Values of Engagement: Exploring Digital Media through Generation and Neoliberalism

Robert Samuels

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

October 2018

Copyright statement

Abstract

Within existing literature (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2007; 2008a) digital media engagement is often understood through audience productivity, privileging productive fans over unproductive others, and limiting our understanding of how and why users engage with digital media. In my study, I complicate this discourse by exploring the multi-modal value of digital engagement within an original and empirically-grounded 'cascade' model. Adopting a qualitative interview study, I collected in-depth interviews from 34 participants, aged 20-30, exploring my respondents' performances of their engagement through generation and neoliberalism.

Theoretically, I argue for the plurality of value and engagement, which my participants negotiate across varying contexts (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006) through my cascade model, which aligns four original modes of engagement: fan-like, guarded, routinised, and restricted, with distinct forms of value: community, personal, habitual, and reflective. Participants enter the model via one of three levels, fluidly hybridising value and engagement in a variety of differentiated ways. Through this analysis, I argue that neoliberalism (Rose, 1999; McGuigan, 2014) emerged as a key contextual factor framing the value of participants' engagement, with the position via which respondents enter, and thus negotiate, the cascade model relating to their specific neoliberal dispositions towards 'right' and 'wrong' 'self-branding' (Marwick, 2013).

By aligning participants' neoliberal dispositions with digital cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993; Rojas et al, 2000), I also critically interrogate the 'digital natives' concept (Prensky, 2001; 2012; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008), arguing that the varying levels of capital and differing engagement modes in my data challenge this monolithic discourse which assumes a shared generational digital habitus. Within my innovative model, the value of engagement is not only multi-modal, but inherently fluid, with my approach complicating discourse in this field beyond existing notions of productivity, without arguing for audience productivity as normative or positing a binary of productive and unproductive engagement. This study, therefore, is vital to furthering our understanding of how and why users engage with digital media (Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018), and the value of this practice within neoliberal digital media 'worlds' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 215).

Contents

Word count (excluding bibliography and appendices): 86,054

List of Figures

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Like many people of my age group, I engage with a lot of digital media. I research actors while watching a TV series, I peek into my friends' lives on social media, and I often treat myself to an in-depth article with a cup of tea before realising that I should get back to work. I also enjoy reading the dreaded comments sections – in fact, I often skim articles, just so I can have a laugh with the jokers, a knowing smirk at the trolls, and even get annoyed by the know-it-alls. A lot of the time, however, I find myself slumped on the sofa, idly scrolling through Facebook as I take nothing in, wondering quite how I got here. While these experiences are probably relatable to a lot of people, as I started to develop this project, I found that my engagement was not always reflected within the predominant studies of digital media audiences. Instead, users were presented as enthusiastic 'producers' (Vos and Heinderyckx, 2015), or even 'produsers' (Bruns 2007; 2008a; 2008b), engaging with digital media through semiotic, enunciative, and (particularly) textual productivity, rooted within the influential fan studies work of John Fiske (1992)[1] and Henry Jenkins (2006).

My own experiences simply did not align with these presuppositions. In terms of my textual productivity, I have never posted in a fan forum, or even written so much as a tweet about a TV show - never mind producing fanfic or any other fan texts. My engagement in comments sections, social networking sites, or any other digital community, occurs without participating productively, with this experience seemingly absent from the literature. Privileging fan engagement in this way, however, implies that non-productive digital media engagement either does not exist, is of little interest to explore theoretically, or simply does not matter. My study emerged from this conflict, as I became intrigued not only by *how* other people engaged with digital media, but *why* – particularly if it was not readily apparent. If engagement is more complicated than existing discourse would suggest, then why do users engage - what is it about digital media that users value? My study addresses this research question by exploring how and why users engage with digital media outside of specific scenes, communities, fandoms, or texts - and the value of this engagement.

In this Introduction I will establish the significance of my theoretical approach, while assessing the analytical arguments that occur throughout this study. Firstly, through a discussion of my terminology, the original modes of value and engagement are introduced, which are positioned within a cascade model of digital media engagement. Although I

---

[1] See Göran Bolin (2012) for an account of Fiske's audience productivity theory.

identify my work as an interview study, through this approach, I will draw comparisons with contemporary ethnographic and conceptual work on engagement (e.g. Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018) by considering my methodology, alongside the potential role of triangulation through secondary quantitative data. Following this, the four analytical threads that run throughout this study will be summarised, with value, engagement, generation, and neoliberalism positioned in this order (both here and within the literature review) to reflect the significance of each narrative, mirroring the title of this study. Finally, I will provide a series of chapter outlines, highlighting how my argument develops throughout the thesis. Before this, however, it is essential to introduce how I analyse engagement and value within my original 'cascade model' of digital media engagement.

Introducing the modes of value and engagement within the cascade model

In this study, I propose four differentiated concepts of engagement, which are aligned alongside a specific form of value, with these combined modes then organised into levels within a 'cascade model'. At the top level is the more productive *fan-like engagement* and *community value*; level two features unproductive *guarded engagement* and *personal value*; level three contains the everyday practice I refer to as *routinised engagement* and *habitual value*; while level four includes participants' self-assessed *restricted engagement* aligned with *reflective value*. Participants can enter this multi-dimensional cascade model at any of the top three levels, with the fourth mode unable to be engaged with alone, as participants at this level reflect on and attempt to restrict their other engagement practices. From their starting point in the model, respondents hybridise their engagement fluidly downward, due to their levels of cultural digital capital and specific neoliberal dispositions. The value of digital media engagement is thus shaped by the position via which my respondents enter, and subsequently negotiate, the cascade model.

These four original modes of engagement are each indicative of differing respondent practices that emerged from the interviews. The first mode, fan-like engagement, refers to the type of productive consumption that dominates existing discourse. While I intend to complicate these notions, it is important to note that this type of engagement does exist in my data, but that it does so alongside other, differing modes. I have labelled this engagement 'fan-like' to evoke the existing body of literature, while also indicating that some of my participants who engaged in this way, did so without using typical fan texts. Many (for

example, Samantha [2]) were productive within online social networks, without involving themselves in a fan community. Other labels for this engagement, such as 'fannish' (e.g. Busse, 2015), or simply 'fan', would potentially limit the mode to fan practices, failing to communicate the productive engagement that occurred outside of fan communities.

'Guarded' engagement, conversely, refers to unproductive consumption that is characterised by self-directed and privacy-conscious lurking without contributing anything in return. I use the term 'guarded' as opposed to 'non-fan', or 'anti-fan' (see Gray, 2003), as some participants at this level identified as 'fans' (e.g. Matthew [3], a 24-year-old primary school teacher who is a self-described fan of WWE, *Dragonball-Z*, and Chelsea Football Club), without engaging productively, preferring to lurk in fan forums and blogs. I also wanted to avoid less-productive modes of engagement being discursively linked to non or anti-fandom, as there is more depth to this type of engagement than a rejection of fan practice. The third mode of engagement, 'routinised', is indicative of the types of habitual and impulsive media use that are rooted in the 'everyday' (Highmore, 2011). While recognising that I cannot generalise from this, across my data, routinised engagement was the most common form of digital media consumption amongst my 34 participants, which in terms of the validity of my qualitative data, suggests that wider theories might want to pay greater consideration to this concept of engagement. I use the term 'routinised' to capture the unthinking, recursive, and ever-present nature of this engagement, as opposed to 'everyday', which evokes specific discourse (e.g. Visser, 1986; Moran, 2007), that I build upon, and thus wish to differentiate from my approach. Finally, 'restricted' engagement refers to participants who intentionally limit media practice they perceive as 'negative'. I selected 'restricted' over 'limited' as I did not want to imply that participants who restrict their engagement were limited in their technological savvy or capabilities.

Similarly, as the four modes of value are original concepts built upon a theoretical framework, I wanted to ensure the selected terms evoked the meaning I intended, without being limited by existing theory. The first mode, 'community' value, is aligned with fan-like engagement, as it refers to the social worth associated with productive engagement, which I felt was best captured with the word 'community'. 'Social' or 'communicative' value would not

---

[2] Samantha is 25 and is the only participant entering the cascade model at the fan-like level who did not attend university. She is married with one child and works part-time as a checkout assistant. Samantha is a self-described fan of fantasy literature and likes to keep up with local and national news.

[3] Matthew has just completed his master's in history. He is originally from Nottingham, and is in a relationship with another participant, Victoria, who he lives with. He admits to using his favourite sources (specifically for wrestling and football) several times a day, but never posts himself.

have differentiated this form of value in the way I intended, with private interpersonal communication also occurring amongst participants entering the model via guarded engagement. I also felt that the term 'communal' value, while inferring the community aspect of this form of worth, conflicted with the individualism of neoliberal self-branding in a potentially problematic way. 'Personal' value is associated with guarded engagement, with worth linked to independent, self-directed practice, as opposed to shared involvement. I use the word 'personal', over 'independent' or 'self', to indicate that this value does not align with neoliberal selfhood but offers a resistance to this ideological position. The third mode of value, 'habitual', aligns with routinised engagement, with this term indicating the value inherent in media engagement that facilitates routine and habit. Finally, 'reflective' value captures the reasoning behind participants' restricted engagement, as a way for participants to identify their negative practice. This approach to theorising engagement and value is grounded within the data I gathered from 34 respondent interviews. In the next section, therefore, I will introduce my methodology, aligning this study with interview-led digital media research, while also considering the potential role of secondary quantitative data for my study.

Adopting an interview approach to theorising multi-modal value and engagement

To gain a detailed account of users' engagement, and the value of this practice, I prioritised validity over generalisability, "because qualitative studies are not usually designed to allow systematic generalizations to some wider population" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 293) by gathering in-depth, 'thick' descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of my participants' experiences with digital media. Adopting this type of interview method has various limitations, particularly regarding the way in which respondents chose to perform their identities within the specific social and cultural contexts of the interview setting – a notion I will return to throughout the thesis. As such, there are other potential methods available, and while quantitative research is often utilised within this field (e.g. Barker, 2005; ter Wal et al, 2005; Bond, 2015), such an approach is more appropriate for work that seeks to confirm or challenge larger, measurable relationships through "the formulation of hypotheses, which are then tested" (Bamberger, 2000, p. 16). Conversely, according to Linda Findlay:

> Qualitative researchers do not seek to extrapolate statistically the findings from a specified sample to the wider population. Instead, they are concerned to show that findings can be transferred and may have meaning or relevance if applied to other individuals, contexts and situations. (2006, p. 320)

To address my aim of exploring participants' varied digital media practices, I required an approach that did not assert existing definitions of 'engagement' or 'value' upon my respondents' discourses. Instead, I allowed each of my 34 participants to frame the interview around their own online interests (which I will discuss in Chapter 2). As I did not recruit respondents through any specific communities, scenes, or fandoms, a wide variety of topics were covered during the interviews, including: feminism, Scottish independence, makeup tutorials, professional wrestling, furry fandom, and LGBT inclusion within Christianity (to name just a few). While these topics are widely dissimilar - with some clearly fan-led, while others are not fan-like at all – there were similarities in how respondents engaged with, and valued, these disparate subjects online.

Within the specific aims of this study, a quantitative methodology would not have captured these nuanced differences within participants' digital media engagement that are impossible to quantify (Priest, 2010, p. 4). I could have adopted a mixed methods design, however, by utilising secondary quantitative data to triangulate my research. Toija Cinque and Jordan Beth Vincent offer an example of this approach, triangulating their own sample with secondary data drawn from the Australian Research Council (2018, p. 5). Other examples, including Taejin Jung (2008), also demonstrate the benefit of triangulating qualitative interviews with secondary quantitative data. As Wendy Olsen notes: "the mixing of methodologies" offers a "more profound form of triangulation" (2004, p. 3), with secondary data potentially offering further validity to interview discourse (Denzin, 1970; 1979; 1989; Flick, 1992). Furthermore, according to Alan Bryman, "multi-strategy research provides such a wealth of data that researchers discover uses of the ensuing findings that they had not anticipated" (2006, p. 110), with the validity offered by triangulation an additional 'unanticipated consequence' of this approach (Smith, 1986; Deacon et al, 1998).

There are various datasets that could have been used alongside my interviews, for example: Office for National Statistics' *Internet Users in the UK* (2016), Pew Research Center's *Social Media Updated* (2016), and Statista's *Social Media Statistics & Facts (2017)*. While including secondary data may have offered a greater 'wealth' of data, the scale and purpose of these datasets are unlikely to have aligned with my data in a helpful way, particularly due to my participant-driven approach to interviews. Triangulating primary and secondary data with differing research purposes, as Pamela Hinds et al suggest, risks "invalidating the effort and the findings" of my study (1997, p. 411). As I am interested in the nuanced details of participants' digital practice; my aim of examining micro differences within a small generational cohort conflicts with data that searches for macro similarities in a way that neglects the kind of nuance I am interested in. Furthermore, finding relevant secondary data

that aligns with my specific research approach would be difficult. Such secondary data, therefore, would not offer greater validity, as Pamela Hinds et al note, but likely disrupt my aim of complicating reductive concepts (such as generation and engagement).

