furthermore, Callum also explains that Facebook, as well as other companies, would do anything to keep their data that they collected from you at all times. He is very pessimistic

about the amount of data Facebook has on you as a person as they will do anything in their power to withhold that information and not grant you permission. This leads us to the fact that participants felt they had no control over their own data.

4.1.2.2 No control over our own data

"(…) once you've given anything to Facebook, you lose all rights to your information" (Elizabeth, 22)

Participants expressed that they cannot control the data, their own data, when Facebook shares it with a third party, as they will lose all the rights to their own personal data. They felt Facebook had no right getting into their personal details and knowing what they are up to at all times of the day, as they did not particularly give permission for that according to them. For Florian (20), he even expressed that he felt as if he was being used to just gather more information. The participants expressed desire to have control over their own data and not that Facebook can collect all kinds of data and then sell that to advertisers, as that kind of data should be "none of their business" as Florian (20) puts it.

According to Davey (19) and Grant (25) they also discussed that we only have to wait until some data will leak some time, just as it did with Cambridge Analytica which Facebook was connected to, as Davey (19) said. Facebook has a lot of information on its users, personal details, that could ruin lives when leaked to the public. Davey (19) also explain that there is a lot of information that he would rather not have other people know, as he said you should also be allowed to have privacy:

"And I think that if I don't want to tell other people, why would a big Internet company like Facebook be allowed to know that?" (Davey, 19)

This leads us to the next part of privacy concerns, the mis-use of information.

4.1.2.3 Mis-use of information

"Well Facebook doesn't charge people to use their account, so any time, anything that doesn't charge you, you are the product." (Elizabeth, 22)

Participants agreed to the fact that whenever a service is free, it means that you are the product or that you are the price. By being products then, Facebook is able to sell all of the users' data to advertisers, from which they can get lots of revenue. The participants found that

this was a mis-use of their details and that Facebook should not know what they all do on the Internet. Mark (22) even expresses that this makes him feel unsafe, which Tobias (23) agrees to. For Tobias, he is quite afraid that some day in the future his statements that he posted on Facebook could be used as some kind of evidence somewhere, under some certain circumstances, and that information eventually could be used against him.

For the participants it felt like Facebook was taking it too far. Even though the participants acknowledge that when a service is free, the users are the product, they think Facebook should not make money off of their information and thus the participants consider this to be a mis-use.

4.1.2.4 Facebook not an open source

Also, the participants found that Facebook could not really be trusted in any way with what Facebook does with their users' information and how much information Facebook actually has on them. As Florian (20) explained, there is a movement called the "free software movement", meaning that software does not belong to any company. Everybody can look into the code and see what is happening with the program and what happens with your personal data. Facebook's code however is not open to anyone, meaning no one can know what Facebook actually does with their users' information, meaning they could do anything they want with it, even if they say they will not. Facebook is also not always that transparent in what they do according to Gust (17). They might say that they only gather a certain amount of your information, but this might not actually be true. However, with Facebook not having an open code, there is now way to figure that out. According to Mark (22), Facebook is just an unethical company, where they keep certain information from us such as with Cambridge Analytica, which used Facebook's data regarding its users for politics and Facebook knew about that for a longer period already. According to him, everything is "behind closed doors", or not transparent. Mark further discusses that Facebook could say it might be end-to-end encrypted, such as with Whatsapp, but as Facebook is not an open source, there is nobody who can actually check this. Callum (24) further adds to this transparency, where he says that the ultimate aim of Mark Zuckerberg was to actually have ultimate transparency, but he finds this is nowhere to be found as Facebook does not tell what kind of data they collect and to who they sell it to. There seems to be no limit to them as to how much Facebook collects as data. A few of the participants therefore also expressed the desire for a new open source social media platform.

To summarize this theme, participants found that Facebook holds too much information and data on them. They felt that they did not have control over this data as Facebook can use it for advertisements, as well as there will be always be a chance some time that it might be leaked which they themselves have no control over. Facebook is able to monitor them and share this information, without getting consent from the users. Participants felt that this was too much, where Facebook should not be earning money off of its users, even though acknowledging users are the product when the service is free. Last, participants also expressed that Facebook is not transparent in what they are doing with the users' information, making Facebook a closed source, and some desired a new open source platform. The fact that they felt it was a mis-use as well as that Facebook is able to sell their users' data, is also established in Baumer et al (2013).

4.1.3 (Emotional) dissatisfaction

(Emotional) dissatisfaction was the next reason participants discussed, which can be divided into multiple dissatisfactions, the first one being the feed, with four participants mentioning this. First, some of the participants explained that the feed started changing, where the content that was shown was less interesting than it was before. This eventually led them to think that Facebook did not really have a purpose anymore. Some examples Florian (20) gives are the Vines that he kept seeing as well as that he kept seeing content from people that he has nothing to do with, even though they were part of his friend list. Davey (19) partly agrees with this, as he also expressed that he saw pictures from some people that he did not know, but they were liked by some of his friends. However, they had nothing to do with him or his direct friends. For Mark (22) it was also the advertisements that bothered him. Yuriy (18) then further added Facebook was just inconvenient as well, as the feed kept changing:

"[Facebook is] inconvenient. It is slow, I can't find the posts I just read a few minutes ago, when the page refreshed and so on" (Yuriy, 18)

The next connection two participants gave related to dissatisfaction was the political ambition of Facebook, even though partly related to different ambitions. As Grant (25) explains:

"[What] I find very bad about Facebook is that it regulates the content. I'm personally um... I think it should be something like a public utility, where some kind of free speech applies, or if you censor someone, you have to, you have to have a good reason for it."

Grant (25) argued that Facebook's ambition is to change the way we communicate and to change the world, however Facebook is not that careful. Facebook censors and removes certain content or political groups without warning, which according to Grant is interfering with his country's (the Czech Republic) politics. According to him, some kind of free speech should apply on Facebook. Furthermore, he also expressed that people are too easily offended these days, meaning he was very careful with writing his (political) opinions on Facebook, as he was afraid he might offend one of his friends.

Davey (19) in a sense agrees to this political interference. According to Davey, Facebook has some kind of "filter-bubble", meaning that you will only be exposed to certain content that you already agree to, politically. This could for example be related to (negative) news such as terror attacks or negative news from the Middle-East. As Davey explains:

"You get a colored image of the truth. So that you uh... So that you actually only think that your opinion is the absolute truth and there is not another... That there are more perspectives to look at things... But Facebook actually makes sure that you keep looking at the world in the same way."

He also explains that we also partly do this ourselves already, as we choose specific newspapers and these newspapers all write from different perspectives as well. However, he acknowledges that Facebook is not just a social network, but it is also the biggest media company in the world, and if this company only shows a colored truth, then eventually something will go wrong, especially as Facebook does not use a certain editorial team to make sure the news content will be neutral.

The third dissatisfaction was brought forward by one participant, Tobias (23), who found that Facebook was not useable in a constructive way. First, Tobias used Facebook as a space where he could also share his art. However, this constructive way did not last long, as he had the impression people were not that interested in seeing his art and that made him feel disappointed, as he put a lot of effort in it.

Another dissatisfaction one participant had was that Facebook suddenly bought Whatsapp, which according to Mark (22) was quite strange, as Facebook was already very big and with buying Whatsapp a lot of communication would go through the same platform. He found that strange, dissatisfying, and not a good thing.

Last, two participants found that Facebook made their self-esteem worse. They kept comparing themselves to their 'friends', who seemed much happier or further along than they were in life, or they just were not happy with seeing themselves online that much:

"I just, I felt like I was getting really upset and then I realized that it wasn't a good thing for me and I didn't want to feel that way. (Vanessa, 24)

"All of my friends were really like posting pictures of our friend groups and I guess I didn't really like seeing myself online. I didn't really like what I looked like, I had pretty bad self-esteem, so I would just ignore or just untag myself." (Nicole, 22)

Nicole in general had a very low self-esteem and was always very self-conscious about her posts on social media in general, which little-by-little made her stop posting on Facebook. Eventually, she also felt that she was being overexposed on Facebook, with friends posting pictures of their friend group. She was not pleased with the way she looked like, as she had curly hair and was not happy with her face and skin color. According to her, this is partly because of the country that she grew up in, the Philippines, where not many people have curly hair, and a white skin is seen as more beautiful. Whenever she would see a picture of herself on Facebook, she would cringe and felt pretty bad about it. For this reason, she eventually started avoiding Facebook more and more.

Thus, some participants felt emotionally dissatisfied (Morrison& Gomez, 2014), however mostly all had different feelings regarding the (emotional) dissatisfaction of Facebook, ranging from Facebook's feed to Facebook making them feel worse about themselves. All these explanations made them unsatisfied with Facebook as they mostly hoped Facebook to be different.

4.1.4 Social media as false representation of life
When discussing if and how social media was not considered to be presenting 'real life', eight participants found this to be true. Participants felt that Facebook in a sense made them compete with all their other friends on Facebook, as all pictures that they saw on Facebook often contained the happiest parts of their friends' lives.

"I felt like I was trying to somehow compete with images that other people were creating of themselves, so I was also creating some kind of image of myself and also often somehow... (…) Like people were trying to sell their picture of there, or an image of themselves and their lives." (Tobias, 23)

Tobias also found Facebook to be impacting his self-esteem. However, he also expressed he was actually seeking for some validation. All his friends showed great pictures, and he felt

that he was also seeking for this and should create such pictures as well, to show he also has a "fun and happy life". Thus, he was creating images while competing with others in order to seek validation that he was not a sad or boring person.