My methodological interest in validity over generalisability locates this study within an emergent tradition of conceptual digital media work that seeks to understand audience engagement by exploring digital media practice (e.g. Madianou and Miller, 2012; Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018). While the concepts presented here require further testing, within this study I present a tentative, but hopefully persuasive, original model for digital media engagement, with the hope that further testing through additional data gathering could extend it in the future. I will discuss this alongside other directions for future study in the Conclusion. Having outlined the methodological underpinnings of this study, which presents four original modes of engagement and value through a cascade model, I will now introduce the four analytical threads that run throughout my thesis: value, engagement, generation, and neoliberalism, through a discussion of the significance of my approach, beginning with value.

Assessing the plurality of value through a theoretical framework

As noted above, during the interviews I did not impose any definitions of value upon my respondents – in fact, I did not use the term 'value' at all during this process. Value in this study is considered through interviewees' discourses, built upon a theoretical framework presented in Chapter 1. I use value in a multi-discursive sense to refer to the various factors and engagement practices that are significant or worthwhile to my participants. In the cascade model, four forms of value are introduced: community, personal, habitual, and reflective. Value, according to Göran Bolin, "is not one entity, unified and homogenous" (2011, p. 127), and my study develops Bolin's assertion, suggesting that value is inherently multi-modal, both theoretically, and within my cascade model. As Bolin suggests, the term 'value' evokes various fields of study, making any singular outline particularly challenging. Due to this wide-range of approaches, and in order to provide my data with 'theoretical grounding' (Goldkuhl and Cronholm, 2003), I employ a detailed framework of value, critically analysing established theories that can be applied within a digital media context.

I begin with Karl Marx (1867/1976; 1939/1973), whose approach to defining value through labour is utilised in digital media research (e.g. Andrejevic, 2010; 2013; Fuchs, 2012; 2014), with this work offering a singular definition of value through the 'exploitation' of social media users. The framework then follows two differing post-Marxian understandings of value,

beginning with the gift economy (Hyde, 1983), which, when applied in a digital media setting, demonstrates how two contrasting notions of value (market and sharing) can fit together within a singular digital media marketplace (Booth, 2010; Lobato and Thomas, 2015). Having considered discourse that presents value as singular and as a duality, through classical sociology, I then assess value as multi-discursive, including sign value (Baudrillard, 1972/1981), and the differing forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1989/1996; 1993). Due to the depth of work on 'value', there are other positions I could have utilised within my framework, such as the philosophical study of value through axiology (Hofstede, 2001; Gunaratne, 2009), or more contemporary market-led ideas such as Earned Media value (Social Chorus, 2013, p. 2). I have utilised the above discourses over other potential concepts, which are applied effectively within digital media literature, to demonstrate the limitations of approaching value from a specific conceptual standpoint. By addressing this work, I am able to create an effective framework for theorising value using relevant and significant work.

Through this framework, alongside participants' discourses, I suggest the need for a multi-discursive understanding of value in analyses of digital media engagement, due to the limitations inherent within a singular theoretical approach, which does not capture the range of value at play within my data. As such, I align my concepts of value with a critical application of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006), which considers how people negotiate differing forms of value across various contexts, offering an effective model for understanding the significance of value as a plurality. As Boltanski and Thévenot note: "To attach persons to worlds would mean pinning them down in a single form of worth…human beings, unlike objects, can manifest themselves in different worlds" (p. 215). Through developing this model, I demonstrate the differing ways participants value digital media engagement, hybridised across the cascade model. Aligning this value framework with participants' engagement offers an original approach to understanding why users engage with digital media. Through this analysis, I aim to understand the worth of my participants' practice, to explore the significance of the various types of engagement I identify in this study, and subsequently the value of engagement beyond existing, fan-led discourse. In the next section, before addressing this literature, it is important to understand how 'engagement' and 'digital media' are defined in this study, due to the breadth implied by this non-specific terminology.

Complicating digital media engagement beyond fandom

Providing a definition of 'engagement' is potentially problematic, as I do not wish to indicate a privileging of productive, fan-like consumption, which I am attempting to complicate within

this study. Instead, any definition must explore the 'interpretive' and 'critical' process (Livingstone, 2008, p. 59) of engaging with digital media. As Sora Park notes in *Digital Capital* (2017): "Digital engagement is a complex process with multiple factors that influence the access, adoption, and utilisation of digital technology" (p. 44). Within her study, Park explores 'digital engagement' through a spectrum, defining the term as: "the act of using digital technologies to benefit the user, usually through fulfilling a purpose", which refers to "all types of usage initiated by the user that results in intended outcomes" (p. 5). While Park's approach to broadening engagement aligns with the aims of this study, defining it as 'purposeful' and 'intentional' does not account for the habitual, often impulsive practices that were so prevalent within my data. In his 2005 article, 'Audience Ethnographies: A Media Engagement Approach', Antonio La Pastina also provides a model for engagement, which, while underdeveloped, attempts to explore the process between 'viewers/consumers and texts' across four stages: reading, interpretation, appropriation, and change (pp. 6-7). Usefully, La Pastina's model broadly explicates the stages involved when a user engages with a text without restricting the concept definitively. Drawing on this model, Norbert Wildermuth provides a comprehensive definition of engagement:

> Admittedly, no single term can fully encompass the complex, multidimensional and multi-layered interaction between text and reader/viewer. With La Pastina (2005) I use the term 'engagement' to imply the totality of experience the processes of media use and reception involve. (2008, p. 367)

I develop this approach to engagement through the multi-modal entirety of 'experiences' and 'processes' involved when my participants consume digital media, within my original cascade model. Engagement in this study, therefore, refers to a wide range of participant practice, including (but not limited to): interacting productively with online communities (e.g. posting pictures on social networks), carefully managing identities through self-branding, consuming content unproductively (e.g. lurking on a forum), casually browsing and conducting socially-motivated surveillance (e.g. 'spying' on friends within social networks), and habitual scrolling (e.g. using phone apps as part of a morning routine). Similarly, I use 'digital media' as a catch-all term to indicate something a user of media may consume. As I noted earlier, this study does not focus on any specific scenes, communities, fandoms, or texts, to expand engagement beyond existing limitations. Instead, I employ the term 'digital media' - a broad, and intentionally non-specific term - to indicate the various media my participants discussed using. In his own work on digital, or 'new' media, Paul Booth offers a similar description of this type of media, which supplements my own definition:

But what do I mean by 'New Media'? Quite plainly, I define New Media as those media forms that are digital, interactive, updatable, and ubiquitous... Digital media are, at their most basic, media defined by their constituent parts: the 1's and 0's of binary code. This has the effect of making all New Media texts boundless – or, rather, bound in the same infinite mediation as all other New Media texts… Specific online interactive New Media 'texts' include blogs, wikis, online comments, Social Network Sites, and all interactions between them. (2010, p. 3)

As Booth notes, the potential scope of 'digital media' is vast, and I did not attempt to limit this field for my respondents. Instead, I constructed an interview framework that allowed participants to identify the digital media they engage with, both broadly (in terms of text, video, etc.) and specifically (i.e. particular websites, content providers, etc.). The 'digital media' referred to in this study is constructed by my participants, and covers all forms of media they discussed engaging with online. This includes: social networking sites, video streaming sites, search engines, blogs, forums, news websites (e.g. *BBC*), online shops, auction sites, and mobile apps, amongst many others.

Through an original approach to aligning value with engagement using a fluid, multi-dimensional cascade model, this study is primarily concerned with challenging reductive definitions of digital media engagement, which are often restricted to fan-like notions of productivity and participation. Within this argument, however, I am not constructing any notion of productivity as normative with regards to audience engagement, or positing a binary of productive and unproductive engagement. Due to the specific limitations associated with interview studies, which I will elaborate upon in the Conclusion to this thesis, I am also not attempting to generalise existing arguments regarding fandom to the whole audience. My intention is to instead explore engagement as multiple, rather than as singular, as has been argued explicitly or implicitly within fandom literature, in order to further develop the concept beyond existing limitations.

I align this study, therefore, with recent work that complicates engagement, including Ben Light (2014), Sora Park (2017), and Rhiannon Bury (2018), who demonstrate the significance of theorising engagement beyond a broadly Fiskean discourse of audience productivity. Park and Bury share a similar approach, by positioning engagement within a scale. In Park's study, participants are placed on a 'varied spectrum of digital engagement' (p. 13) through their digital capital, using the multiplicity of engagement to explore the participation gap (p. 7). Similarly, Bury theorises her participants' engagement in *Television 2.0* through a 'participatory continuum', which places "those practices that require lesser amounts of involvement in fandom on one end and those that are bound up with fandom on the other end" (p. 92). Light's differing approach considers "the role of disconnection as an

active part of our engagements with SNSs" (p. 9), effectively addressing *disengagement* as a vital part of the engagement process: "Disconnective practice is not necessarily about resistance or navigating problems associated with SNSs, it is something that adds value to people's experiences and allows them to operate as they want to with such spaces" (p. 104). Crucially, these three studies recognise that engagement extends beyond audience productivity, as Bury discusses:

> These findings suggest that the majority of fans of popular television can indeed be classified as participatory but that most are clustered on the "less involved" end of the continuum, doing more than viewing but not directly engaging in the hallmark practices associated with community and participatory culture. (p. 93)

My study builds upon these important contributions to the field, by proposing a multi-dimensional model for engagement, which draws together Bury's critique of participation with the multiplicity of engagement in Park's work, through my specific concepts of value and engagement, allowing me to develop different versions of what Light theorises as 'disconnection'. By drawing these differing approaches together, I hope to further develop discourse within audience research fields, which according to Bury, "has conflated participation with participatory culture, and overrepresented the fan positioned at the 'most involved' end of the continuum" (p. 107). Within my study, therefore, I demonstrate the significance of complicating digital media engagement, and thus notions of fandom and participatory culture, beyond existing limitations. As Melissa Click suggests: "There is much to be learned from studying fans who do not fit traditional descriptions" (2007, p. 301). This timely study is particularly important in gaining a wider view of the varied practice occurring within the contemporary digital media 'marketplace' (Webster, 2014), offering a greater understanding of digital media users through complicating fan engagement. This conceptual argument is shaped through the methodology of my study, interrogating generation to understand the value of participants' engagement.

Critiquing generation in my study through challenging the concept of 'digital natives'

My interview study provides an original way of addressing digital media audiences and engagement, with little existing work in the field contextualising participatory culture through a critique of generation. Using this approach, I challenge the prominent notion of 'digital natives', a term coined by Marc Prensky (2001) to describe the so-called cohort of users born after 1980, who, according to John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, "all have access to networked technologies. And they all have the skills to use those technologies" (2008, p. 1).

The problematic implication of a generational universality has been questioned by numerous scholars, including Sue Bennett et al:

> The picture beginning to emerge from research on young people's relationships with technology is much more complex than the digital native characterisation suggests. While technology is embedded in their lives, young people's use and skills are not uniform. (2008, p. 783)

I consider generation within an expanded concept of class (see Savage, 2015), suggesting that there is no singular cohort of 'digital natives'. Throughout the thesis, my use of the term 'digital natives' is not an application of this theory, and while it could perhaps be argued that the concept remains peripheral in parts of my analysis, this is an intentional choice, as I am arguing that 'digital natives' is not a workable or useful concept, with my study representing a critique of this notion. While certain analytical threads may not overtly focus on 'digital natives', my exploration of neoliberalism and digital capital (particularly in Chapters 5 and 6) serves to interrogate the 'digital natives' concept by complicating the factors associated with this discourse. My analysis focuses on the 20-30-year-old respondents I have recruited for this study, in order to critically interrogate the notion of a generational universality in terms of technological skills and savvy. Through this argument, I therefore challenge the notion that the differing modes of engagement and digital media practices I have identified in my data are specific to one generation of so-called 'digital natives'. Although I do not have the data to put forward this analysis, I would speculate that my arguments regarding engagement, cultural capital, and neoliberalism would potentially be applicable to other age groups, which I will discuss further in the Conclusion. Furthermore, as the study develops, the significance of generation becomes embedded in neoliberal cultural politics, with this framework bringing together the various analytical threads through participants' conceptualisation of this dominant ideology, and further demonstrating the limitations of 'digital natives' theory.

'Neoliberal selfhood' as an analytical framework

In this thesis, I use what Jim McGuigan terms 'Neoliberal selfhood' (2014, p. 224), referring to the pervasive 'ideological and cultural' aspects of neoliberalism (2016, p. 16) to position the differing modes of engagement within my model against a wider cultural backdrop. As Jason Read notes: "Neoliberalism is not just a manner of governing states or economies, but is intimately tied to the government of the individual, to a particular manner of living" (2009, p. 27). Within my approach, therefore, I demonstrate the wider significance of my participants' engagement practices, and their differing positions regarding neoliberal selfhood, with my work representing a critical reading of the internalised self-governance of

neoliberalism. I use this specific aspect of the wider neoliberal ideology due to its cultural dominance (Harvey, 2005, p. 3), not just in terms of economic policy, but across western cultural 'lifestyles' (Rose, 1999, p. 230) and 'aspirations' (Sender, 2006, p. 140). According to McGuigan, neoliberalism as a cultural phenomenon is widespread:

> In truth, it is exceptionally difficult today not to see neoliberalism 'everywhere and in everything'. It is so manifestly there wherever we look, whether or not we are conscious of its presence, perhaps even within ourselves. (2016, p. 10; see also Saad Filho and Johnston, 2004, p. 2; Venugopal, 2015, p. 169)

As my modes of engagement are assessed across Chapters 3-6, the differing neoliberal positions of my respondents are developed through a three-part structure, positioning fan-like engagement as aligning with this cultural ideology, guarded engagement as resisting aspects of it, and routinised and restricted engagement as offering two differently negotiated positions within this framework. Such is this 'manifest' dominance of neoliberalism, not just in terms of economic policy, but within the "socio-cultural makeup of people" (McGuigan, 2014, p. 224), I suggest it has become a key cultural category, and form of self-policing, threading together other forms of distinction in my analysis (including class and generation) due to its significance in capturing respondents' conceptual position towards digital media engagement.