A big reason as to why social media was not seen as real life and as a false representation of life was because the images created and posted on Facebook were seen as "false" and "misleading":

"Social media is really misleading, because nobody ever puts like ugly selfies or just day to day activities, it's only like their best versions of themselves. (…) I don't think it's mentally healthy too (…), it promotes an environment where you just show, kind of like a very false side of yourself. (…) I think social media is really fake. Um... I don't think that my Facebook accurately displayed my life at all." (Elizabeth, 22)

"Nobody really posts like the bad stuff, so... It kind of creates like a false image of what their life is like." (Julie, 25)

Facebook was used by people to show "their best versions of themselves" and according to Elizabeth (22), she says this was a very unhealthy thing, or as Julie (25) describes it, the "happy points in their lives". Grant (25) further argued that he felt that people were pretending to be something they are not. According to Elizabeth, these kinds of images can make people feel bad about themselves as it is very easy to get sucked into it. Elizabeth also in detail explained how she found out how fake social media actually is in this aspect, not just Facebook but also for a big part Instagram. Elizabeth explains that there is a saying in America: "Doing it for the Gram", meaning people will just go out to take 20 to 30 pictures, of in her case in front of a waterfall, and then leave after the pictures were taken. They did not actually enjoy the view or spend time looking at the waterfall, but only took some 'selfies' in front of it to show others how good their life is. This for her was a real eye-opener as she saw how misleading it actually was, as those people did not actually enjoy the waterfall, but purely came there to take some pictures and then quickly leave again, where lots of people seem to take a picture of stuff specifically to post it on Facebook or Instagram.

Elizabeth (22) further explained that these kinds of false images can make people feel bad about themselves, as you start comparing your own life to these perfect images that you see online. Participants described feelings of being insecure, feeling inadequate and even feeling uncomfortable:

"But it could be that I felt more insecure when people… Uh... Showed their 'perfect life' so to say." (Florian, 20)

"(…) It kind of made me feel inadequate." (Julie, 25)

"Facebook was probably the major thing in making me feel depressed, because I was constantly comparing my life with everyone else's." (Nicole, 22)

"I don't know, looking at other people's photos or timelines and thinking that they had somehow more interesting lives than me and that really didn't do my self-esteem any kind of good." (Tobias, 23)

Besides the fact that it was making Julie (25) feel inadequate, her now ex-boyfriend also had a big influence on her quitting Facebook at the same time. Whereas she constantly kept comparing herself to other people, she also looked up certain people, people who she also dated in the past. He did not feel comfortable with that and made her give up Facebook in order to stay with him, as it was not doing any good to either of them.

Comparing themselves to other people on social media was thus another reason for the participants to quit. Comparing themselves did not make their lives any better, as it often lowered their self-esteem, and often the images they compared themselves with were false representations of life.

4.1.5 Addiction

Addiction was another important reason to quit for seven of the participants, where they felt like they had to take a step back and take control again of their own lives. Some of the participants explained that is partly because of the way Facebook is designed and because of Facebook's algorithms. It is designed to make people stay on as long as possible. The news feed will change whenever the page is refreshed, meaning new information will keep showing up, as well as that you can always scroll down for even more information. Through Facebook's algorithms participants had the feeling that they could spend all day on Facebook, as Facebook will always show the participants something that Facebook thinks they are interested in:

"I indeed believe that it is made to you know, that unending content, that you can keep scrolling forever, I think that has an addictive effect." (Florian, 20)

"An app or a device gets more addicting if the rewords are random. It's addicting. Because you'd never know what happens." (Simon, 22)

"The way the news feed is designed. Um… It's like it shows the most interesting posts. And then you have to scroll through and look at all the interesting posts, that's how I felt anyway." (Nicole, 22)

According to Callum (24) it is not that Facebook is made to be addicting, but it is because of the algorithms which are designed to keep people on Facebook for as long as possible. These algorithms make people stay on there and makes people come back, which is addictive, as people are curious what to see next. For Simon (22), this addiction was also the main reason he wanted to quit Facebook, as he felt he was spending too much time on his Smartphone because of it.

Being curious about what is next, or what they are missing, is related to the concept of FOMO, or the fear of missing out, as Elizabeth (22) described. Elizabeth further discussed that Facebook was a way to allow herself to not be bored. It was easy to log in while waiting in line or walking in-between classes. She kept scrolling, wanting to be updated on other's lives and trying to feel connected to her friends and not wanting to feel left out:

"I think for me it was, because I was really interested in seeing what people were up to. And I think that comes from the trend of FOMO, fear of missing out. (…) and wanting to feel like you were in the know." (Elizabeth, 22)

The fact that people could spend a long time on Facebook was also acknowledged by other participants. Participants also felt tempted to look at people's information. There is a certain urge to log into Facebook all day long:

"(,,,) the kind of mindless activity and the fact that you could stay on for a long period of time. Um... And getting kind of tempted to look at people's information that you know." (Julie, 25)

As Callum (24) discussed, the notifications you get from Facebook makes your head think and make you feel the urge to immediately log in and see what it is, in order to make the red circle with the number disappear. For Yuriy (18) and Nicole (22), this "mindless" activity made them use Facebook a lot during the day, where Yuriy would even skip making food, meaning Facebook was very difficult to escape from:

"(…) it actually made me browse all day, so I was in my bed. I just woke up, I have my telephone in the hand and I browse all the day. I don't even prepare any food." (Yuriy, 18)

"I think the news feeds started to kind of mold to my interests and it made it a bit more addictive. (…) I would check my Facebook constantly throughout the day, it was like the first thing that I looked at in the morning, the first thing I looked at before I went to sleep. And throughout the day I'd check Facebook." (Nicole, 22)

An interesting comparison was also made during the interviews, where Callum (24) compared Facebook to trash TV. Where first a comparison to TV was made where Facebook was seen as a waste of time and easy to fill time with, here it connects to the comparison of addiction.

"There is something comforting, or I guess that's not the right word, or... If you can, hah, I don't know if you have this type in the Netherlands, like trash TV." (Callum, 24)

Callum compared addiction to easy entertainment, such as reality TV or trash TV. Reality TV shows are also watched, even though they are "rubbish". It is just a way to not be bored and to have some sort of easy entertainment coming at you. This makes you as a person watch more and more of these shows because they are entertaining and comforting. He feels this is the same case with Facebook, where you will always find something entertaining, such as photos or videos, and you keep looking through these as long as possible.

So, a majority of the participants acknowledged they felt addicted to Facebook, where they would spend many hours per day scrolling through the feed and where they felt like they would miss out if they would not connect enough. Participants thus felt like taking a step back, which was also noticed by e.g. Baker and White (2011), Baumer et al (2013) and Stieger et al (2013).

4.1.6 Preferring other communication forms

A reason mentioned by five of the participants is that they also had a preference for other communication forms. First of all, three of them preferred just seeing people, and especially their friends, face-to-face and have real life conversations with them. Yuriy (18) then explained it is because then you can actually also do stuff, which to him is much better. For Simon (22) it depended on which people; with some people he would prefer to have face-to-

face conversations, however with other people he also thought it was fine to have online conversations. This probably depended on how close he was to a person as well.

"I would prefer to actually talk to people" (Elizabeth, 22)

"I have two best friends, and I want to talk to them in life. So, if I just, if I move my conversations to Facebook I won't need them too much. (…) We can do stuff together. Walk, go to the concerts and so on." (Yuriy, 18)

"I prefer face-to-face interactions, with some people. And, there are also people that I don't want to meet, and then I'm perfectly happy that I only have to deal with them on Facebook, or WhatsApp." (Simon, 22)

For Grant (25), his reason to prefer other communication forms was related to his thoughts on privacy. More participants had the same kind of reasoning as him and preferred other channels, however for them it was not a reason at all to get off Facebook. For Grant then, he discussed that he wanted to have control over the communication channel that he uses:

"I prefer encrypted communication where there is end-to-end encryption. So… My main communication channel now is e-mail, but I haven't yet implemented encryption, because I was just too busy." (Grant, 25)

Even though he prefers end-to-end encryption and that is a small reason for him to get off Facebook, he acknowledges he still does not use end-to-end encryption at the moment as well with his email. He did quit Whatsapp as well, even though it is end-to-end encrypted, as it is also owned by Facebook. As can be seen from his quote, his reason for not having end-to-end encryption right now is that he is too busy at the moment to make sure his e-mail will be private. He also acknowledged that if it was a bigger and more important reason for him, that he would have made sure it would already be end-to-end encrypted by now. Nevertheless, it is something that he wants to make sure of in the future.

Tobias (23) had a quite personal related reason to prefer other communication forms. At the moment he is a student in Fine Arts and occasionally tried posting his art on Facebook. He tried to use Facebook in a constructive manner, where he felt he could share his art receive some feedback on that. This however was not the case, meaning Facebook was not the correct platform for him to share his art and to connect. He preferred using other more proper media accounts, such as DeviantArt, to spread his art instead and get this feedback. DeviantArt gave him better experiences and thus had more purpose than Facebook did.

"Yeah, it was some, somehow disappointing to yeah... To put a lot of effort into something and then not really receiving a lot of feedback on it. And I just had better experiences with other platforms." (Tobias, 23)

Hence, five participants explained that they preferred other communication forms, with most explaining they have a preference for face-to-face conversations (Baker & White, 2011; Guo et al, 2012) and one of them another platform as he wanted to be able to share his art.