This neoliberal thread emerged during my analysis, and while I had initially anticipated generation to be the key analytical factor within this study, which is reflected in my research design, the significance of neoliberalism in my data is further evidence of the value of my interview approach. As Paul Willis and Mats Trondman suggest, empirical audience research "recognizes and promotes a dialectic of surprise. This is a two-way stretch, a continuous process of shifting back and forth, if you like, between 'induction' and 'deduction'" (2002, p. 399). According to David Morley, "this is precisely the point of empirical work" (1992, p. 173), with the value of such an approach, as Willis suggests, lying in the possibility of "being surprised, of reaching knowledge not prefigured in one's starting paradigm" (1980, p. 90). The 'surprising' significance of neoliberal selfhood in my data demonstrates the value of my interview approach, as this original analysis would not have emerged through a quantitative methodology.

Before presenting an outline of my chapters, it is worthwhile to discuss another potential element of my methodology, which I have chosen not to pursue analytically in this thesis. As I will discuss further in Chapter 2, I recruited respondents for this study using 'opportunity' or 'convenience' sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981; Fogelman, 2002; Babbie, 2011) to

find people who were accessible to me. Through a snowball approach, my recruitment subsequently occurred within four closely situated localities to me (Huddersfield, Ackworth, Penistone, and Pudsey). While I did not specifically design location into my data collection, due to its presence, I considered pursuing this socio-demographic element analytically. As such, it could be argued that location has numerous implications regarding digital habitus, which as Mike Savage et al (2005) argue, are tied to a person's sense of place and locality (see also Urry, 2000; Beck, 2002; Crawford and Robinson, 2013; Bolin, 2017). Due to the age range of my participants living in Huddersfield, many of whom were former or current students, I could have explored these implications of location through their 'transient' status (Sinha, 2016, p. 23), contrasted with the participants in Ackworth, Penistone, and Pudsey, who were more rooted in their hometowns. However, once my analysis progressed to routinised and restricted engagement in Chapter 5, it became apparent that there was no significant differentiation regarding location in my data. Furthermore, given that location was not explicitly designed into my study, and the relatively small number of respondents I recruited (particularly outside of Huddersfield), any conclusions I might have attempted to draw are unlikely to be analytically meaningful or empirically grounded. Therefore, in the following chapters, I will not be pursuing location in any of my arguments. Having established the four analytical threads that I do consider throughout this study, I will finally link these concepts together through outlining my chapters, before beginning with a literature review.

Chapter outlines

This thesis contains six chapters, with the literature review and methodology providing a foundation upon which the remaining four chapters are built. Chapter 1 argues that existing discourses of value and engagement require complicating beyond current limitations, while suggesting that the monolithic 'digital natives' concept reduces generation to an unhelpful binary of digital 'natives' and 'immigrants'. I also demonstrate the growing dominance of neoliberalism as a cultural politics. In Chapter 2, value and engagement are brought together for the first time through the cascade model, demonstrating the significance of aligning these key analytical threads. This chapter begins with a discussion of differing qualitative and quantitative conceptual frameworks, before further establishing this study within qualitative, interview-led audience research. A review of the research design, data collection, and coding processes are also included in this chapter.

Having aligned value with engagement through the introduction of the cascade model, at this point in the study, I artificially separate the four modes for the purpose of analysis, beginning

in Chapter 3 with fan-like engagement and community value. In this chapter I analyse this mode of engagement as aligning with neoliberal selfhood in my three-part structure, with value linked to careful 'self-branding' (Marwick, 2013), while demonstrating how participants' high levels of cultural capital begin to critically interrogate the 'digital natives' concept.

In Chapter 4, guarded engagement is positioned as an antithesis to the neoliberal dispositions of the previous chapter, with respondents entering at this level resisting neoliberal selfhood through the personal value inherent within 'connected privacy' (Kitzmann, 2004), clearly differentiating this mode within my three-part analysis. Conversely, similarities regarding cultural capital between both fan-like and guarded engagement point to the limitations inherent within the 'digital natives' discourse. While this chapter still engages critically with relevant fan studies discourse, I begin to demonstrate the range of engagement at play within my data, and the various differences and nuances that exist within each mode. This is evidenced by my analysis of guarded engagement and personal value as both self-directed, and as a situated resistance to neoliberal selfhood. I also suggest that participants' apathy towards some media use demonstrates how linking media practices to generation through the digital native characterisation is simplistic and reductive.

The multi-modality of value and engagement is developed further in Chapter 5, by presenting two differing modes together, which represent varying negotiated positions between the two polarities of neoliberal fan-like and resistant guarded engagement within my three-part analysis of digital media consumption and neoliberalism. This allows a challenge to the overemphasis placed upon productive engagement within existing literature, which I will further strengthen through my analysis of participants' digital surveillance as a social practice. The lower levels of cultural capital amongst respondents entering via routinised engagement further suggests the shortcomings of a monolithic 'digital natives' argument, and the greater significance of neoliberalism as an analytical framework in my data. Routinised engagement, I suggest, is tacitly embedded within neoliberalism, while restricted engagement represents a different negotiated position, with respondents critiquing their own practice to realign themselves in this ideological framework. Additionally, due to routinised participants' lower levels of cultural capital, I argue that factors associated with 'digital natives' (such as tech-savvy and capabilities) can be assessed outside of generationality, in a way that hasn't been pursued significantly in the field to date.

The previously separated modes are reintegrated into the cascade model in Chapter 6, as I bring together my various analytical threads, arguing that value and engagement are fluidly hybridised within my data, with participants' levels of digital cultural capital and specific

neoliberal dispositions significant in capturing the level via which respondents enter the model. In this final chapter, not only are value and engagement multi-modal, but participants fluidly negotiate the various modes, to the extent that some struggle to articulate the conflicting forms of value at play within their digital media engagement. I align the level at which respondents enter the cascade model with their position regarding neoliberal selfhood, suggesting that both are important in understanding how and why participants engage with digital media. In this chapter, I also conclude my challenge to the 'digital natives' discourse by proposing that technological savvy and capabilities are linked less to notions of generation in my data, and instead to my disaggregated reading of digital cultural capital. I align this argument within the broader framework of neoliberal selfhood, further demonstrating the (unexpected) dominance of this ideology within my analysis. Finally, alongside directions for future research and a reflective analysis of my study, I bring the four developed threads together in the Conclusion, where I discuss the value of digital media engagement, for my participants, through generation and neoliberalism.

As these various analytical threads and arguments emerged from a grounded theoretical application of my data, which, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, is based on a small number of respondents within a specific age range, I am cautious to avoid generalisation of my arguments outside of the restrictions of my data. In order to explore the nuances in my participants' digital media engagement, I prioritised validity over generalisability, and as such, I do not suggest that the model I propose in this study can be applied more broadly outside of my respondents. Without attempting to generalise, however, I believe that my findings merit further exploration to consider how my model may play out across other age groups, and through a greater emphasis on class distinctions. I will discuss these potential directions for future research further in the Conclusion.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

To provide a satisfactory review of the literature within the scope of this project, this chapter is organised around the key analytical threads highlighted in the title: value, engagement, generation, and neoliberalism. In this chapter, I will establish my key arguments through a critical assessment of the previous literature, identifying the limitations of existing discourse using structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), and demonstrating how my study is positioned within the field. Firstly, I present a theoretical framework of value, to unpack the concept of value, which, according to Göran Bolin, "appears in many different forms and results from a variety of processes. It is not one entity, unified and homogenous" (2011, p. 127). Beginning with Karl Marx (1867/1976; 1939/1973), and the singular focus of Marxist media scholars upon surplus value (Andrejevic, 2002; 2009; 2010; 2013; Fuchs, 2010; 2012; 2014), I then consider value as a duality through the gift economy (Hyde, 1983), Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas' informal economy (2015), and Paul Booth's Digi-Gratis (2010). Following a differing route out of Marxist discourse, the plurality of value is then assessed through the work of Jean Baudrillard (1968/1996; 1970/1998; 1972/1981), and Pierre Bourdieu (1989/1996; 1993), demonstrating the limitations of a singular theoretical approach to value. Through this position, I align with a critical analysis of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006), providing a framework for plurality within this thesis.

Having established my value framework, I then address engagement through a critical assessment of the dominant discourses within existing literature. Beginning with John Fiske's influential audience productivity theory (1992), alongside subsequent work from Henry Jenkins (2006) and Charles H. Davis (2013), I critique the emphasis of fan studies work upon productive engagement and audience agency, positioning this work as oppositional to earlier Marxist research. Having demonstrated this limitation, I then assess the emergent body of work that attempts to conceptualise engagement beyond these restrictions, including 'polymedia' (Madianou and Milller, 2012) 'disconnection' (Light, 2014), the 'spectrum of engagement' (Park, 2017), and the 'participatory continuum' (Bury, 2018), placing my study within this significant literature. Following this critique, I then align generation with engagement through participatory culture, and specifically Axel Bruns' 'produsers' concept (2008a), suggesting that the focus upon productivity in this discourse aligns with the assumptions of practice within the monolithic 'digital natives' narrative

(Prensky, 2001; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008), assuming a shared digital habitus (Papacharissi and Easton, 2013) across this generation of users.

Finally, having presented my main arguments within each narrative thread, I introduce the concept of 'neoliberal selfhood' (McGuigan, 2014), as an analytical framework to tie the study together. Beginning with a discussion of neoliberal policy by Matthew Eagleton-Pierce (2016), I discuss the impact of this dominant ideology outside of economics, and specifically the self-governance and "philosophy of individualism" (Peters, 2001, p.118) that it promotes culturally and socially. Through the work of Nikolas Rose (1999), I demonstrate how neoliberalism repositions people as "entrepreneurs of the self" (p. 230), with their digital identity performance shaped by neoliberal 'self-branding' (Hearn, 2008; Marwick, 2010; 2013). I use neoliberal selfhood as the framework in this study due to its 'manifest' dominance as a 'hegemonic ideology', according to Jim McGuigan (2014; 2016), aligning value, engagement, and generation analytically within this study. In this chapter I also utilise structuration theory to frame these various discourses, and as such, it is essential to first outline this concept.

The duality of structure and agency within the digital media 'marketplace'

In *The Constitution of Society* (1984), Anthony Giddens developed structuration theory, proposing: "The basic domain of study of the social sciences… is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time" (p. 2). Within this "debate on structure and agency" (Carpentier, 2011, p. 191), order is constructed through social structures, while agency represents the "socially constituted capacity to act" (Barker, 2008, p. 234). This duality of structure and agency, as Barker notes, is central to structuration theory, with structures both constraining and enabling agency: "Individual actors are determined by social forces that lie beyond them as individual subjects. However, those social structures enable subjects to act" (2008, p. 233; see also Allor, 1988, p. 217). Giddens' work promotes the duality of structure and agency as 'mutually constituted' according to James Webster, whereby "individuals rely on structures to exercise their agency and, in doing so, reproduce and alter those very structures" (2011, p. 48). In *The Marketplace of Attention*, Webster considers this duality within digital audiences:

> Media users confront a digital environment loaded with ready-made structures. They
> have television networks, video on demand, websites, social media, and search
> engines at their disposal. These are the resources they use to do what they want.

> Those structures, however, aren't rigid. They constantly adapt to the actions of their users. Networks change their schedules, cancelling some shows and cloning others. Search engines move different sites to the top of their rankings. New topics trend on Twitter. Those changes, in turn, affect the actions of the users. (2014, p. 11)

Through structuration theory, Webster presents a shifting digital marketplace in which structure and agency co-exist, with users able to act within the limitations of malleable media structures (see also Rubin, 1984; Rosenstein and Grant, 1997; LaRose, 2010). Webster also notes that within this digital media marketplace, engagement can be purposeful, although "most media use is ingrained in the rhythms of day-to-day life and so has a predictable recursive quality" (2011, p. 46). Further research also suggests that much digital media use is confined by habit and routine (Neuendorf et al, 2001; van Rees and van Eijck, 2003; Hasebrink and Popp, 2006), with users' agency 'bound' by the structures of digital media (Webster, 2014, p. 14; see also, Simon, 1997). According to Webster: "In this context, the most directly relevant structures are the media resources that agents use to enact their preferences" (2011, p. 47). While Webster's use of structuration theory emphasises the duality of structure and agency in the digital media marketplace, this approach conflicts with much of the literature that will be presented in this chapter, which considers value as bound by structures, and engagement as productive agency. Although Webster does not consider value or neoliberalism with regards to structuration theory, his approach to conceptualising the digital media marketplace is useful in assessing the significance and limitations of the structures and agencies involved with audience engagement. A singular emphasis, therefore, cannot be placed upon agency or structure, with value and engagement occurring in my analysis through this duality. Having established the significance of structuration theory within the digital media marketplace, I will now assess how value is conceptualised theoretically within existing discourses, demonstrating the need for multiplicity within analyses of digital media.

Approaching the plurality of value through a theoretical framework

As Göran Bolin notes: "Value is complicated in its wide variety of uses and in its plurality of connotations" (2011, p. 127), and to limit and understand this 'complicated' concept, therefore, within this framework I consider a range of theoretical approaches. I begin by addressing Marxist concepts of value (1867/1976; 1939/1973), which are then applied within a digital media setting through Christian Fuchs (2010; 2012; 2014) and Mark Andrejevic (2002; 2009; 2010; 2013). Due to the focus on social media as 'exploitation' within this literature, which emphasises structure over agency, I suggest a singular approach to value is limiting, subsequently pursuing two differing pathways out of Marxian discourse. Firstly, I

assess how differing economies of value - capitalism and the 'gift economy' (Hyde, 1983) - can co-exist, using Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas' informal economy (2015), and Paul Booth's Digi-Gratis (2010) to assess this duality of value. Pursuing a further critique of Marxist value, I consider how sign value (Jean Baudrillard, 1968/1996; 1970/1998; 1972/1981), as well as cultural and social capital (Pierre Bourdieu, 1989/1996; 1993), differ from the previous concepts through their focus on non-financial assets such as prestige and social mobility respectively, positioning value as inherently multi-discursive. I conclude with a critical application of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006), which provides a basis for plurality within this study, through its approach to value within differing contextual 'worlds'. I begin my theoretical framework with a brief outline of Karl Marx's concepts of use value and exchange value, which is central to Marxist economics, with value ultimately tied to the extraction of profit through labour.

From Karl Marx to Christian Fuchs - value, labour and exploitation

According to Marx, use value concerns "the natural particularity of the commodity" (1939/1973, p. 267), with value derived through function, or "the potential use" of an object (Churchich, 1990, p. 92). Exchange value is linked to labour (and thus the exploitation of labourers), and indicates the value of an object in exchange: "If we speak of the *value in exchange of a thing,* we *mean* in the first instance of course the *relative quantities* of all other commodities that can be exchanged for the first commodity" (Marx, 1939/1973, p. 128, emphasis in the original). Marx's works "condemn capitalism as oppressive, exploitative, alienating, estranging and heteronomous" (Fuchs and Dyer-Witheford, 2012, p. 783), with capitalism defined as the process of extracting value through labour, as Marx notes in *Capital*:

> The capitalist consumes labour-power, the product of the labourer is incessantly converted, not only into commodities, but into capital, into value that sucks up the value-creating power, into means of subsistence that buy the person of the labourer, into means of production that command the producers. (1867/1976, p. 716)

Labour is a "key relational and historical category in Marx's theory" (Fuchs and Fisher, 2015, p. 9) referring to "the production of exchange-value for the market… by wage labourers who sell their labour power" (Lund, 2015, p. 67). Within Marxist economics, value is a product of human activity, whereby use value and exchange value are created through "both abstract and concrete labour" (Fuchs and Fisher, 2015, p. 9). According to Marx:

> On the one hand, all labour is an expenditure of human labour-power, in the physiological sense, and it is in this quality of being equal, or abstract, human labour that it forms the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labour is an expenditure of human labour-power in a particular form and with a definite aim, and it is in this quality of being concrete useful labour that it produces use-values. (1867/1976, p. 137)

Central to Marx's concept of labour and value generation is exploitation, as Bingqing Xia notes: "The 'classical' Marxist understanding of exploitation focuses on the surplus value produced by one group, labourers, that is taken by another group, capitalists" (2015, p. 89). Labour is considered by Marx as an act of exploitation with the exchange value extracted through workers' productivity greater than the amount of value returned to the labourer. This value differential is referred to in Marxist economics as surplus value: "only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes towards the self-valorization of capital" (Marx, 1867/1976, p. 644). According to Antonio Negri: "The theory of surplus value is in consequence immediately the theory of exploitation" (1991, p. 74), with Marx referring to surplus value in *Capital* (1867/1976), as "the differentia specifica of capitalist production" (p. 769) and the "driving force and the final result of the capitalist process of production" (p. 976). This intrinsic link between surplus value and exploited labour is essential to Marxist economics: "The secret of the self-valorization of capital resolves itself into the fact that it has at its disposal a definite quantity of the unpaid labour of other people" (Marx 1867/1976, p. 672). Due to this essentiality of labour exploitation, value in subsequent Marxist discourses omits non-political or capitalist economies (Roemer, 1982), as Kaan Kangal discusses:

> On one hand, Marxism has a promising critical potential for offering a systematic approach that explains social roots, political consequences, and ideological reflections of the digital media economy. On the other hand, it is challenged by the new forms of capitalism emerging from digital space and information-based value generation, which could not be foreseen or even imagined back in Marx's time. (2016, p. 417)

When applied within a digital media context, Marxist economics define value through the commodification of digital labour. Mark Andrejevic utilises the term 'Exploitation 2.0' to indicate the "interactive capability of new media to exploit the work of being watched" (2002, p. 239; see also, 2009), while Christian Fuchs describes digital media as enabling "the commodification and exploitation of the users' activities and the data they generate" (2014, p. 61). This focus upon 'digital labour' (Burston et al 2010; Scholz, 2013) - particularly regarding social media, where users' data offers a form of surplus value - is indicative of the

limitations of Marxist economics, with the value of digital engagement reduced to capitalist critiques, as Fuchs demonstrates:

> There is no doubt that users are motivated by social and communicative needs and desires to use social media. But the fact that they love these activities does not make them less exploited… Exploitation is measured as the degree of unpaid labour from which companies benefit at the expense of labour. If exploitation does not feel like exploitation, then this does not mean that it does not exist. It is exploitation even if users like it. (2014, p. 64)

Fuchs' rigid Marxist approach to value explicitly overlooks any social or communicative worth of engagement, as Kangal notes: "Fuchs assumes that because Internet users are not paid for their activities, and yet they still produce a greater part of all the value distributed in the digital era, they exemplify a new kind of productive labor that produces surplus" (2016, p. 423). This analysis places considerable emphasis upon the influence of digital structures over agency, as Fuchs demonstrates: "The technological and informational structures of the Internet have to a certain degree changed in order to guarantee the continuity of commodity culture, exploitation, surplus value generation and capital accumulation" (2014, p. 43). This position of Marxist economics opposes participatory culture, which conversely overemphasises agency through audience productivity, as I will discuss later in this chapter. As such, Fuchs and Andrejevic are particularly critical of Henry Jenkins (2006; 2013) and Nico Carpentier (2011), with Fuchs labelling participatory culture as "a rather harmless concept created by white boys… who love their toys" (2014, p. 58), while Andrejevic dismisses Jenkins' affective economics (2006) as a "re-appropriation of marketing rhetoric" (2013, p. 50). Participatory culture, according to Fuchs, "tends to advance a reductionistic understanding of culture that ignores contemporary culture's political economy" (2014, p. 57). While Fuchs' analysis highlights the contrasting positions of Marxist economics and participatory culture within a structurationist analysis, the hard-line focus upon exploitation in Marxist discourse limits value to a singular economic definition. As such, it is essential to explore post-Marxist concepts of value through two differing theoretical approaches, including Jean Baudrillard and Pierre Bourdieu, and firstly, within differing digital economies.

Value as a duality within contrasting gift and market economies

As Henry Jenkins et al note in *Spreadable Media* (2013), digital networks are "shaped by the complex interactions between a 'sharing' economy… and a 'commercial' economy" (p. 66; see also Lessig, 2008), therefore "it's crucial to realize that audiences and producers often follow different logics and operate within different economies" (p. 63). The concept of a 'gift

economy' is particularly useful within this framework, as it acknowledges both the existence and significance of exchanges occurring outside of the capitalist marketplace, and thus, differing forms of value. The gift economy is an anthropological concept (Mauss, 1950/1990), which is applied in a digital context by numerous scholars (e.g. Barbrook, 2003; Currah, 2007; Skågeby, 2010; 2012; Baym, 2011; Kennedy, 2016; Romele and Severo, 2016) to explore exchanges of information in online spaces (Rheingold, 1993). The gift economy positions value through the social exchange of information and knowledge, or as Richard Barbrook describes, "through mutual obligations created by gifts of time and ideas" (1998). Within a digital setting, Jörgen Skågeby notes: "Digital media objects are not always exchanged for money, but in fact traded for other digital media objects in differing kinds of peer-to-peer networks" (2012, p. 197). As Paul Booth summarises: "People create and share content without charge or recompense, or, at least, by charging a variable, user-determined fee… The gift economy builds social bonds" (2010, p. 24). These gift exchanges form 'social bonding value', according to Jacques Godbout and Alain Caillé (1992/1998), which represents "the symbolic value of vehicles of relationships and the social bond" (Pulcini, 2012, p. 150). Within digital media networks, therefore, communicative exchanges offer value through social bonding, as Skågeby notes:

> By lifting the perspective from exchange and use values to include social bonding values that people ascribe to digital media objects (compared to physical objects) we also shift focus towards new sets of contiguous activities, and ultimately practices and representations. Thus media objects in a social context are perhaps best conceptualized as socio-digital objects. (2012, pp. 197-198)

The crucial difference, therefore, between market and gift economies lies within sharing, which while 'economically damaging' to the former, is beneficial to strengthening social ties and bonding to the latter (Jenkins et al, 2013, p. 63). In his 1983 book, *The Gift*, Lewis Hyde differentiates between commodities and gifts, with gifts exchanged to resolve conflicts or expand social networks (p. 29). Conversely, "to convert an idea into a commodity means, broadly speaking, to establish a boundary of some sort so that the idea cannot move from person to person without a toll or fee. Its benefit or usefulness must then be reckoned and paid for" (p. 105). While not explicitly discussed by Hyde, this distinction demonstrates the differing forms of value within market and gift economies, by aligning commodities with exchange value, and gifts with social bonding value. As Jenkins et al note: "A commodity has value, while a gift has worth" (2013, p. 67). While I disagree with separating value and worth, arguing instead that value is multi-discursive, this fundamental difference between market and gift economies provides a useful value distinction: "The gift economy functions as an analogy for the informal and socially based exchanges which characterize some

aspects of the digital ethos" (Jenkins et al, 2013, p. 65). This discussion of gift and market exchanges however, is not to imply separate economies within the digital media marketplace, with both models inextricably entwined, according to Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas:

> The media economy [is] a complex system, including not only firms, producers, institutions and consumers, but also lobbyists, fans, minimum-wage workers, criminals, hackers, activists, enthusiasts, technicians, and many others… the nature of their interactions is determined not by character or morality, nor by technology… but by the institutional contexts produced by the collision of different types of economies. (2015, p. 173)

Lobato and Thomas theorise this as the 'informal economy', "an analytic concept that refers to a range of activities and processes occurring outside the official, authorized spaces of the economy" (p. 7). Within the informal economy, contrasting values are intertwined as a duality - simultaneously restricting and facilitating the other, as with structure and agency. Paul Booth (2010) assesses this duality within his 'Digi-Gratis' economy, a "mash-up of the market economy and the gift economy" (p. 24), which "retains key elements of both economies, but exists as unique unto itself. Importantly, it is *not* a convergence or a hybrid of the two. It is the simultaneous existence of both economies as both separated and conjoined" (p. 24, emphasis in the original). In the Digi-Gratis economy, "money is not exchanged, but retains elements of a market structure" (p. 24), with Booth suggesting that "the Digi-Gratis, therefore, is not quite a gift economy, and not quite a market economy" (p. 25).

These interwoven economic models within the digital media marketplace demonstrate the restrictions of a singular approach to value, and the complexity of a 'mash-up' economic model. This approach further highlights the restrictions of Marxist discourse, which, due to its focus upon structures, does not allow for the implicit agency within Digi-Gratis and informal media economies, whereby such audience activity is positioned as exploitative labour. As demonstrated by the duality of gift and market economies, considering value as separable between differing economic models (i.e. exchange value within a market economy, or social worth within a gift economy, as Jenkins et al proposed), is limiting within the complex digital media marketplace. While these models crucially theorise value not as singular, but as a duality, I suggest that value can be further developed through sign value (Baudrillard, 1968/1996; 1970/1998; 1972/1981), cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1989/1996; 1993). As such, I will explore a differing route out of Marxist concepts of value through this

sociological literature, which approaches value outside of classical economics, and instead through social structures and semiotic meanings.