4.1.7 Taking a stance

This last reason was also named by two participants, namely the fact that they quit to take a stance. For Jorine (22) she thought it would make a statement by not having Facebook when she moved to a new town for her studies. All new people then would know already that she is not active anymore, which eventually would make it easier for her as well to settle in and to not have the same conversation over and over again where people expect you to have Facebook. For Davey (19), he says making a statement also played a role in his decision, as he felt that people too quickly assume that you will have a Facebook account and he found that a shame. He often witnesses that people will mention they will post it on Facebook, or that you could only join certain events if you would mark yourself as 'going' on a Facebook event page. Also, he explained that professors at his university often assume everyone has Facebook, as they will post certain documents on Facebook, which he then would not be able to see. Even though he has a Facebook account yet again, he often tries to make a statement that not everybody has an account by emailing the professors and asking if they could send it per e-mail instead. He wishes it would not have this monopoly effect on our everyday life, where it seems all kinds of communication these days go through Facebook

4.2 Reasons to return to Facebook

Out of the fourteen participants, five found themselves returning to Facebook, with some having the same reasons, however also having some distinct reasons. This section will discuss these reasons, the three themes that were found through analyzing the interviews.

4.2.1 Study

"Sometimes I feel quite sad that I caved in to the pressure to join the [Facebook] group." (Davey, 19)

One of the reasons discussed was the fact that their study had a connection to Facebook, which was the case for two of the participants. They explained the fact that school or classmates made a Facebook group in order to keep in contact and in order to share funny things or school related things such as articles. For Davey (19) it was mostly the reason that they posted fun things and were introducing themselves in that group in order to get to know each other when he started his study. For Nicole (22) it was also the reason that they made a Facebook group. However, instead of sharing the funny things or getting to know each other, they thought it would be easier to communicate through Facebook instead of e-mail. Even though she has Facebook now, she only uses it for that group and in order to communicate with friends through Messenger and does not post anything or adds anyone.

4.2.2 Connecting

Another reason found was the fact that the participants tried to connect to both friends and family as well as with organisations.

 "But it's also getting hard because I have friends from all over the world that I don't have any other means to communicate [with]." (Nicole, 22)

Related to connecting with friends, for Nicole (22) it was not her main reason to come back, as that was her studies, however it was so to say a side-effect. She is living abroad for her studies in Canada, even though she is originally from the Philippines, and because of that she has met friends from all over the world. Through Facebook she is able to keep in contact with them and communicate, how they are, and more, which is why for her it would be difficult to delete it again.

For Yuriy (18) it was also related to connecting with his friends and family. He too moved away from his home, not to another country but to the other side of his country Ukraine, and through Facebook he is able to connect to his relatives. He feels like right now he is not able to lose that connection as he is quite far away from them and he cannot see them face-to-face.

This means Nicole (22) and Yuriy (18) basically have the same reasons for coming back. Callum (24) also made a Facebook account again, in order to connect to his friends and family and communicate. He is also abroad, however not because of his studies, but because he is on a long-term holiday. For him, Facebook is an easy tool in order to communicate with relatives and friends at home and also to keep them posted on his whereabouts. The fact that social media is a good tool for people who live (far) away from home in order to keep in contact,

was also established by Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe (2008) and Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007)

4.2.2.2 With organisations

One participant, Julie (25), expressed that she came back as she was quite involved with certain organisations and these organisations posted events on Facebook as well as quite a lot of information. Without having Facebook, she felt that she would miss out on all these kinds of information. It made her make a new Facebook account, however by using a pseudonym while also not adding anyone nor posting anything, but only to connect to these organisations.

4.2.3 To promote

The last and third theme picked up from analyzing the interviews was to be able to promote an organization, which was the case for Davey (19). Not only did he make Facebook for his studies, but he also used it partly to promote and help an organization, even though he finds it hypocritical of himself. He was trying to make people vote no to the privacy referendum for the Dutch government. He found it hypocritical as he actually is quite against all the advertisements on Facebook and now he used it himself, however it was for a better cause. He used the subsidy money from the referendum commission to promote statuses in order to explain why people should vote no. However, as the referendum is over now, he only uses it for his study.

Concluding, the participants that relapsed did so because their study was connected to using Facebook, to connect to friends, family and orginasations, and to promote. Most of the participants also mentioned that they would most likely delete Facebook again after they will not need it anymore, as they are pretty tied to it at the moment, mostly related to the first reason of their studies.

4.3 Positive experiences after quitting Facebook

From the analysis of the interviews, four main themes were found about how the participants positively experienced leaving Facebook and how it might have positively affected their lives.

4.3.1. Feelings of contentment

Over half of the participants, ten in total, had feelings of contentment after leaving Facebook. These feelings ranged from feeling happier, relieved, more confident and peaceful,

or even "liberated" as Simon (22) said. Five of these ten agreed that they felt relieved after leaving, mostly regarding the privacy issues the participants had as a reason to quit Facebook. Since they quit, four of them felt like they do not have to worry about this anymore. As Florian (20) explains:

"A lot less data is going to Facebook, which is quite nice."

Or as Jorine (22) explains:

"I'm already happy that I don't have to worry about it anymore, especially with all these issues regarding privacy and all those things."

Vanessa (24) had a different positive experience regarding the privacy issue, where her reason to feel relieved was not related to the data Facebook had on her, but more related to the fact that her personal details were not publicly available anymore. This also made her feel confident as she faced trouble with a low self-esteem while on Facebook.

Regarding the positive effect of feeling relieved, there was also an aspect where two participants expressed that there was no obligation anymore; there was no reason to come back. For Tobias (23), he had been in a stressful period, and by leaving Facebook, which first felt like an obligation, it all became better and no longer an obligation. For Simon (22), even though he first had urges to log in when he only deactivated his account, he now felt that there was nothing to worry about anymore. Where he first was drawn back to Facebook thinking how people might be liking his pictures or what people were saying, he felt that deleting his account made him feel relieved. He knew nobody could see his account anymore, so there was no reason to pay attention to Facebook anymore.

From this it can already be seen that experiences depend on how someone is as person and what they go through in everyday life and also related to why they quit Facebook in the first place. This can be even further seen by the feeling of being more confident and being healthier, which was explained by two participants. The reason why they are the ones experiencing confidence is because they in the first place did not feel confident when using Facebook because of the constant comparison online as well as the fact of having a low self-esteem:

"I also felt a bit more confident. (…) I didn't have to like portray an image of my life and um… Constantly like update like my life online." (Vanessa, 24)

"I guess my confidence in myself has built up, I don't think about what other people say anymore." (Nicole, 22)

Hence, for Nicole (22) and Vanessa (24) Facebook made them feel more confident as they stopped comparing themselves to other people and their lives and how their life 'should' look like. Julie (25) also experienced that she stopped comparing so much as it was harder for her to look up certain people that she was curious about before, and that made her feel much happier. Julie however did not express feelings of confidence. For Tobias (23), who expressed he was learning how to compare himself less, he did express feeling more confident in that aspect.

Whereas using Facebook initially made Vanessa (24) also feel depressed, by quitting Facebook she was able to focus on her goals of becoming mentally healthier and to be less depressed and anxious regarding the fact that she kept comparing herself to others and felt like she needed this perfect life as well. And so, quitting Facebook and focusing on her goals is exactly what she did.

So, a majority of the participants explained they felt happier, more confident as their data is not online anymore as well as more confident as they do not have to compare their lives to others anymore. This therefore adds to Roberts & Koliska (2014), as it elaborates more on their described positive experiences.

4.3.2 Connecting more

Related to the reason that participants quit because they felt Facebook was disconnecting them, a positive experience some of them noticed when leaving Facebook was that they felt that they started connecting more again and have a *real* connection with people. Five of the participants experienced this.

"I actually felt like I connected more with my friends. (…) I never really uh... Initiated a conversation with them. Or they didn't initiate a conversation with me. But when I quit Facebook, I couldn't see what they were posting, so I really wanted to know what was going on in their lives, so I initiated a conversation with them." (Vanessa, 24)

As Vanessa (24) described, she felt that she started connecting more to people as she actually had to initiate contact through text or face-to-face interaction in order to be updated on people's lives. For her, it also led to seeing her friends more often in real life. This was also the case for Elizabeth (22), who explained she started reaching out more to people in order to figure out what is going on in their lives. Elizabeth then also further added that

because of this actual connection, she also felt that she was more excited for other friends' life updates, as she felt happier for these people when they shared certain news or other kinds of information, as it was not ruined by a certain Facebook post; the connections felt more genuine and real. By reaching out she felt you can get to know this as well and she felt that was a more natural way to do so. To Jorine (22) this partly was also the case, as she felt that when she saw friends again, they had much more to talk about, as you did not see it yet on Facebook and she considers that to be much better.

Grant (25) also experienced being more connected, however in a different way. It was because of his work that he felt more connected to people. He found a new job and he felt very connected to his colleagues. Through his work he also went to more social events. So, to Grant, it was work that made him feel more connected.

Even though some reached out more to their friends through text, call or initiating face-to-face conversations, for Mark (22) it was also that he actually made new friends by quitting Facebook that made him feel connected more.

Participants thus more felt more connected as they reached out more to friends and that felt more authentic, as they would find out about things in a more natural way instead of through an online platform.

4.3.3 Time spend in a different, positive way

> "Mostly also because I can just be much more productive without having to keep an eye on the whole platform." (Mark, 22)

From all the participants, three also expressed that they became more productive after they quit Facebook, where Facebook at first was making them less productive and which was a reason for them to quit. Where Mark (22) and Callum (24) did not actually explain how it made then more productive, Yuriy (18), who was the only one who noticed his grades in university got worse because of his extensive use of Facebook, noticed his grades going up again, as he spend more time studying for school instead of spending time on Facebook.

> "I became more successful at studying, that's the main point." (Yuriy, 18)

For Elizabeth, she felt that by quitting Facebook she now had more time to focus on her hobbies. From the interview, it can be said this would involve traveling for example.

> "I found that I was a little happier too because I had to focus my energy on hobbies. And I found this is what I want." (Elizabeth, 22)

Nicole (22) noticed she now had more time to do other things that she actually likes to do, and that felt better to her and she now had the ability to put her energy somewhere else. Florian (20) too noticed he now had more time focus on hobbies. In his case, this would be to focus on making music.

Florian (20) was one of the participants who expressed he also just had more time to do other stuff, he for example went outside more than he used to do before when he still used Facebook. Tobias (23) too expressed he generally just had more time as he did not spend two to three hours per day on Facebook anymore.

For Grant (25), he mostly got to focus more on his work as he is very invested in that, where he even expressed it felt like he lives at work. His dedication to work also made it easier for him to quit, as he did not think about Facebook anymore that often. Generally, he felt he had more time now to focus on his work.

Again, it can thus be seen that reasons to quit also relate to the experiences people face when leaving Facebook. Where a reason to quit is that Facebook does not make them productive, them being more productive is a positive outcome they gain from quitting. Also, they felt they spent too much time on Facebook and now they express they opened up much more (free) time to focus on other more important things for them, such as their hobbies.

4.3.4 Realization that social media is not beneficial

Even though I categorize this theme as a positive outcome, which it is, it is different compared to the other three themes above. Whereas it was found that Generation Y is addicted to social media and sees its usage as a high priority (Cabral, 2011), by quitting Facebook participants took back that control and found that it really is not that much of a priority; they can live well without it and do not need it.

4.3.4.1 Social media not a necessity
"It wasn't like I was losing something that big." (Callum, 24)

Four of the participants felt that they did not miss anything after leaving Facebook, where it did not feel like a big loss according to Callum (24). Even though research has been connected to challenges of missing out on content (Baumer et al, 2015), participants at the same time also felt they were not missing anything. As Jorine (22) explained, she does not miss anything at all, as she still has good friends and a social life where she still gets invited to parties. For her she cannot think of any reason as to why she should still be on Facebook.

To Simon (22), it felt like he did not miss anything because he also did not post anything himself anymore and people were not able to look at his profile, which means there was also no communication possible. For Davey (19) it was also that he just did not miss anything about it, as he already started using it much less before he eventually quit than he did at the beginning when he made his Facebook account.

Two of the participants even felt that they had no need for social media anymore after quitting Facebook. Elizabeth (22) discussed that the longer she was away from social media and time wasters in general, she felt like she also no longer had the need to use them anymore. Jorine (22) also felt that life without social media is fine, where she for example still has good contact with friends without social media. As she describes, it is not a "necessity of life" to have Facebook or other social media channels, and she can live fine without them.

4.3.4.2 Worrying less

For two participants it also felt like they did not have to worry that much anymore, while related to two different reasons. For Elizabeth (22) it was related to the fact that she did not have to worry anymore about what she looked like. First, it felt like a competition online who had the best life, but after quitting Facebook there was no need for competition anymore. She stopped sending pictures of herself to other people and stopped caring too much about the way she looks:

"Why do I care what somebody's opinion of me is that I haven't talked to? Or that they're not in my life anymore." (Elizabeth, 22)

For Callum (24) it felt like it was "one less thing to think about", which felt pretty good to him and he could forget about it.

4.4 Negative experiences and challenges after quitting Facebook

When analyzing the interviews, seven main themes on how the participants negatively experienced leaving Facebook were picked up as well as some challenges they faced.

4.4.1 Missing out on content

The negative experience as well as a challenge that most of the participants faced was missing out on different types of content. In total, eleven of the participants thought this to be a negative experience and they experienced this in five different ways.

4.4.1.1 Friends, family, and interests

"I don't have any frame of reference for what they're up to." (Elizabeth, 22)

"(…) I kind of felt out of the loop of things." (Nicole, 22)

The most mentioned missing content the participants discussed was the fact that they missed out on content posted by their friends, family, studies and/or other interests they have. For Elizabeth (22) and Nicole (22) they felt like they did not really know what people were up to anymore and therefore felt like they were not up to date with was going on in their friends' and family's lives.

Jorine (22) mostly felt that she was missing pictures her friends or family would post on Facebook, for example from holiday pictures. Jorine was also the only one who expressed this.

Simon (22) felt that he missed out on some of his interests, as he is/was quite invested in the Metal scene, and since deactivating his account he finds it hard to follow these bands and feels he is missing out on content from it. For Davey (19), he makes electronic music and he was in a Facebook group with other people with the same interest where they could post their own music in order to get some feedback. He felt he was missing out a bit as he was not able to see that anymore and get feedback that way. However, he also explained there are other ways to still get feedback, as you could always send an e-mail to someone.

4.4.1.2 Events and parties

"People have been forgetting to invite me to some things, cause they will be like 'oh, I've made a Facebook event and I invited people and just forgot about you'." (Elizabeth, 22)

Five participants felt that they were left out of parties and other type of events because they did not have a Facebook account anymore. According to Elizabeth (22), friends will use Facebook as a way to organize an event and there invite their friends, and when you do not have Facebook you are not between their friend list anymore, which makes it easier for them to forget about you. She found that if they actually want her to come to a party now, they have to actually tell her that there is a party. Tobias (23) also acknowledged he is sometimes unaware of certain parties happening and he further added to this that sometimes he went to a party and while trying to get in he was not able to, as they only allowed people in if they used Facebook to mark themselves as 'going' in the event page. However, he said he went to one of the organizers to explain the situation and then they would still let him in, which is why it is just a small problem in his eyes. Mark (22) also noticed that most parties were organized on

Facebook and therefore he did not get any notification regarding these parties. In order to then find out if there was something planned, he would really have to talk to his friends, meaning he noticed he was invited to a lot less parties than before.

Julie (25) also felt like she was missing out, but related to local events instead, and Jorine (22) felt the same way, where Jorine further added that is not that big of a problem, as she would also find out in another way. For Callum (24) it was also more related to the fact that certain dinners were organized through Facebook.

4.4.1.3 Missing out during conversations

Participants also felt they missed out while having conversations with friends. As Mark (22) explained, you are not able to talk to friends that much online anymore, so you have to plan meet-ups to go somewhere and talk. He felt that whenever he would meet up with friends and drink somewhere, he was missing out on certain conversations, where his friends still communicate through Facebook and Whatsapp, which he both deleted. Certain conversations that happened there, he has no knowledge of, and that made him realize how much he actually misses.

Florian (20) even went as far as describing himself to be an "outsider". He acknowledged that in the beginning this was quite a problem, but the longer he was off Facebook, the less he cared about it and he would find out that information in different ways. He found out that when people are important to him and he is important to them, they will find another way to communicate with him.

4.4.1.4 Birthdays

Normally, as most people add their birthday to their Facebook account, Facebook informs you about upcoming birthdays. Davey (19) discussed he missed out on certain birthdays. He says it might sound like something small, however Facebook usually notifies you when it is someone's birthday, and now since he left Facebook he does not get this notification anymore. However, even though he does miss this kind of content, he also said he would be able to fix that with a birthday calendar. As Florian (20) further discusses, he found it quite sad that sometimes he forgets the birthday from one of his best friends, from which he did not add his birthday to his calendar or from who he did not know his birthday by head. Then he would later hear from another friend that it was his birthday, and he would feel quite bad about that.

4.4.1.5 Politically

Grant (25) was the only one who missed certain political content, which can already be related back to him also being sensitive regarding the fact that Facebook censored some political parties in the Czech Republic. Since leaving Facebook, he misses content posted by political representatives that he used to follow on Facebook. Consequently, he felt like he became less informed regarding politics, even though he is quite a political person.

Whereas previous research did notice the challenge that people often feel like they are missing out (Baumer et al, 2015), for them it was mostly discussed that they felt like they were missing out on posts related to their friends and family, or missed sharing anything themselves online. For the participants in this study, only Jorine (22) felt like she was missing pictures of her friends and family, and all the others had different reasons of feeling missing out, such as certain events, birthdays, and face-to-face conversations, which in Baumer et al (2015) only was noticed in later stadiums of quitting.

4.4.2 Time spend on other (social media) websites

The next mentioned challenge seven of the participants faced was that instead of spending so much time on Facebook, which most of them acknowledged they did, they started spending this time on other social media sites. Six out of these seven also had addiction as a reason to quit using Facebook.

> "It's so easy whenever you're bored, just to log in and just like click through a bunch of posts and it's faster than real life. And... So that's Reddit which pretty much replaced Facebook." (Elizabeth, 22)

Elizabeth (22) explained that she is not used to feeling bored, and therefore Facebook used to be the place she would turn to whenever she was bored, to scroll through the news feed and see what people were doing. Quitting Facebook then made this hard, as she had to find something else to replace that with. For her, she ended up using Reddit much more, and Reddit is also very easy to "get sucked into", as it also contains a bunch of mindless content while still not always gaining a lot of knowledge. Florian (20), Julie (25) and Yuriy (18) also started using Reddit more after quitting Facebook, meaning their time was also spent differently. Yuriy however discussed he still found it to be better than Facebook. For Callum (24) Twitter replaced Facebook and Yuriy and Florian also added Youtube to their list.