Fields and signs – the multi-discursive value of intangible commodities

Jean Baudrillard's concept of sign value emerged through his early works, *The System of Objects* (1968/1996), *The Consumer Society* (1970/1998) and *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972/1981), which explores the system of objects and signs within everyday life. This discourse can be aligned with the shift in focus from production to consumption as the determining factor in the circulation of commodities (Bolin, 2011, p. 36). As Baudrillard states:

> It is not the quantity of money that takes on value, as in the economic logic of equivalence, but rather money spent, sacrificed, eaten up according to a logic of difference and challenge. Every act of purchase is thus simultaneously an economic act and a transeconomic act of the production of differential sign value. (1972/1981, p. 113)

Sign value, according to Barton Beebe, is rooted in linguistic notions of worth: "Baudrillard works not from the classical economic notions of use value and exchange value, but from the linguistic, Saussurean notion of value, that is, value as relational difference" (2008, p. 62). This approach, therefore, considers "a commodity's differential value as against all other commodities, and thus the commodity's capacity to differentiate its consumer" (2008, p. 62). Sign value is concerned with the philosophical "marginal differences" (Baudrillard, 1970/1998, p. 90) linked to prestige, with Baudrillard arguing the need to move beyond the 'concrete' and 'particular' concept of use value (1972/1981, p. 130). Perhaps due to the differing research traditions of sign value, use value, and exchange value, applying the former within an economic value framework is potentially challenging, as Bolin notes:

> Sign value, however, is somewhat problematic as a concept. Although it is easy to see the point Baudrillard is trying to make - to highlight the increasing importance of signs and symbols in the production of economic value - it is not entirely clear from his writings how this value should be related to exchange value. (2011, p. 36; see also Golding and Murdock, 2000)

Despite this ambiguity, sign value is a useful conceptualisation of value, as it enables the separation of tangible commodities from the intangible sign commodities within the digital media marketplace (Benkler, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). In this context, Bolin aligns sign value with audience production and agency (2011, p. 122), which can also be positioned

alongside the value inherent within the gift economy. Furthermore, this semiotic approach to value, and the significance of intangible commodities, can be understood through the works of Pierre Bourdieu. In *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993), Bourdieu presents 'symbolic capital', as representing the value of intangible commodities:

> Alongside the pursuit of 'economic' profit, which treats the cultural goods business as a business like any other… there is also room for the *accumulation of symbolic capital.* 'Symbolic capital' is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate. (p. 75, emphasis in the original)

Symbolic capital exists alongside 'economic profit', in Bourdieu's fields model, which covers both material and symbolic production (p. 20), with value, therefore, not limited by a singular economic definition. As Bolin notes: "Fields of cultural production include the production and evaluation of cultural expressions in symbolic form" (2011, p. 26). 'Fields', in Bourdieu's work, represent various social and institutional arenas, and the politics that are negotiated within these 'social universes':

> As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independence of those of politics and the economy. The existence of the writer, as fact and as value, is inseparable from the existence of the literary field as an autonomous universe endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practices and works. (pp. 162-163)

Production, therefore, occurs within the context of the 'laws' and 'institutions' of a specific field (p. 163), with Bourdieu's fields of production enabling analysis of the act of production, and the value inherent within the field, as Bolin states:

> The specific attraction of the field model is that it tries to capture the dynamic processes of cultural production, involving not only cultural producers in a narrow sense, that is, artists, authors, film directors, composers, etc., but also other agents surrounding these producers of cultural expressions: curators, critics, sponsors, cultural institutions (for example, museums, film festivals, book fairs) as well as prizes. (2011, p. 26)

The positioning of people in a field is portrayed by Bourdieu as a power struggle, with fields representing a 'sphere of power' (p. 164), whereby people are positioned based on the manner of their production. In this sense, Bourdieu's fields of production can be aligned with structuration theory (Weik, 2014, p. 296) as Bourdieu notes the effects of structure and agency upon each other within the field of power. Within this model, Bourdieu also considers the value of differing forms of production based upon a person's 'position' within the field:

"The characteristics of the positions occupied by intellectuals and artists in the field of power can be specified as a function of the positions they occupy in the literary or artistic field" (p. 165). Bourdieu considers smaller-scale production as 'art for art's sake' (p. 167), with production restricted for use by other producers, the value of which is associated with the autonomy of production, and is "unaffected by outer demands and influences from other areas of social space" (Bolin, 2011, p. 28). Conversely, larger-scale production is directed towards a marketplace, with value attributed in economic exchange terms. In a digital media context, H. Cecelia Suhr (2012) places social networking sites within the field of cultural production model, describing this form of media as a 'digital battlefield' (p. 13), with social capital "acquired through popularity" (p. 27). While Bourdieu's work recognises differing forms of value, which can be aligned with structuration theory, there is a limit to his fields model, which emphasises "the two fundamental principles of differentiation – economic capital and cultural capital" (1989/1996, p. 5). This privileging of economic value (Bolin, 2011, p. 26) obscures other forms of value within a field (Benson, 1999, p. 485), and, as Hesmondhalgh notes:

> Bourdieu has [little] to say about large scale 'heteronomous' commercial cultural production, given not only its enormous social and cultural importance in the contemporary world, but also its significance in determining conditions in the sub field. (2006, p. 217)

Within a digital media context, the limits of Bourdieu's approach to production are further demonstrated through 'digitisation', which Bolin suggests "can be said to have liberated texts from the industrially defined platforms of the pre-digital era" (2011, p. 25). As I suggest through this theoretical framework, value in the digital media marketplace is inherently multi-discursive, with Bourdieu's fields model limiting other forms of semiotic value (such as sign value). This is particularly apparent through the convergence of production and consumption online, according to Bolin:

> The boundary between production and consumption is dissolving with the advent of new digital technologies, which provide ordinary media users with tools for production. This is naturally true: the means of consumption is most often also the means of production. (2011, p. 26)

The 'consumptive production' of digital media, Bolin states, "results in the production of sign exchange value at the social level of differentiation between individuals" (2011, p. 38), with engagement (in this production-led definition) holding sign value through the 'social difference, status and legitimacy' (as Bolin notes) associated with intangible digital commodities. Bolin's interpretation of sign value, however, serves to emphasise digital

media users' agency, which conflicts with Bourdieu's structurationist position. Addressing the concept of cultural capital, therefore, both readdresses this disparity, and establishes another critical form of value within my framework. Cultural capital considers the embodied value associated with knowledge, tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills, and resources, and according to Eugenia Siapera: "Audiences will respond to media representations in a manner that reflects the cultural capital they possess" (2010, p. 169). In the above discussion, I noted that cultural capital is concerned with power and 'position' within a given field (Webb et al, 2002, p. 28), and through this focus, Webb et al suggest that "Bourdieu tends to collapse various social groups and social experiences into a single group, a single experience" (2002, p. 147; see also Frow, 1995). Within a media analysis, this approach is potentially restricting, as Siapera notes:

> [Cultural capital] appears to imply that engagement with the media is somehow determined by one's background; from this point of view, the 'power', or at least the role, of the media is disregarded. This approach does not tell us anything about the actual outcome of encountering the media, or the cultural capital acquired or lost in the process. (2010, p. 170)

Despite the limitations of cultural capital, this concept highlights the personal nature of value dependent upon embodied dispositions. While cultural capital emphasises power and position within the field, it also understands that value can be gained or lost through a person's specific dispositions (often class and education), extending beyond a specific text and users' agency. Bourdieu refers to these dispositions as 'habitus': "The durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations… [which produces] practices" (1972/1977, p. 78). Habitus is durable and transposable, and is the product of early socialisation, with a persons' dispositions carried across contexts. People thus "respond to cultural rules and contexts in a variety of ways… but the responses are always largely determined - regulated - by where (and who) we have been in culture" (Webb et al, 2002, pp. 36-37). This interpretation of value demonstrates the duality of structure and agency, as value is embedded within the habitus, with cultural capital gained or lost through a person's embodied, transposable dispositions.

Addressing value through this sociological discourse demonstrates the theoretical plurality of value, which is conceptualised in the works of Baudrillard and Bourdieu through semiotics, prestige, rules of the field, and embodied dispositions. In Marxist discourse, value was assessed as a singularity – rooted within economic terms through the exploitation of labour. To challenge this position, I sought two differing pathways out of Marxian literature, by first demonstrating value as a duality of market and sharing economies within the complex

'mashup' digital media marketplace, before addressing value as multi-discursive through Baudrillard and Bourdieu. These varying positions demonstrate the plurality of 'value' as a concept, and the limitations of adopting a particular theoretical position. Value, I suggest, is multi-discursive and I will conclude this framework, therefore, by critically aligning my study with Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006), which offers a framework for plurality, across varying contextual 'worlds'.

Complicating value across differing contexts

In my study, I align this theoretical framework of value with digital media engagement, to explore the multi-faceted concept of value across my respondents' varying media practices. Adopting such an approach is critical to understanding the nuances of value within a contemporary digital setting. As Bolin notes in *Value and the Media*:

> The uses of the concept [value] need to be broadened, not for its own sake but because a delimited use of the word also delimits our appreciation of the wide variety of phenomena with their own special logics for value accumulation. (2011, p. 122)

Assessing value within digital media discourse, as Bolin suggests, offers a greater understanding of how and why audiences engage with digital media, with much existing work in this field (as I will discuss in the following section) failing to address the plurality of value within the wide-range of digital media engagement. Having critiqued value through Marxist discourse, differing economic models, and sociological work, the position I reach regarding value aligns with and develops Boltanski and Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006). Within their work, the authors outline their 'polity model', whereby market, political, and philosophical notions of value "each embodies the model in a specific way depending on whether the order of worth is based, for example, on wealth, esteem, the general will, or competence" (p. 65). Through a comparison of texts, Boltanski and Thévenot suggest "each of these [value] philosophies proposes a different principle of order" (p. 14), noting the restrictions within "some of sociology's most common presuppositions", particularly regarding "the way sociology treats beliefs, values, or representations" (p. 16). Positioning value across differing principles of order offers a framework to assess plurality, whereby differing forms of value can be conceptualised beyond a specific mode of discourse. As Boltanski and Thévenot note:

> The problems raised by relations among worlds cannot be dismissed by associating the various worlds and the worths they manifest with different persons, cultures or milieus, the way classical sociology treats relations among values and groups. To

attach persons to worlds would mean pinning them down in a single form of worth… human beings, unlike objects, can manifest themselves in different worlds. We are investigating the possibility that people can reach justifiable agreements despite the availability of multiple principles of agreement, and can do so without acknowledging a relativism of values. (p. 215)

Through their polity model, Boltanski and Thévenot not only demonstrate how value is multi-discursive, but provide a framework for operationalising value across varying contexts: "In a differentiated society, each person regularly has to confront situations stemming from distinct worlds, has to recognize such situations and prove capable of adjusting to them" (p. 216). In this model, value differs depending on the order of worth, with people therefore negotiating various forms of value as they move between contextual 'worlds' (for example, work or home life). My approach to value builds on Boltanski and Thévenot's broad model, therefore, by applying this work within a single, specific 'world' - a digital media setting - exploring how value is differentiated across various engagement contexts within this world, and thus reimagining the order of worths in a specific contemporary setting. In this theoretical framework, I have assessed the plurality of value through an exploration of differing concepts, in order to establish my approach within this study. In addition to value, I also aim to complicate existing discourses of engagement, to understand how value can be applied to my participants' digital media practices. In the next section, I will offer a critical evaluation of existing discourse, suggesting that the over-emphasis upon agency through productive engagement is reductive in studies of digital audiences.

Defining engagement through audience productivity, and the privileging of fandom

As Charles H. Davis notes: "Engagement has become a key concept in scholarly research on media consumption" (2013, p. 181), and within this section, I will assess how prominent discourse, including Henry Jenkins' affective economics (2006) are rooted within John Fiske's notion of audience productivity (1992), privileging fandom within the digital media marketplace. Through this critique, I suggest fan-led definitions are reductive and emphasise agency over structure, therefore aligning my study within the emergent body of literature from Ben Light (2014), Sora Park (2017), and Rhiannon Bury (2018) that complicates this approach. Through a critical review of this significant literature, I will identify the gaps in existing discourse, and how I aim to address these absences within my study. By positioning my literature review around structuration theory, in my analysis of value, I questioned Marxist work that over-emphasised the significance of structures. Similarly, in this section, a structurationist approach means that too much emphasis cannot be placed upon users' agency regarding their potential capacity to act through digital media engagement.

Much of the dominant discourse regarding engagement, however, accentuates agency through audience productivity, redefining digital users as producers (Papacharissi, 2007), or even *produsers* (Bruns, 2007; 2008a; 2008b), with Bruns' work particularly emphasising the importance of textual production in understanding digital media engagement. In 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom' (1992) John Fiske outlines three types of audience productivity: semiotic, enunciative, and textual (p. 37). Semiotic productivity, according to Fiske, regards the "making of meanings of social identity and of social experience from the semiotic resources of the cultural commodity" (p. 37), and is "essentially interior" (p. 37), with social communication of these meanings considered to be enunciative productivity. Textual productivity concerns the more tangible production and circulation of fan-made texts amongst other fans (p. 39), with these concepts interlinked, according to Fiske:

> All popular audiences engage in varying degrees of semiotic productivity, producing meanings and pleasures that pertain to their social situation out of the products of the culture industries. But fans often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help to define – the fan community. (p. 30)

Fiske's definition of audience productivity fundamentally ingrains engagement within semiotic and textual production - with the latter particularly indicative of a fan-like conceptualisation of engagement. As Matt Hills notes, Fiske's audience productivity has been "reified and distorted over time in fan studies" (2013, p. 132), with textual productivity having gained particular resonance in fan-led digital media research. Models such as hypertextuality demonstrate this emphasis on textual and semiotic productivity, which considers "the distributed processes in which users interact with texts and with each other through texts" (Jensen, 2010, p. 91; see also Bolter, 1991; Aarseth, 1997). In this hypertextual model - a development of another Fiskean concept, intertextuality (1987) - audiences are engaged in semiotic and textual production, adopting the roles of both 'producers' and 'receivers' (Livingstone, 2004a, p. 4). This entrenchment of engagement with audience productivity is dominant in much digital media research, positioning the web as the "most massive example, so far, of a multi-modal hypertext" (Jensen, 2010. p. 91) due to its multiple communicative functionalities (Condon and Čech, 1996, p. 65).

Work which emphasises this connection between engagement and audience productivity through Fiskean discourse has, as Jonathan Gray notes (2010, p. 143), received a greater amount of attention in fan studies and participatory culture work, whereby engagement has become conflated with assessing levels of audience productivity, with value similarly

reduced by this approach. However, within 'plural' digital audiences, according to Sonia Livingstone, there exists 'diverse' individuals (2004a, p. 4), who demonstrate varying levels of semiotic and textual productivity - referred to by Jenkins as the 'participation gap' (2006, p. 258). As Davis notes:

> A clear distinction may be drawn between on the one hand the fan and on the other hand the less involved media consumers: the passive television viewer, the convenience-seeking transient cross-media grazer, the media multitasker, the functionally illiterate media consumer, and the uninterested non-member of an audience. (2013, p. 180)

Davis' bundling together of these various audience roles demonstrates the privileging of productive users in this dominant discourse of engagement. Value is thus aligned with fan-like practices, based on the restrictive understanding of engagement as determined by high levels of audience productivity. Furthermore, according to Davis: "Audience engagement occurs in a power law distribution of participation" (2013, p. 183), with fans positioned at the top of the participatory digital media marketplace, with less-engaged users at the bottom, due to their limited capacity to act. This focus upon fans within engagement discourse places considerable emphasis upon the potential capacity to act, further embedding engagement as an act of productive agency, while marginalising the practices of the wider, plural audience.

Engagement as the potential capacity to act

In his influential 2006 work *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins echoes this approach, positioning users with the highest levels of productivity at the vanguard of contemporary audiencehood (p. 245) through his concept of affective economics, an economic model for media industries, "which seek to understand the emotional underpinnings of consumer decision-making as a driving force behind viewing and purchasing decisions" (pp. 61-62). Affective economics offers a prominent example of audience productivity discourse, as it positions audiences who seek 'emotional' engagement with media texts as the 'ideal' media consumer:

> According to the logic of affective economics, the ideal consumer is active, emotionally engaged, and socially networked. Watching the advert or consuming the product is no longer enough; the company invites the audience inside the brand community. (p. 20)

The ideal media consumer, as described by Jenkins, is clearly a committed, productively engaged fan - an individual whose online semiotic and textual productivity is consistent and

visible to the media industries. This 'ideal' consumer, however, only represents a small section of the 'plural' audience, as noted previously by Livingstone, demonstrating a parallel between Jenkins' ideal media consumer and Davis' aforementioned distinction between 'the fan' and 'less involved media consumers'. In both discourses, fan-like productivity is regarded in higher esteem than less productive practice, which subsequently aligns value with specific, productive engagement. Furthermore, within affective economics, 'consumers' are granted "much greater control over the flow of media into their homes" (p. 64), with Jenkins' interchangeable employment of 'media consumer' and 'fan' particularly problematic, with fan-like engagement not distinguished from the practice of others within the plural audience. Research from Christy Dena (2009), Robert Pratten (2010), and Eric Evans (2011, p. 12), however, suggests that only a small minority of an audience will engage with media texts as fans do. Affective economics, therefore, is only really applicable to Jenkins' 'ideal media consumer' - i.e. the fan. This narrow focus upon fan engagement epitomises literature within this discourse, which ignores large sections of the plural audience, despite having identified that these users exist, reducing engagement to a practice of fans. This approach presupposes that engagement either does not occur within other members of the plural audience, or that any engagement that does occur lacks value.

Mirca Madianou and Daniel Milller's concept of polymedia (2012) can also be aligned with Jenkins' convergence theory by presenting media as an integrated structure, representing "an approach to media use that treats the media rather as a symbolic environment than as individual channels of communication" (Jansson, 2015, p. 36). According to Madianou and Miller, a wide variety of digital media choices exist, with users inherently owning the 'skills' and 'confidence' to use numerous forms of digital media (p. 136). Within a polymedia framework, the significance of individual media sources ('mediums') is lessened due to the existence of alternatives, and the heightened potential capacity of audiences to engage with these alternatives: "The very nature of each individual medium is radically changed by the wider environment of polymedia, since it now exists in a state of contrast, but also synergy, with all others" (p. 125). Polymedia, therefore, highlights the agency of audiences, through the choice of available mediums within the digital media marketplace.

Adam Tyma et al also provide a working definition of 'polymediation', within which individuals "simultaneously act as producers, audiences, and critics who *can* describe, react, examine, and assess the implications of ongoing discourses" (2014, p. xx, emphasis added). While Tyma et al continue to emphasise audience productivity through the capacity to act, this approach suggests that the potential for semiotic and textual productivity may not always be fulfilled (though this is not specifically stated by the authors). Polymedia defines engagement

as intrinsically linked to the agency of choice within a vast digital media marketplace, and the potential capacity to act through audience productivity. As with affective economics, assuming all users within a plural audience contain the capacity to act is problematic. Firstly, such an approach limits engagement to specific sections of the audience, secondly, it assumes that all users inherently desire to engage productively, and finally, the value of engagement is resultantly linked to the potential capacity to act.

However, placing *polymediation* discourse within structuration theory allows for engagement to be conceptualised outside of fan-led discourses. Within polymediation, users both contain the potential for constant semiotic and textual productivity, and have the availability of choice to engage with every digital media source available to them - although they do not (and cannot) always fulfil this potential capacity to act, despite the array of discourse which suggests otherwise. As Mark Stewart notes: "Digital streaming presents a facade that any content is available to the viewer (2016, p. 696), with Tama Leaver further suggesting that the "potential for, and indeed expectation of, near-synchronous global distribution of media [is] not fulfilled" (2008, p. 146). Polymediation, however, recognises that engagement potentially exists within the structures of the digital media marketplace, and is therefore able to be conceptualised in both a fan-like sense and in other forms - although it is important to acknowledge that other forms of engagement are not elaborated within this discourse. While polymediation allows for engagement to be conceptualised in both a dominant fan-like sense and in other forms, the assumption that all users carry a sense of purpose, and thus fulfil their potential capacity to act is still prevalent within this discourse. In this study, I propose that engagement can occur in numerous forms through the structures and agencies that facilitate and restrict digital media use, with the value of engagement not limited to fan-like practices.

Gaps in fan-like discourse and the emergence of engagement within a scale

My data suggests that only some users engage with digital media texts productively, and the significance of purpose and the capacity to act is widely over-emphasised in dominant discourses (Kreiss et al, 2011, p. 255). Furthermore, if digital engagement is assessed through the duality of structure and agency, then users' consumption of digital media can be considered as being more diverse than much of the contemporary literature suggests. There is, however, a small emerging body of research that recognises this reductive discourse, with Ben Light (2014), Sora Park (2017), and Rhiannon Bury (2018) offering various approaches to complicating engagement. In *Disconnecting with Social Networking Sites* (2014), Light discusses the need for analysis to "go beyond discussions of use and non-use

and to encompass understandings of how we make SNSs work for us, or not, on a daily basis in terms of their diversity and mutability" (p. 4). In Light's work, he notes that focusing on productive engagement "discriminates against the invisible and other", with work in this field missing practice that "we might not see" due to looking for "elements of connectivity" (p. 9). Light addresses this disparity through users' disconnection with social networking sites as a form of engagement: "Disconnection makes connectivity possible. We cannot be connected to everything all the time… and therefore we have to disconnect in some way in order to make the connections we want to emphasise at a particular point in time feasible" (p. 155). While Light crucially acknowledges non-productive forms of engagement, his concept of 'disconnection' is still presented as a purposeful act, which is rooted in users' agency.

Adopting a different approach, in *Digital Capital* (2017), Sora Park proposes a 'varied spectrum of engagement' (p. 13), noting that "digital engagement is a complex process with multiple factors" (p. 44), plotting engagement based upon users' levels of digital capital: "a predetermined set of dispositions that influences how people engage with digital technology" (p. 27). Adopting a similar model, Rhiannon Bury also plots engagement on a scale through her 'participatory continuum', which features "practices that require lesser amounts of involvement in fandom on one end and those that are bound up with fandom on the other end" (p. 92). The majority of fans, Bury suggests, are "clustered on the 'less involved' end of the continuum, doing more than viewing but not directly engaging in the hallmark practices associated with community and participatory culture" (p. 93). By plotting engagement within a scale, both Park and Bury theorise that not only is engagement varied, but that the focus upon audience productivity within existing discourse has "overrepresented the fan positioned at the 'most involved' end of the continuum" (Bury, p. 107). These two approaches crucially reduce the emphasis upon purpose and the capacity to act in defining users' engagement. Additional studies from Aviva Rosenstein and August Grant (1997), and Robert LaRose (2010), however, also highlight the 'recursive quality' (Webster, 2011, p. 46) of media engagement as often lacking in specific purpose. While Light, Park, and Bury vitally complicate engagement beyond productive limitations, there is still little focus on engagement as the habitual use of familiar tools (Simon, 1997, p. 99). Livingstone elaborates upon this proposition: "People are, in their everyday reception of television and other media contents, often participatory seekers after meaning, not always accepting but sometimes negotiating or even resisting textual meanings" (2005, p. 30). While Livingstone's assertion still implies agency, as audiences are intentionally 'seeking', 'negotiating', or 'resisting' meanings, there is a recognition that users do not always fulfil their potential capacity to act.

Within the dominant discourses of engagement, the significance of audience productivity and the potential capacity to act is overemphasised - with the value of engagement subsequently restricted to fan-like definitions. Through this privileging of productive fandom, engagement is positioned as a benchmark for successful media output, with the concept of fandom offering "an ideal mode of engagement and use that cultural industries aim to facilitate" (Sandvoss, 2015, p. 358). Productive engagement, therefore, has become the pinnacle of digital media consumption, with anything else a failure of digital media to engage audiences' capacity to act through semiotic, enunciative, and textual productivity. In addition to exploring engagement through disconnection, a range of capital, and a scale of participation, therefore, I suggest the need to further question the focus upon agency (regarding both the purposeful capacity to act, and audience productivity) in existing discourse. By assessing habitual, everyday practice, alongside the differing levels of participation, I conceptualise engagement in numerous, differentiated forms in this study, developing the important emerging work of Light (2014), Park (2017), and Bury (2018), through drawing these discourses together into a multi-dimensional approach. Having established the gaps in existing discourses of value and engagement, in the following section, I will address the methodological approach of my study through generation, aligning these narratives with the work I have assessed so far, through critiquing the notion of a shared generational 'digital habitus'.

Challenging 'digital natives' and the notion of clear generational divides

Within the sociological discourses of value presented earlier in this chapter, 'habitus' was only briefly introduced as an analytical tool to describe a person's durable and installed dispositions. As the concept of habitus, according to Zizi Papacharissi and Emily Easton, "invites both ambiguity and flexibility in terms of how it is interpreted" (2013, p 171; see also Park, 2009), its deployment within this section of the literature review can be expanded into a larger analysis of the generational predispositions of my participants. Habitus is a useful concept in understanding digital users' "embodied dispositions" (Couldry, 2004, p. 358) as it aligns media engagement within the context of structure and agency (see Giddens, 1979. p. 121). To refer to a predominant 'digital habitus', therefore, is to understand that an embodied predisposition towards understanding meanings exists across a generational cohort's media engagement. As Hendrik Kleinsmiede suggests: "Acclimatization and habituation are crucial before we can speak of a collective digital *habitus*" (2001, p. 91, emphasis in the original).

In their 2013 chapter 'In the Habitus of the New: Structure, Agency, and the Social Media Habitus', Papacharissi and Easton apply habitus within a new media setting to "trace how structure and agency are evoked and reconciled via the practices of everyday (mediated) society" (p. 171). Habitus, according to Papacharissi and Easton is: "The product of long and ongoing processes of socialization that impart practices taken for granted" (p. 172), with digital habitus (or 'social media habitus' as it is framed by the authors) extrapolated to refer to "a set of dispositions that emerge out of the social architecture of social media and frame but also constantly invite the remediation of agency" (p. 172). Within the convergent digital media marketplace, digital habitus represents users' shared understanding of media structures, and their agency within this environment.