Simon (22) also discussed he could not stand boredom, where he often grabs his phone when he does not have anything else to do. Simon wishes he would be able to sit in a train and do nothing, however he is still always tempted to look at his phone:

"I realized quickly that deleting Facebook isn't solving the problem that I have. The time that was spend on Facebook is now mostly spend on news sites."

Simon replaced Facebook by going to news websites. He discussed it to be "a process", as his problem still is not solved where he still spends too much time on phone whenever he tries to distract himself.

These results correspond with Baumer et al (2015) who also found that people after a while would start spending their time on other platforms. Here however, it seemed like they directly started spending their time on different social media platforms. Hence, it seems Facebook is not the only one to blame where participants themselves started spending that time elsewhere.

4.4.3 Loss of contact

"But with my friends... Yeah, it kind of… Sadly... Brought me apart from them and like, I wasn't that super close to them anyway." (Nicole, 22)

Six participants also experienced a loss of contact. For Grant (25), he lost some connections, but he did not consider them to be close friends. His closest friends would move to other communication platforms in order to communicate with him. The connections he did lose, he considered those to be more from acquaintances. Even though he does experience a loss of contact, he considers it to not be the worst thing, as there are other ways to contact close friends as well.

Other participants also felt the same way. Nicole (22) felt that the people that she did lose contact with, were not very close friends of her anyway, even though she did consider it to be sad that they drifted apart. Tobias (23) felt the exact same way as Nicole. For Mark (22), who also felt sad, as he started missing quite a lot of people, his friends did not feel the need to move to another platform. He also understands though, that some people might not have the time to move to another platform. For Nicole, Mark and Tobias it made them sad, but Vanessa (24) felt quite bad about it in the beginning while she became more distant with some people.

Julie (25) used to use Facebook as a way to communicate with the people who were not local, and just because she deleted Facebook these connections suffered and/or ended. Initially this made her quite upset, as she did not understand why people would not find

another way to communicate with her. However, she considered it to be for the best, as apparently those people make this small thing, leaving Facebook, impact their relationship with her and she found new connections with people who do not mind staying in touch through other platforms.

Feelings of disconnectedness were closely related to this loss of contact. Julie (25) and Mark (22) both explained they felt a bit disconnected as their relationships with friends changed. As Julie (25) explained, her relationships changed or just completely disappeared and that made her feel disconnected. For Mark (22) too, he felt disconnected as there was a loss of contact, as his friends were still on Facebook and would not move to another platform.

For Elizabeth (22) it was related to the fear of missing out, which made her feel disconnected, as now she had no clue as to what people were up to anymore and felt like she might be missing out on some big news.

As Roberts and Koliska (2014) and Baumer et al (2015) discussed, people also feel disconnected when quitting Facebook. This is partly because they feel that now something is missing in their lives, as social media and smartphones take a big part in our lives. This was also the case for my participants, who felt disconnected because they missed their connections and who missed content posted online.

4.4.4 Feelings of struggle

Four of the participants also experienced some feelings of struggle, such as anxiety, isolation and tension.

> "I was worried before about what it meant on other people's perceptions of me. (…) Maybe other people would think because I deleted Facebook and they couldn't find me that I was dead or (…) that there was something seriously wrong with me. Or that my life was just so boring (…)." (Elizabeth, 22)

Elizabeth (22) first already experienced comparing herself too much on social media online and now she felt that by quitting Facebook, people might think less of her as a person. She feels that by quitting Facebook, she might turn irrelevant to others or others might think she does not exist, where some might not even remember who she was anymore. This increased some feelings of anxiety for her. Nicole (22) too felt like she was putting herself in an "anxiety corner", where she felt locked up while not communicating with her friends. This led her to feel isolated. Nicole (22) felt isolated and lonely because most of her friends did not live close by as she lived in the sub-urbs. When quitting Facebook, she felt she did not really

talk much to her friends anymore and as she lived far away, it also was not easy to visit fiends quickly, as her mom also did not like her going out on her own. Now she even moved to a different country, which made her even be apart from them more as she felt she was cutting herself off from her friends and that made her feel lonelier, especially as she also is not good at making friends in the 'offline' world. Vanessa (24) also felt a bit alone and isolated as she did not know what was going on and as she felt she was missing out.

Callum (24) felt some tension between him and his friends and/or family, as some people did not realize he had actually quit Facebook, as he did not notify anyone that he was leaving. Some people expected him to reply to their messages which he was unable to do, and he acknowledged that that probably was not a nice feeling for his friends, and therefore he noticed some tension, but not anxiety or real isolation.

Feelings of anxiety and isolation were also acknowledged by Roberts and Koliska (2014), which according to them mostly comes from the fact that people feel like they are missing out on content or because family and friends wondered where they had gone, which was the case for Vanessa (24) and Callum (24). For Elizabeth (22) however it was because she first compared herself a lot and now thought she might be irrelevant, and for Nicole (22) she felt isolated as she had less ways of connecting with her friends as she lives far away.

4.4.5 Urges to log in

Some of the participants also explained they actually had urges to log in, which was also acknowledged by Roberts and Koliska (2014). In total, three participants experienced this. As Elizabeth (22) is not used at feeling bored, she had urges sometimes to log back into Facebook and to see what people were up to, which to her was "really really hard", but then she replaced that with other social media platforms in the end. For Simon (22) it was mostly the urge to see what people were actually up to and what had happened and how they are doing. Vanessa (24) even explained that these urges to log in made her feel a bit weak as she realized the power Facebook had over her.

4.4.6 Other people's expectations

What two participants also struggled with, was the fact that people often expect and assume you as person to have a Facebook account. For Callum (24) this was related mostly to the fact that people expect you to be contactable on Facebook and to be able to message them there and to reply. For Elizabeth (22) too, she felt people often just assumed you have a Facebook account. However, she added to this that it is not only people, but also websites

such as AirBnB, who she said often prefer you to have some kind of social media account to probably verify you are an actual person. Without social media though, this makes it harder for them to check if you are not "a bot", as she says.

4.5 Rules to reduce social media use

4.5.1 Limiting time

4.5.1.1 Setting time limits and using social media differently

Half of the participants felt that they became more aware of the time they spend on social media and how they spend this time at the same time. According to Florian (20) this does take some discipline in order to actually do that and to become aware of his online behavior:

"That I'm aware of what I'm doing and how I feel about it, and how much time I spend doing it." (Florian, 20).

The participants had different ways to reduce this time after they became aware of how much time they had spent. For Grant (25), he explained he for example had cut down his Reddit use already by 90%. As Grant is quite a political person, he used to use Reddit for politics as well, but he stopped doing that and now uses it more for the professional sub-Reddits which take up much less time.

Callum (24) then for example is trying to set time limits, where he will not look at it anymore after a certain time, say 8 or 9PM, so he will not be too distracted anymore:

"So I'm not kind of in bed using it. Not using it when I wake up, like checking news or whatever. Um… Not using it when I'm eating food (…)"

Related to this, Tobias (23) also tried keeping his Internet use within a certain time frame, so he will not experience the negative effects it can have on him.

Callum (24) also tried setting a limit of pieces of content he is allowed to look at per day, for example only 10 videos or 5 articles per day. This way he is still able to get the "positive aspects" from social media, but he would not go "overboard". With setting a limit, he feels like he only looks at the articles he *really* wants to look at and therefore does not waste time anymore. Jorine (22) for the most can agree with this, as she is trying to focus on only using it when it is actually useful to her and interesting, where she thus feels like she is not wasting time anymore.

4.5.1.2 Apps to track time

Julie (25) has not actually limited her time much yet, as she has other priorities at the moment, but she did express that time limits might work for her in the future as well as something like an App that could help her in the future, where her time on her phone will be

tracked. Furthermore, she also explained that some Apps could also block certain websites at a certain time of the day, which also could be helpful, as she will not always be able to use them then anymore. One participant also actually explained having such an App in order to track the time she spent on her phone or on certain apps. For Elizabeth (22), she downloaded the App called *Quality Time*. For her this is quite an eye opener, as it will show her exactly how much she spends on her phone and also on certain apps.

4.5.1.3. Uninstalling apps and deleting accounts

"So I started to take steps to reduce that time (…) and I started to delete apps that I don't use." (Simon, 22)

Another way to limit their social media use is by quitting other platforms and by deleting apps. For Simon (22), he deleted each App that he just did not use anymore and for Elizabeth (22), she has uninstalled every app that she considered to be a time-waster, such as Instagram. Davey (19) added to this, that he for most of his social media accounts deleted the apps, so he will spend less time on it during the day, which means he was able to be more productive for his studies. Tobias (23) also had such a reason:

"I tried to see to test first which platforms were helping me and… I somehow progressively deleted those that didn't really help me. Or that I felt like were keeping me stuck somewhere rather than helping my progress."

He tried to see which platforms would be helpful to put his content on, as he tries to share his art on social media as well, and he deleted those that did not help him.

Jorine (22) also quit other social media accounts after she quit Facebook, namely Twitter and Instagram. Grant (25) too deleted Instagram at the same time as he quit Facebook, as to him Instagram was not an easy tool, where his account suddenly followed a lot of people and it is almost impossible to unfollow all those people, he said. Also, he deleted Whatsapp as it is owned by Facebook as well.

Uninstalling apps and deleting accounts in a sense could be related to going off-line altogether, which was established by Morrison and Gomez (2014). However, the participatns here still use the Internet and other useful websites, but they *are* reducing their technology use more in order to reduce wasting time.

4.5.2 Cold turkey stops

Cold turkey stops also seemed helpful to a few participants. Elizabeth (22) has tried cold turkey stops before, during her holiday, and as they have worked before for her, she expressed it could be useful again once she finishes her semester at university. She explained that by putting away her laptop and phone for that time, she can actually focus on herself and try to learn new skills, which to her would be the "ultimate goal" in the end.

Yuriy (18) explained that for him the best way would also be to take a few months off the Internet, without using it at all, which is relatable to doing a cold turkey. However, for him too it is not possible at the moment, due to his "professional development".

Florian (20) agrees that cold turkey might be the best way for him to limit his time. He discusses that when you are disciplined, it is possible to keep control on how often you use social media or the Internet in general. However, he feels like he is not that disciplined, so for him the best way to quit would be to stop cold turkey after he notices social media does not do anything for him anymore.

For the participants thus, it is not something they are doing now, but would see themselves doing in the future, even though Elizabeth (22) already did it once before. This could be related back to quitting technology (almost) all at once, as was described my Morrison and Gomez (2014).

4.5.3 Technological intervention

"I really have to invest in a brick-phone and leave my phone at home." (Simon, 22)

At the extreme we find the only participant who went as far as to use a technological intervention. Simon (22) discussed that his dream would be to go back to a brick-phone where he could leave his smartphone at home during the day. This way he could still access Whatsapp during the morning and evening, but not during the day. Something he also did was quitting his phone service. By quitting his phone service, he hopes that when it has ended he will spend less time on the Internet and on his phone in general as he will only have prepaid calling then and hopefully will not have the urge to check his phone all the time. This technological intervention was also acknowledged by Morrison and Gomez (2014).

4.6 Opinions towards social media and the participants' behavior

4.6.1 General opinions towards other social media

Here, a majority of the participants also explained how they perceive other social media, meaning how they regard and think about other social media.

4.6.1.1 Reddit

That Reddit was the most discussed platform was not surprising, as the participants have all been found through the use of Reddit. The perception towards Reddit was discussed by eight of the participants. A contradiction was found between the participants on how they look at Reddit.

First, participants found Reddit to be much more useful than, as you can actually learn something there. As Florian (20) discusses, Reddit can also be used to obtain information from or to catch up on news, and in that sense it is used productively. Or as Gust (17) explains, you also have the chance to actually learn something from Reddit. For Yuriy (18), he learned a lot about what the Internet does with our brains, as there was a sub-Reddit recommending a certain book regarding that issue. As a user, you can "tailor it [Reddit] to your own interests" as Simon (22) explains, and to which Vanessa (24) agrees.

Grant (25) also explains that Reddit would be more difficult to leave for him than Facebook, as Reddit has much more potential. Through Reddit, he is able to see what is new in his field regarding machine learning, artificial intelligence and programming language. He calls these "specialized sub-Reddits".

Related to privacy, Reddit is also seen to be saver according to Gust (17), as Reddit is way more personal than Facebook. On Reddit, you do not need to enter your personal details when making an account, it is pretty anonymous, meaning the data they gather is much less personal, which Vanessa (24) and Simon (22) agree to. Simon further adds that "the person isn't the focus", and as Davey (19) explains, "it is nothing personal".

Second, Reddit was also seen as a timewaster according to Elizabeth (22), and an "echo chamber" of Facebook as Grant (25) explains, as there is also easy content on there to spend time mindlessly and they also remove certain communities from their website, just as Facebook censored certain political parties. Callum (24) explains that Reddit might even be worse to him than Facebook, as for him it takes up even more time as there is much more content to be found and those are more entertaining as well, even though he also explained that content to be "better", but still a waste of time.

As Elizabeth (22) perfectly sums up, it depends on the way you use Reddit, meaning it has multiple potentials, where it would be okay to use if you go there "with the intent of looking something and reading something", or in other words to learn something, but not when you are bored and looking to entertain herself. Thus, there is a contradictory attitude towards Reddit, where it depends on the user and how the participants use it on whether it causes harm or not. This most probably applies to Facebook as well, but this is something they became more aware of after quitting Facebook, where they still think of Facebook to be worse, mostly related to the privacy issues.

4.6.1.2 Instagram

Instagram was perceived differently, where a few have deleted their Instagram account because Facebook took it over, others think Instagram is a very different platform than Facebook, or where one thought it was even more fake than Facebook. The latter was the case for Elizabeth (22), who felt pictures on Instagram were even more staged and fake, which made her feel jealous once again or feel left out. Florian (20) explained he had deleted Instagram after Facebook bought it. For Grant (25) it was one of his reasons to delete Instagram, but also the fact that his Instagram got accessed by some malicious software as he explained, which started following thousands of people. Vanessa (24) explained she actually deleted Instagram before she deleted Facebook, as on Facebook she at first still had connections with friends, which she did not have on Instagram.

Jorine (22) however had an opposite opinion, where she expressed that she likes using Instagram and she uses it more like some kind of a blog. Instagram is not used to stay in contact with friends, she only follows some people she finds interesting or inspiring, and she considers that to be very different than what Facebook was used for. Nicole (22) agrees to this and she too feels that she can follow certain accounts that she likes. As she is interested in design and visual things, Instagram is a great platform to use. For Simon (22) it is the tattoo scene that he follows on Instagram, by also explaining he does not add any friends.

Mark (22) does not use it in the same way, as he only uses it to link back to his own website, as he occasionally photographs certain people. This way he makes it possible for people to tag him on Instagram and they then will be linked back to his website.

A small amount of the participants also never felt like using Instagram, as it just did not spoke to them.

It can be seen that the participants overall have very different opinions towards Instagram, where the ones that do use Instagram are more like passive users and solely follow certain

accounts that are of interest to them, but they do not actively post anything themselves. A few have also deleted Instagram after Facebook bought Instagram and one finds Instagram to be even worse than Facebook.

4.6.1.3 Youtube

Just as with Reddit, Elizabeth (22) considers Youtube to be a time-waster too. For her, it all seems to be connected that again, Youtube is not useful and it only shows even more how fake social media is. She discussed vlogs from people that would show how they would take their pictures for Instagram and she considered this to be a real waste of time. Even though Callum (24) agrees to the fact that you can waste quite a lot of time on Youtube, he also considers the platform to be very entertaining.

Others however have explained that Youtube could actually be a good tool. According to Florian (20), Youtube could definitely be of worth, as you can also gain information from the all its videos, and it is interesting. For Yuriy (18) he also is able to use Youtube as a way to practice English, meaning he can "learn new skills", and thus actively use it.

4.6.1.4 Whatsapp

Even though there are questions whether Whatsapp is also considered to be part of social media, it was interesting to see their attitudes towards Whatsapp as well, as Facebook also bought Whatsapp.

For Elizabeth (22), even though Facebook took it over, she has more faith in Whatsapp as it is end-to-end encrypted. Florian (20) however expressed he would preferably use Signal as messenger App, as it is an open source. Nevertheless, because of social pressures he is basically forced to still use Whatsapp as everyone in the Netherlands uses it as communication platform. This pressure is also acknowledged by Simon (22), as he explains "there's really no way… Away from Whatsapp."

Even though Mark (22) also prefers using Signal, he explains that Whatsapp at least does not "push" advertisements, and in a sense, is much more useful than Facebook was. He discussed Whatsapp is not addicting as you do not see an endless feed of messages. For Davey (19), who also has a preference for Signal, it is not per se that he explains feeling a certain pressure to use Whatsapp, but he still uses it as not everyone has Signal.

4.6.1.5 Twitter

Even though Grant (25) finds Twitter to be a good tool to learn more about his field regarding machine learning and artificial intelligence, he does not use it too much. For Jorine

(22), it feels like Twitter is a bit more professional than Facebook regarding following the news. Related to news, Davey (19) keeps an eye on Twitter to keep track of certain organisations, such as some political parties. Even though these participants explain their usage of Twitter, they also discuss they barely actually use it.

Overall then, the way participants perceive other social media seem to differ quite a lot between the participants. Some might think they are time wasters much like Facebook, but others also consider them to be more useful as they could actually learn things from other platforms, or they are considered to more interesting.

4.6.2 Being cautious about how to use social media

After quitting and realizing how social media can affect their lives, five participants explained they became more cautious on how they use social media.

"I believe that there are ways to use Facebook, Instagram, social media or technology in their healthy ways, but it takes a lot of discipline." (Elizabeth, 22)

Elizabeth explains that with moderation, she would be able to use social media in small amounts, as she believes small amounts are not harmful, but it would take a lot of discipline. Florian (19) adds that very much depends on how you actually use social media, on whether it will be harmful yes or no, as you can also get useful information from it. As long as you get useful information then, he seems to think that it will not be harmful.

Where Tobias (23) was first optimistic about how to use social media, it turned pessimistic as to him they did not seem useful for his professional intentions, and now he is rather pessimistic again. He seems to be more hopeful that with some caution he might be able to use it again, as long as he has professional intentions towards it.

Callum (24) was a participant who really put emphasize on using it actively or passively. After he noticed how other platforms take up as much time as Facebook, it made him rethink on the way to use the Internet. He asks himself the question as to whether he is "trying to pass time" or if he is "trying to actually do something productive". Facebook to him was very passive, as you were just shown certain content, but Youtube could be used actively as you still can learn new skills. For Gust (17) it would be to use it productively as well, where you still have a chance to learn something new.

Thus, participants seem to be more cautious and aware now on how they should use social media, in order for it to not do any harm to their personal lives, which was also one of the positive outcomes after quitting Facebook.