The implications of a united digital habitus can be aligned with the 'digital natives' concept - a term coined by Marc Prensky (2001), which is applied (in both scholarly and popular discourse) to refer to digital users born after 1980. This theory groups together a large cohort of people who "were raised in an environment in which they were surrounded by technology" (Akcayır et al, 2016, p. 435), and thus assumes inherent technological capabilities and characteristics within all 'digital natives'. As John Palfrey and Urs Gasser note: "[Digital natives] all have access to networked technologies. And they all have the skills to use those technologies" (2008, p. 1). Digital native discourse infers a universal digital habitus, with the understanding of how to access and operate digital technology inherent across this cohort - it is ingrained within the digital native, "and they've never known any other way of life" (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008, p. 2). The popularity of the 'digital natives' discourse is reflected in numerous parallel theories, including 'homo-zappiens' (Veen and Vrakking, 2006), and Don Tapscott's 'net generation' (1999; see also Tapscott and Williams, 2008), all of which emphasise the emergence of a younger, 'net savvy' generation (Levin and Arafeh, 2002), born from 1980 onwards (Prensky 2001; Akcayır et al, 2016)

This concept, however, is problematic for a number of reasons (Thomas, 2011, p. 3), not least as it positions non-'digital natives' as 'digital immigrants' - users whose understanding and mastery of technology is 'learned' (Prensky, 2012, p. 69) and thus inferior to natives' inherent digital habitus, understanding, and ability. In addition to assumptions regarding ingrained skills and dispositions, many studies of 'digital natives' also assume certain digital media practices. In Palfrey and Gasser's *Born Digital* (2008), 'digital natives' are portrayed as unconcerned about online privacy, engaging in a "practice of disclosing vast amounts of personal data" (p. 24) to form and manage "shifting, hybrid" online identities (p. 36). Marc Prensky also describes 'digital natives'' 'online life' as "an entire strategy for how to live, survive, and thrive in the 21st Century" (2012, p. 88). As Neil Selwyn suggests:

> Whilst varying in their precise detail, all these accounts confer a common set of characteristics on to current generations of children and young people; not least an innate 'hardwired' affinity with digital technologies. Such accounts convey a sense of digital technology being an accepted and expected condition under which young people now conduct their lives. (2016, p. 365)

As I will discuss in Chapter 2, I conducted interviews within a specific age range (20-30) in order to interrogate this notion of a shared generational habitus, with my data suggesting that the 'digital natives' narrative is reductive and overlooks a range of engagement practices and differing levels of digital capital. While my respondents have grown up within the 'social architecture' of a digital media environment, as outlined by Papacharissi and Easton, there existed a wide range of technological skill and savvy across my data, allowing me to challenge this monolithic 'digital natives' discourse. As Kleinsmiede noted, a broad sense of 'acclimatization' and 'habituation' are indicative of digital habitus, with my data suggesting that differing predispositions and habitus exist across a relatively small number of alleged digital native respondents. As Buckingham notes:

> The digital natives argument also overstates the differences between generations, and understates the diversity within them. Many so-called digital natives are no more intensive users of digital media than many so-called digital immigrants. (2011, p. x)

While this 'technoevangelist' discourse (Thomas, 2011, p. 4) is not necessarily echoed across the literature, there are numerous (positive and negative) discourses regarding 'digital natives', with many debating certain digital characteristics, such as problem-solving, ingenuity, disinterest in privacy, enthusiasm, and technological proficiency (Hargittai, 2010; Joiner et al, 2013). Subsequent research thus attempts to debunk this technoevangelist narrative that has crossed from academic to popular discourse, including danah boyd's *It's Complicated*:

> There is little doubt that youth must have access, skills, and media literacy to capitalize on opportunities in a networked society, but focusing on these individual capacities obscures how underlying structural formations shape teens' access to opportunities and information. (2014, p. 195)

While debate exists around the ubiquity of 'digital natives'' technological skills, there is relatively little literature that questions the resultant assumptions regarding practice, and how these skills (whether present or not) affect digital media engagement. While Buckingham accurately states that many 'digital natives' are not as technologically proficient as often assumed (see also Sue Bennett et al, 2008), my data suggests this argument can be

developed further. As boyd contends within her study of early teens: "Far from being a generational issue, there are significant differences in media literacy and technical skills even within age cohorts" (2014, pp. 194-195). In *Media Generations* (2017), Bolin compares mobile phone use across various Swedish age cohorts (1930s, 1950s and 1980s), demonstrating the "inter-generational transmission" between generations which are "influenced by each other" (p. 51). Significantly, Bolin dismisses the notion of clear divides between generational cohorts, as "no cohort exists in isolation from the others" (pp. 50-51), even within larger generational gaps. My use of generation, and specifically the 'digital natives' concept, develops Bolin's assertion by critically interrogating this popular and enduring narrative. Through my work on digital capital and neoliberalism, I argue that the variety of digital media practices within my data are seemingly not anchored to notions of generation, as the 'digital natives' concept suggests, demonstrating the need to consider media engagement beyond this problematic discourse.

As noted from the outset of this chapter, I have used structuration theory to assess existing work across the various narrative threads. In the first section, I suggested that Marxist media theory (Andrejevic, 2002; 2009; 2010; 2013; Fuchs, 2010; 2012; 2014) placed particular emphasis upon structures over agency. In the second section, this approach was contrasted through productive engagement discourse (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Madianou and Milller, 2012; Davis, 2013), which conversely highlights agency over structure, with neither body of literature aligning with the structurationist approach adopted by Webster (2014). Having established the link between digital habitus and the so-called 'digital native' generation, in the next section I will develop this approach through a critical assessment of participatory culture, which I position as oppositional to Marxist analyses of digital media.

Aligning 'digital natives' with audience productivity through participatory culture

There is much debate regarding the role of users within the digital media marketplace (see Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2002), with the terminology chosen to define this relationship between user and media reflecting the theoretical framework and assumptions of each study. As Web 2.0 arose in the mid-2000s, many studies began defining or re-defining audiences against this technological backdrop (Ridell, 2012, p. 19), with digital media users in this environment "generally seen, by academics and professionals alike, as purposeful actors who know a good deal about the media at their disposal" (2014, p. 13). Participatory culture can be placed within this research movement, with prominent studies from Henry Jenkins (1992; 2006), Sonia Livingstone (2005), Zizi Papacharissi (2007), Axel Bruns (2007; 2008a; 2008b), Jim Macnamara (2010), and Nico Carpentier (2011) moving away from

considering audiences as consumers, with users instead able to contribute and produce within the digital media marketplace. Standing opposed to the aforementioned Marxist media scholars, due to its celebratory focus upon production, participatory culture demonstrates the structure and agency polarity within digital media research.

When discussing fan-led engagement discourse, I noted an overemphasis upon audience productivity. This also occurs in participatory culture work, which considers the heightened *potential* of audiences to produce (both semiotically and textually), and the subsequent blurring of traditional consumer, producer, and user roles (Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 35; Ross and Nightingale, 2003, p. 144). As Livingstone demonstrates: "Audiences and users of the new media are increasingly active – selective, self-directed, producers as well as receivers of text" (2004a, p. 75). This focus upon users' production potential led to the assertion that "there are no audiences, only players" (Coleman and Dyer-Witheford, 2007, p. 947), and that "the audience is dead" (Bruns, 2008a, p. 254). In *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond*, Axel Bruns coins the term 'produsers' to describe this participatory, production-led relationship between user and media:

> Whether in this chain participants act more as users (utilizing existing resources) or more as producers (adding new information) varies over time and across tasks; overall, they take on a hybrid user/producer role which inextricably interweaves both forms of participation, and thereby become produsers. (2008a, p. 21)

Within Bruns' definition of 'produsers', digital audiences permanently engage in both the use and production of digital media content, which conflicts with previous work that emphasises the recursive and habitual nature of much media use. As Webster notes: "This vision of free-wheeling agents can sometimes cause us to forget just how deeply media use is embedded in the structures of everyday life" (2014, p. 44). Produsers' agency appears to hold dominance over structures, as produsers engage in all forms of participation as and when they wish: "The fact that digital technologies seem to have put users in control makes this way of seeing users all the more appealing to theorists" (Webster, 2014, p. 12). In this celebratory hypothesis, audiences can be positioned as both agents and structures - using and producing media simultaneously, and able to create and mould the digital media marketplace. According to Bruns: "Produsers engage not in a traditional form of content production, but are instead involved in produsage – the collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement" (2008a, p. 21). This problematic focus of produsage upon 'continuous improvement' means that users must *always* be engaged in audience productivity. Not only do produsers have exaggerated productivity potential within this model, but they use this potential at all times to build and

create content collaboratively. This, as Macgilchrist notes, is not the case with much digital media engagement: "Produsers are assumed to always already have a power to act, although of course they (we) will not use this potentiality at all times" (2013, p. 100). While Bruns' produsage concept is challenged in further research, this participatory analysis aligns the above fan-led discourses of engagement with the technoevangelist 'digital natives' concept, through the emphasis upon audience productivity and tech-savvy - both of which are linked to users' presumed agency. As Daniel Kreiss et al note, this emphasis is particularly problematic:

> Many of us who study new media still proceed too often from the assumptions that peer production is radically participatory, egalitarian, efficient, and psychologically fulfilling. As a result, we all too easily echo the line that peer production is revolutionizing the way that we produce and consume information, democratizing culture, and fostering a robust public domain. (2011, p. 255)

The Janissary Collective, conversely, theorise participatory culture as "a world characterized by pervasive and ubiquitous media that we are constantly and concurrently deeply immersed in, which dominate and shape all aspects of our everyday life" (2013, p. 263). This 'immersion' tempers the above discourse, acknowledging the significance of structures within a participatory media environment: "Lived reality cannot be experienced separate, or outside of media" (p. 263). Digital media, therefore, is subject to social and technological structures that cannot be escaped through a fan studies, participatory culture, or 'digital natives' emphasis on agency, as The Janissary Collective note:

> We argue that contemporary participatory culture is a form of power that aligns closely with existing values and norms, and that members in participatory culture are not so much free to contribute, but rather can be seen as compelled to contribute in a way that aligns with dominant norms and already established power structures. (2013, p. 258)

While I do not wish to imply that productivity is in any way normative, this approach to participatory culture importantly acknowledges users' productive agency within established 'power structures', while more cautious literature also suggests audiences' production potential is not, and cannot always be fulfilled (Proulx et al, 2011, p. 23; Macgilchrist, 2013, p. 100). As Webster critically observes: "Although digital technologies seem to empower people to do what they want, the media play an important role in shaping those encounters" (2014, p. 146). Developing this argument, Mirko Schafer (2011) draws a distinction between 'explicit' participation, which is 'driven' by textual and semiotic productivity, and 'implicit' participation, which is channelled by 'automated processes':

In contrast to explicit participation, implicit participation does not necessarily require a conscious activity of cultural production, nor does it require users to choose from different methods in problem-solving, collaboration, and communication with others. Rather, it is a design solution that takes advantage of certain habits users have… Such platforms provide the means for certain user activities and benefit from the user-generated content. (p. 51)

Through implicit participation, Schafer notes, digital structures 'channel' media users within the "architecture of participation" (p. 78), with agency thus restricted and pre-shaped by technology. Within these digital structures, work in this field considers varying forms of participation, including self-branding (Banet-Weiser, 2011; Maguire, 2015; Gandini, 2016) and everyday surveillance (Marwick, 2012; Trottier, 2012; Lyon, 2018). These divergent (but linked) concepts demonstrate differing versions of participation, whereby seemingly individualistic media practices are rooted in community and sociality within the structures of the contemporary digital media marketplace. Self-branding refers to the strategic identity performances of users on digital platforms, whereby the self is positioned through social networking sites as a "commodity for sale on the labour market" (Hearn, 2008, p. 427; see also Marwick, 2010). Self-branding, according to Ruth Page, is undertaken by users "in order to achieve the visibility and influence deemed necessary to achieve status or fame in the offline world" (2012, p. 182). As I will discuss in Chapter 3, while much research characterises this apparently individualistic practice as 'new vanity' (Twenge and Campbell, 2009, p. 142), as Sarah Banet-Weiser argues, "self-branding does not merely involve self-presentation, but is a layered process of judging, assessment, and valuation taking place in a media economy of recognition" (2011, p. 293). For many digital users, this "'increasingly normative' mode of representation and sociality on the Internet" (Maguire, 2015, p. 80), occurs as one of "various forms of online interaction that enable new practices of sociality based on publicity and affect" (Gandini, 2016, p.126). This type of digital production is inherently participatory, according to Alessandro Gandini, as this 'new practice of sociality' serves to combine "networking with the management of social relationships" (2016, p.126).

The practice of self-branding is also linked to a differing form of participation, as users also engage in surveillance within these digital platforms, according to David Lyon: "Many check on others' lives using social media... At the same time, the 'others' make this possible by allowing themselves to be exposed to public view in texts and tweets, posts and pics" (2018, p. 6). This "popularisation of surveillance culture" (Trottier, 2012, p. 40) has "appeared as people engage more and more with the means of monitoring" (Lyon, 2018, p. 5), expanding beyond corporations and intelligence agencies to occur in domestic 'everyday life': "Parents use surveillance devices to check children, friends observe others on social media, and it is

increasingly common to use gadgets to monitor ourselves for health and fitness… Thus watching becomes a way of life" (Lyon, 2018, p. 5; see also Trottier and Lyon, 2012). As with self-branding, this normalised everyday surveillance is also participatory, as users 'monitor their digital actions with an audience in mind' (Alice Marwick, 2012, p. 379; see also Albrechtslund and Lauritsen, 2013). As Lyon argues:

> Checking up on information that others share is vital to the social life that makes social media hum. In other words, online surveillance as understood through the imaginaries and practices of its users is not necessarily as sinister or coercive as its critics might think. (2018, p. 117)

While both surveillance and self-branding may appear individualistic, vain, and perhaps sinister, they have become normalised within the structures of the digital media marketplace, representing differing versions of participation. I am not positioning such practices as narcissistic or voyeuristic, therefore, as this would pathologize respondents and analytically miss this normalisation. Within this critical approach to participatory culture, audiences are subject to both agency and structure, which, when aligned with previous discourse regarding the productivity of fan-led engagement and the shared habitus of 'digital natives', demonstrates the limitations within this literature. To further explore these limitations, I have chosen to pursue digital media engagement through my participants' age, to investigate the nuanced differences that may exist even within a small generational cohort and thus challenge the notion of a singular generation of tech-savvy so-called 'digital natives'. In the next section, therefore, I argue for an expanded concept of class within my study, which includes generational analysis, to challenge this strong discourse that has emerged around 'digital natives'.