4.6.3 Realization (when getting older)

"Everything is a growing and learning experience and I do wish I could learn my lesson faster with a lot of social media or the amount of time I spend on my computer or the Internet." (Elizabeth, 22)

Another attitude six of the participants had was that they felt they started realizing and being aware more the older they got. What they started realizing differed per participant. According to Elizabeth (22) she learned what the right things were the older she got, even though she wishes she would have found out sooner. Nevertheless, she still feels "ahead of the curve" as she is only one of the relatively few people who are realizing how much time they actually waste on the Internet and she is trying to change that since she realized. Related to feeling "ahead of the curve", Simon (22) described that he is now more aware that the "momentum is changing", where it is becoming "cool" to not have Facebook, as you are part of a minority.

Gust (17) also explained that when you are young, you do not really pay attention to what social media do and that only with time he started noticing the importance of privacy. For Mark (22), his realization only came after Facebook started sharing data with Whatsapp. For him that was the reason to deepen himself into privacy issues and to look for alternatives, as he saw how bad social media organisations actually are.

Facebook in general and other social media as well seemed to only harm people more according to Vanessa (24), which she did not realize at first. Her view then became more negative after she realized the following:

"Like, especially like surrounding the idea that we have to be perfect or we have to portray a life that is perfect in line."

This idea of always having to show a perfect life was causing more harm than it did any good.

Jorine (22) explained that she became more aware that Facebook is just a phase for her, just as Hyves was, and that it someday will disappear again, just as Hyves also disappeared after a while in the Netherlands. Everything eventually becomes less popular and will be old news.

It thus seems that growing older made the participants more aware of how harmful social media actually are or can be and that social media only have a temporary existence in their lives.

4.6.4 Social media as a positive tool

"I'm not against social media or something." (Davey, 19)

Three participants also felt social media could be used as a positive tool. Davey (19) explained he also notices the positive effects social media can have, such as the possibility to reach people and to keep in contact with people who live far away.

For Florian (20) it was more related to his hobbies that he noticed how social media can be a good tool, as without Facebook he would have never been in the band he is in now. He still has Youtube and Reddit and explains that social media can still be a good tool to get your information from or your news. The most important things he mentions is that it all depends on how you actually use it.

Lastly, Elizabeth (22) explained it could be used as a tool to "market yourself" or "present yourself", for example on LinkedIn, even though she does not want to do this herself.

Hence, whereas participants firstly discussed Facebook to be something bad and perceived other channels to be mostly the same, even though depending on the way it could be used, they also felt social media can be used as a positive tool. It mostly seemed to be depend on the features of the social media channel, whether it could be used productively or whether it was of big interest to them, as well as the way they used it themselves.

Summary

To conclude the whole chapter, by analyzing the interviews from the participants who have all used Facebook in the past, seven reasons were analyzed to leave Facebook, after having semi-structured in-depth interviews with fourteen participants in order to delve into the importance of these reasons as well. Even though a few participants came back to Facebook, it was not really out of personal preference as it was more of a necessity. When looking at how the participants experienced leaving Facebook, they were mostly related to the reasons of quitting Facebook. Participants mostly faced challenges and negative experiences at the beginning, however they argued that to be less relevant after time went on and quitting seemed to be worth it. The most explained rule to limit their social media use, was by limiting their time spend on social media sites. Regarding the opinions towards other social media they

seem to have become more aware of the effects of social media after quitting Facebook, partly looking at different social media in the same way, however they started using it differently, meaning not only Facebook was to blame for their issues.

5. Conclusion and discussion

<u>5.1 Conclusion</u>

The goal of this research was to (1) discover the reasons to quit or take a break from Facebook, (2) discover the reasons for relapsing to Facebook, (3) explore the experiences of leaving Facebook and (4) to explore the opinions towards (other) social media after leaving Facebook as well as to explore the rules that have been applied to reduce social media use. 14 interviews were conducted with young (previous) Facebook users aged 16-25, who were selected using Reddit. Through a thematic analysis, the interviews were analyzed and compared to each other in order to answer the research questions and to see what possible relations were between these questions.

Regarding the reasons to quit, there were quite diverse reasons for participants to leave, but also overlapping reasons were found, ranging from banality to taking a stance. Most of the reasons have been established in other research as well, where this study adds more detail regarding the motivations behind these reasons. A few reasons however stood out.

For participants, banality seemed to be the most important factor for leaving Facebook, where Facebook was considered to be a waste of time, which was also established by e.g.: Baumer et al (2013), Stieger et al (2013) and Schoenebeck (2014). Related to banality, inauthentic relationships seemed to be an important theme to leave (e.g. Baumer et al, 2013, Stieger et al, 2013), where participants felt that Facebook was not connecting them to friends. This does not relate to the idea that Facebook has the positive effect of fostering relationships and enhancing relational ties (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann, 2011), both strong and weak ones (Granovetter, 1973). Participants found that Facebook connections were not true connections. Even though it sometimes felt like the participants got to know people more through Facebook and therefore broadened their social network (Granovetter, 1973), actually reaching out to friends or family online was often limited. Relationships therefore stayed on the surface.

Privacy was another reason that stood out, where participants felt that Facebook held too much information on them, that they do not have control over their own data (e.g.: Baumer et al, 2013; Stieger et al, 2013), that they mistreat the users' information (Baumer et al, 2013) and that Facebook is not an open source. When talking about Facebook not being an open source, some participants also expressed the desire for a new open social media platform. Something interesting was also mentioned by the participants, where they felt as if they have no control over their data and they discussed that they never gave permission to Facebook to

use their data. In actuality however, they did give permission when they signed up for Facebook, as they agreed to the terms and conditions. It seems many participants, even though worrying about privacy, did not consider this fact.

It was also analyzed that Facebook did not represent real life, where people often show their 'perfect' life, which made participants feel they had to compete against these images. Participants also used very strong words, such as "false" or "misleading", which indicate that this reason was strongly felt. Previous research did state that social media was not real life (e.g. Baumer et al, 2013, Stieger et al, 2013), but more related to the fact that it did not establish authentic relationships or real connections. Surprisingly, comparison to others' happy lives was not included in previous research, but here it was a reason for quite a few participants making it a disbelief that is has not been covered yet before. As explained, individuals can re-create and reinvent their identities (Zhao, Grasmuch & Martin, 2008), where they often do not portray their true self, but a desired self. This desired self could be connected to people always wanting to show their happy events in life, which eventually made the participants compare themselves too much to others and which eventually became a reason for them to quit.

When looking at how the positive and negative experiences and challenges relate back to the reasons of quitting, quite some overlap can be found. When looking at the positive experiences, feelings of contentment (Roberts & Koliska, 2014) were felt by a majority of the participants for different reasons. Five of these participants who also voiced privacy as a reason to quit, explained they felt relieved as none of their data went to Facebook anymore. Two who voiced that Facebook included fake representations of real life explained they now feel more confident as they do not have to worry about this online competition anymore. Their self-esteem also relatedly got better after they stopped this comparison. Also, inauthentic relationships were part of the reasons to quit, and through quitting, participants felt they started connecting more again to their friends. By connecting more, they might also be broadening their social capital (Bourdieu, 1985), however without the use of social media. As positive experiences related to the reasons of quitting Facebook have rarely been discussed in research, this study adds a lot of new knowledge and therefore was mostly data-driven. It seems that quitting Facebook therefore definitely helped bettering the participants and the way they feel.

Related to the negative experiences, it was less connected to the reasons, where participants felt like they were missing out on events, birthdays, and friends' information, noticed a loss of contact, also felt disconnected, had feelings of struggles such as anxiety, had

trouble coping with people's expectations and started spending their time on other websites. What can be said from the latter, that they started spending their time on other Internet sites, is that their problems were not solved yet. Even though Baumer et al (2013) also acknowledged this challenge, they found that it only happened after a while that people started spending their time on other websites. Here, there was no time relation, as it seemed the participants in this study almost immediately started doing this. Where addiction was a reason for them to leave, it seems their problem was not all to blame on Facebook, as they started wasting their time on other social media after they quit Facebook. It seems to depend more on the way they use the Internet in general and on their personality as well, as some participants expressed that they are unable to not do anything and therefore grab their phone out of boredom. Also, Baumer et al (2013) only noticed that participants felt like they were missing out on content posted by their family and friends, or that they missed posting content themselves. However, here only one participant acknowledged that, where the other participants expressed other reasons for missing out, such as missing out on events. Here it was thus partly data-driven again.

Contradictory to feeling more connected, participants also felt a loss of contact and felt more disconnected after quitting. Nevertheless, they expressed this to be just a small issue. It could be that they first felt disconnected, but more connected after they had quit for a while. Related to this loss of contact, it was often mentioned that participants did not consider these to be real friends, but more like acquaintances, or their weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). As described by Grant (25), good friends, or the stronger ties (Granovetter, 1973), would find another way to still connect to him.

After quitting Facebook and as a consequence of the experiences and feelings they went through after quitting, some participants expressed that they became more cautious on how to use social media. They started looking at the reason why they use it and how they are using it; whether they go there for a cause or whether it is for entertainment, or in other words; actively or passively. They are aware it does take a lot of discipline. They also explained that the realization how social media impacts us, only comes at a later stage when you are getting older, as you do not really think about the impacts when you are younger. Also, they were not fully negative towards all social media, as they do acknowledge the positive impacts it could have, for example to keep in contact with friends and family when abroad, or to learn new skills. Regarding other platforms and what their opinions are towards those, it seemed to depend on the platform and the way they could use it. Some were explained to have a more useful effect, such as Youtube or Reddit, where you could actually learn something new, and

Instagram was seen as much less related to having your private life online, where most were passive users. The ones using Instagram used it more for their own interests.

After quitting and noticing the experiences though, participants have tried to limit their use in multiple ways, as they still feel they spend too much time on the Internet or on other social media sites. These rules connect to limiting their time by setting time limits, using apps to track time, uninstalling apps or deleting accounts, try cold turkey stops, and even technological interventions (Morrison & Gomez, 2014). Where Morrison & Gomez (2014) also explained certain rules to reduce this time, this study adds more detail to the different ways of doing so. Morrison & Gomez (2014) discussed limiting time as in time limits, but did not establish the fact that it could also be reduced by setting an article limit for example, in order to only look at what you actually want to look at.

Related to the fact why some participants have come back to Facebook, they explained their studies to be the most important reason, where their university would use Facebook as a communication tool. Also, some moved to a different country, meaning that Facebook would be an easy way to keep in contact with their friends and family at home. When thinking back at the positive impacts Facebook can have, this is related to enhancing social ties and to keep in contact with friends. Yet still, first these participants felt the reason to quit, partly because it was disconnecting them from their friends and family. The question then remained as to why they felt the need to now use it again to keep in contact if they first felt it was not a way to connect. Looking at the participants who started using it again to connect, all three participants moved away from their homes, to another country or to the other side of a country, meaning it would be almost impossible to meet up with friends or family face-to-face. Therefore, as they moved to another country, they remade a Facebook account, as it would be impossible to see their friends or family face-to-face, meaning Facebook would be the option to stay in contact. This was also established by Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe (2008) as well as Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), that Facebook can be a tool to stay in contact when living far from home.

Even though most part of the reasons have been discussed in previous research, this study adds more detail behind the motivations of these reasons, as well as finding some new themes which are deemed important, where it thus adds to earlier research surrounding this topic. This study further adds more to the positive experiences which were not elaborated on much, seeing most previous research focused on negative experiences or challenges. Therefore, the reasons were mostly theory-driven, the experiences had a combination of both theory-driven

and data-driven themes, and the opinions were all data-driven. This means that the opinions towards social media in the context of quitting Facebook is new to the field.

5.2 Discussion

Even though this study has been carried out with much care, limitations are also found that should be explained.

First of all, even though Skype seems to match the quality of face-to-face conversations, a limitation must be reported. The Internet connection and audio from the interviews did not always result in perfect interviews, where one interview coped with soft sound from the other side and one had to be split between two days due to a hurricane breaking the connection on his side. Nevertheless, this only related to a small portion of the data. Second, this study has only focused on one age group, meaning it could limit the results where different ages might have different reasons to quit or might be more aware of the impacts of social media, as the participants explained that growing older made them more aware of these affects. Third, even though a qualitative thematic analysis was useful for this study, where quite some new ideas found were not discussed by previous research yet and therefore added a lot of new knowledge, a quantitative or mixed method study might be able to reinforce the themes found in this study. These themes are mostly related to the positive experiences as well as the opinions towards social media after quitting Facebook in order to see how generalizable these themes are among a bigger sample. With interviews, it will be difficult to be able to generalize it among a bigger sample, as with surveys for example you can reach a broader audience in order to see the reinforcement of the themes and therefore would be the first recommendation for future research.

What is more is as this study only focused on one age group, it would be interesting to do similar studies to this one with multiple age groups to compare the reasons and experiences and see how they might differ. Here, it would also be interesting to look into the motivations of why participants used Facebook in the first place, as that might also lead to different reasons to quit or the experiences they face. Furthermore, the opinions towards other social media after quitting Facebook should be elaborated more, as research in this context is lacking and should thus deserve more attention.

This whole study could relate back the Social Shaping of Technology (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1985). As mentioned, participants already expressed the desire for a new open sourced social media platform, and the more people might quit, the more it might shape and

influence new technology and the way new social media are set up, which will be a very interesting phenomenon to see in the (near) future.

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Appendix I: Topic list
Opening:

Explanation will be given as to who I am and the goal of this research. Further explanation will be given as to what this research is about. Consent form will have been discussed already in previous conversations with the participants through e-mail/Skype. Lastly, some basic questions will be asked: What is your name? What is your age? What is your occupation? Where do you come from?

Introduction questions to get the interview started:

1. When did you start using Facebook?
    a. When did you quit or taken a break?
        i. *If multiple times:* when?
    b. How long did you take a break/quit?
2. What were your reasons for starting Facebook?/What did you like about Facebook when you started?
3. Do you (still) use other social media platforms?
    a. Did you ever take a break on any of these other platforms?
        i. If yes: why?
    b. What are the reasons you are still using them?
4. When did your attitude regarding Facebook start to change?

Reasons to quit/take a break from Facebook:

5. What were your reasons for quitting/taking a break from Facebook?
    a. Can you explain where these reasons are coming from?
    b. Why are these reasons important to you?
    c. What do these reasons mean to you?

Questions to ask if these have not been mentioned before during the first overall question regarding their reasons, so not all of these following questions will be asked:

6. Did you also take into account the privacy concerns regarding Facebook?
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
7. Did you also consider Facebook to be a waste of time or to be uninteresting?
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?

8. Did you also consider Facebook to maybe be too interesting instead? Where productivity for example is decreased as Facebook then is too time consuming?
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
9. Did you also consider Facebook to be addictive?
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
10. Did you also consider that social media is not real life when dismissing Facebook?
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
11. Did you also consider emotional dissatisfaction? This means that your expectations of the platforms were not met which means you were left unsatisfied.
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
12. Did you also consider cyber-safety? Think about cyber-bullying, or other treats online.
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?
13. Did you also consider having a preference for other communication forms? (such as other social media platforms or preferring face-to-face talks)
    a. *If so*: why?
    b. *If not:* why not? Why were these not important to you?

Relapsing to Facebook:
14. How long did it take you before you relapsed/came back to Facebook?
15. Why were your reasons for coming back?
    a. Can you explain where these reasons are coming from?
    b. Can you explain why these reasons were important enough for you to come back, as you first decided to quit?

Experiences during quitting/taking break from Facebook:
16. Did you notice changes after you left Facebook?
    a. What kind of changes did you notice?
17. Did you face any positive outcomes when leaving Facebook?
    a. Why?/Why not?

18. Did you face any other challenges when leaving Facebook?

    a. What were these challenges? (e.g.: feeling disconnected)

    b. *If not*: why not?

Questions to ask if these have not been mentioned before during the first overall question regarding their reasons, so not all of these following questions will be asked:

19. Did you leaving/taking a break from Facebook affect/influence your relationships (with friends, family, colleagues, etc)?

    a. *If so:* how?

20. Did you feel like you were addicted to Facebook?

    a. *If so:* why/how?

21. Did you experience feeling of disconnectedness?

    a. *If so:* why/how?

22. Did you experience feelings of isolation/anxiety?

    a. *If so:* why/how?

23. Did you feel like you were missing content posted on Facebook by friends/family?

    a. *If so:* why/how?

Opinions towards social media (use):

24. What were your opinions towards other social media platforms before you quit/took a break from Facebook?

    a. Why did you see them this way/differently than Facebook?

    b. How did you use social media platforms?

25. Did you notice a change in your opinion towards Facebook and other social media platforms while taking a break/quitting Facebook?

    a. What was this change?

    b. Did your experience of leaving Facebook have any influence on this?

    c. Did you leave other social media platforms as well because of this?

        i. *If so*: why?

26. What is your opinion towards Facebook and other social media platforms now? (*if they have returned*)

    a. Did you change your social media use?

        i. *If so:* how?

    b. Did you leave any other social media platforms afterwards?

        i. *If so*: why?

   c. How do you now spend time on (other) social media platforms?

     i. Is this different than before?

       1. How?

Final question:

1. Overall, how happy were you with your decision to leave Facebook?

Closing:

2. I have now asked all of my questions. Do you have any questions still for me or anything else to add on this topic that you would like to speak about or mention to me that could be useful?

3. I want to thank you for your participation. It helped a lot to give me more insight into for what reasons people quit/take a break from Facebook and how they also experience this, especially with Facebook known to have addictive features. I hope you also enjoyed it.

4. If you have any further questions for me or anything that you suddenly remember later on you can always contact me on my student email 409160ew@student.eur.nl or you can contact me on Reddit.

5. Again, thank you so much for taking the time to help me.

Appendix II: Overview of participants

Name	Age	Gender	Country of residence	International background	Occupation
Simon	22	Male	Switzerland	Swiss	Student (teacher)
Julie*	25	Female	United States of America	American	Administrative job
Yuriy	18	Male	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Student
Elizabeth*	22	Female	United States of America	American	Student (computer science)
Nicole*	22	Female	Canada	Philippian	Student (design)
Florian	20	Male	The Netherlands	Dutch	Student (informatica)
Grant	25	Male	Czech Republic	Czech	Student (software engineer/machine learning and mathematics) and machine learning researcher
Vanessa	24	Female	Australia	Australian	Job seeking
Callum*	24	Male	Thailand	British	Long-term traveling (studied psychology)
Tobias*	23	Male	Austria	Austrian	Student (fine arts)
Davey*	19	Male	The Netherlands	Dutch	Student (liberal arts & sciences)
Jorine	22	Female	The Netherlands	Dutch	Student (Geoscience and remote sensing)
Mark*	22	Male	The Netherlands	Dutch	Student (software developer/informatica)
Gust	17	Male	Belgium	Belgian	Student

*pseudonym, did not want their identity to be revealed.