Expanding class to include generational cohorts

The relatively small age range of my respondents (20-30) fits comfortably within the aforementioned 'digital natives' cohort. As interviews occurred between October 2015 and March 2016, the latest a respondent could have been born is October 1984 - nearly five years into the digital native range of 1980 onwards (Prensky 2001; Akcayır et al, 2016). Despite aligning with this alleged cohort, there were clear differences in technological proclivity, concepts of value, and engagement practices across my data. Even within a typical range of so-called 'digital natives', there are still numerous forms of distinction that influence how my participants value digital media engagement. As Kate Crawford and Penelope Robinson argue, it is problematic to make generalisations across an age cohort:

The concept of generational cohorts is also very limited: it cannot account for stark divisions within an age group, nor for commonalities across age groups… Nonetheless, generational identity became the basis for nebulous and inaccurate labels, where age groups were rounded into categories – such as 'baby boomer', 'Generation X', and 'millennials' – that now routinely appear in popular debates about technology and social change. (2013, p. 473; see also White and Wyn, 2008)

While challenging assumptions of clear generational cohorts offers a worthwhile approach to digital media research, building analysis in this way is potentially problematic, as it risks creating generalisations which ignore differences in favour of presumed similarities. Crawford and Robinson are particularly critical of "generational claims about media use", which they argue fail "to capture difference and replaces it with false coherence" (2013, p. 473). This particular critique, according to June Edmunds and Bryan Turner, is due to the breadth of approaching generation through a 'cohort' analysis, which "does not fully capture the forms of questions that excite sociologists" (2002, p. 6). A superior approach to generation, Edmunds and Turner suggest, "involves the study of generational cultures and consciousness" (2002, p. 6). Exploring generational differences through a cultural analysis, therefore, is a viable approach to understanding digital media audiences, with recent works including Volkmer (2006), Colombo and Fortunati (2011), Aroldi and Ponte (2012), Loos et al (2012), Bolin and Skogerbø (2013), and Nancy Baym et al's study of college students' interpersonal relationships and media use (2007) demonstrating the growing interest in such an approach. Similarly, Jane Pilcher argues that "the cohort to which an individual belongs, by virtue of date of birth and death, acts to shape the range and possibilities of experiences open to him or her" (1995, p. 134). Developing Pilcher's assertion, the plurality of value within diverse digital media engagement is indicative of the 'range of experiences' available to my specific age cohort. As Edmunds and Turner suggest: "There is a need to integrate cohort and [sociological] generational analysis in order to understand the importance of social resources" (2002, p. 7). Through this approach, I explore the nuanced differences that are missing from many cohort studies of 'digital natives', thus challenging the notion of clear generational boundaries through the plural value of digital engagement in my data.

I approach this aim through expanding the concept of class beyond traditional analytical boundaries in my analysis, due to what Mike Savage argues is an emerging 'resistance' towards class amongst younger cohorts (2015, p. 369). As Wendy Bottero (2004) suggests, class can be split into two schools of thought due to the 'fragmentation' (Crompton, 1996) and 'exhaustion' (Pahl, 1993) of class-based analyses. The first school follows traditional class theories (Goldthorpe, 1996; Marshall, 1997) and, Bottero notes, takes a "precise and contained approach to the meaning of 'class'" (p. 985). The second school, including

Crompton (1998), Crompton and Scott (2000), Devine and Savage (2000) and Savage (2000), "argues for an expanded and transformed class theory", which has arisen due to the "perceived deficiencies of the first [school]" (Bottero, 2004, pp. 985-986). Within this latter approach, Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot and Kyoko Shinozaki note that scholars "rethink economic inequalities, hierarchies and identities, and argue that class exists but in an inconspicuous and individualised manner" (2017, p. 5). As Bottero notes: "In 'renewing' class analysis to include processes of implicit, individualized differentiation, the newer generation of analysts have created the opportunity to look afresh at how inequality and hierarchy work" (pp. 999-1000).

During my data collection, many traditional indicators of social class, e.g. financial information, family background, and living situation, were not included as they were not considered to be as relevant within a generation who are "unlikely to positively identify themselves with a social class" (Savage, 2015, p. 369). In *Social Class in the 21st Century* (2015), Mike Savage argues that "class identities may be (very gradually) becoming less powerful over time and that younger cohorts are especially resistant to them" (p. 369; see also Savage et al, 2001). This emerging resistance to social class among younger generations, according to Savage, is because of the increased emphasis upon cultural capital in capturing class differences, with the author describing a "generational clash" between younger "emerging" and established "highbrow" forms of cultural capital (p. 113). Savage also describes social media as the "infrastructure" for emerging cultural capital (p. 113), further distancing this cohort from traditional notions of class. According to Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, therefore, "in dealing with class issues, it appears important to consider the invisible forces at work that reproduce social divisions by looking closely at individual practices, subjectivities and perceptions" (2017, p. 5).

The 'resistance' to social class among younger generations, and the 'generational clash' between 'highbrow' and 'emerging' cultural capital, as noted by Savage, places greater significance on age as an analytical narrative when researching young audiences. Examples including Tapscott (1998), Palfrey and Gasser (2008), boyd (2014), and Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) demonstrate the rising significance of generation within research of young audiences. My focus upon generation occurs due to the strong 'digital natives' discourse, which presumes a united digital habitus and associated practices, and as such, class has become entangled within this narrative. Expanding class beyond traditional boundaries allows for closer analysis of generational differences within the value of digital media engagement, without removing my analysis from the various distinctions associated with class. I will, however, return to notions of "inconspicuous and individualised" class, as

Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki described (2017, p. 5) where relevant to my arguments, particularly during discussion of respondents' performances of identity, which could be positioned as a construction of class through 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997), and in my reading of digital cultural capital in Chapter 6. While I set out to interrogate the significance of generation with regards to engagement, as my analysis developed, neoliberalism emerged as a key category within my data, serving to link the other narrative threads. To reflect this 'surprising' (Willis, 1980) emergence, I introduce neoliberalism as the final section of this chapter, to establish how this cultural politics aligns my various arguments.

Aligning a structurationist approach to value, engagement, and digital habitus within the cultural politics of neoliberal selfhood

Neoliberalism is a far-reaching term extending into numerous fields of influence within the social sciences, as Matthew Eagleton-Pierce notes: "It can sometimes appear as if neoliberalism is a kind of conceptual Swiss Army Knife which can unpick and cut through almost any argument concerning the modern world" (2016, p. xiii; see also Goldstein, 2012, p. 304). Rooted in economic policy, 'neoliberalism' is associated closely with the politics of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan (see Harvey, 2005), and specifically, according to Eagleton-Pierce, the expansion of commercial markets, the re-alignment of government as 'entrepreneurial', and 'fiscal discipline' towards the welfare state (2016, pp. xiv-xv; see also Gill, 1995; 1998; Saad-Filo and Johnston, 2005; Boas and Gans-Morse, 2009; Dardot and Laval, 2013; Davies, 2014). Such a political approach, according to Michael Peters, is due to a "philosophy of individualism that represents a renewal of the main article of faith underlying classic economic liberalism. It asserts that all human behavior is dominated by self-interest" (2001, p. 118). These fundamental tenants of neoliberal policy - namely entrepreneurship and a philosophy of individualism – can be applied outside of economic discourse, with the effects of neoliberalism occurring ideologically in culture and society, as Jim McGuigan suggests: "Although neoliberalism is first and foremost a doctrine of political economy, it is also, rather more diffusely, a principle of civilisation that shapes the socio-cultural makeup of people through socialisation in the broadest sense" (2014, p. 224).

There is considerable work regarding neoliberalism (e.g. Rose, 1996; 1999; Saad Filho and Johnston, 2004; Sender, 2006; Couldry and Littler, 2011; Hall and O'Shea, 2013; McGuigan, 2014; 2016; Venugopal, 2015), with McGuigan thus positioning neoliberalism as a 'hegemonic ideology', noting that "to be effective, hegemony must operate not only at a philosophical or theoretical level but, also, at a mass-popular level" (2014, p. 20). This hegemonic neoliberalism reflects the political focus of individualism and entrepreneurship,

positioning people as "self-interested individuals" (Peters, 2001, p. 116). While such individualism may imply a privileging of agency over structures, the ideological impact of neoliberal cultural politics demonstrates the significance of structures in framing agency. According to Mark Sherry and Katie Martin: "A central element of neoliberalism is its cultural politics: it is not only market-driven, but also linked to a form of individualist consumerism" (2015, p. 1281). Nikolas Rose expands upon this concept in *Governing the Soul* (1999), suggesting that within the cultural politics of neoliberalism, "individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives though the choices they make among the forms of life available to them" (p. 230). Within this discourse, not only are people positioned as inherently individualistic, but the focus of this cultural politics upon entrepreneurship leads to self-governance through the pursuit of differing consumerist lifestyles, which are framed as aspirational (Illouz, 2003; Hay, 2005; McCarthy, 2005) through strategic labour (Hearn, 2008; Marwick, 2010; 2013). While this literature does not align neoliberalism with structuration theory, considering people as individuals within a clear ideological framework is representative of how peoples' agency occurs within a set of neoliberal structures. As Rose notes:

> The modern self is institutionally required to construct a life through the exercise of choice from among alternatives. Every aspect of life, like every commodity, is imbued with a self-referential meaning; every choice we make is an emblem of our identity, a mark of our individuality, each is a message to ourselves and others as to the sort of person we are. (p. 231)

This aspect of neoliberalism is referred to by McGuigan as 'neoliberal selfhood', which he notes is "especially discernible as well in the lifestyles, aspirations and frustrations of entrants to the 'creative industries'" (2014, p. 224). I use 'neoliberal selfhood' to indicate this particular aspect of neoliberalism, suggesting that the 'aspirations' and 'frustrations' within this cultural politics are not limited to the creative industries, but apparent across my data, aligning with structuration theory while demonstrating the significance of this analysis within my approach to digital media engagement. There is existing discourse that aligns neoliberalism with digital media, through the concept of 'self-branding' (Hearn, 2008; Marwick, 2010; 2013; Gehl, 2011; Gandini, 2016), assessing the commoditisation of users' lifestyles online. Self-branding theoretically aligns users' identity 'performances' (Goffman, 1959; Hall, 1992) on digital platforms with neoliberal cultural politics, whereby the self is reimagined as a "commodity for sale on the labour market" (Hearn, 2008, p. 427). Alice Marwick underlines the consumerist nature of self-branding through "the strategic creation of identity to be promoted and sold to others" (2010, p. 231). Self-branding, therefore, represents the individualism, entrepreneurship, and aspiration of neoliberal cultural politics,

as Marwick summarises: "Social media is intrinsically focused on individuals… individuals tend to adopt a neoliberal subjectivity that applies market principles to how they think about themselves, interact with others, and display their identity" (2013, p. 7).

In the above discourse, neoliberalism is positioned as a dominant cultural politics, entrenched manifestly "wherever we look, whether or not we are conscious of its presence" (McGuigan, 2016, p. 10), with Stuart Hall and Alan O'Shea using the term 'common-sense neoliberalism' (2013) to denote this prevalence. While I have chosen to explore neoliberalism within my data through this literature, it is important to note the Foucauldian underpinning of this work, particularly McGuigan and Rose, with the latter's assertion that within neoliberalism, people become 'entrepreneurs of themselves' directly referencing Michel Foucault:

> In practice, the stake in all neo-liberal analysis is the replacement every time of homo œconomicus as a partner of exchange with homo œconomicus as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings. (2008, p. 226)

My critical reading of neoliberalism as a type of internalised self-governance, therefore, occurs through this Foucauldian underpinning. I have chosen to present neoliberalism through the above discourse, which offers a more contemporary analysis of this ideological cultural politics within digital media engagement. While a Foucauldian approach effectively frames the internalisation of neoliberalism for my participants, exploring neoliberal selfhood within a contemporary digital setting allows me to differentiate my participants' digital media engagement using a structurationist perspective. As McGuigan states: "It is not enough, however, to critique neoliberalism's abstract claims. At the concrete level, critique needs to interrogate the common-sense nostrums and the routine practices of the neoliberal construction of everyday life" (2016, p. 20). I address this shortfall by positioning neoliberal selfhood as an analytical framework in my study, assessing the impact of this internalised cultural politics within my participants' digital media engagement.

In the first section of this chapter, however, I argued for a multi-discursive approach to value, through a theoretical framework assessing existing discourses. Similarly, as John Gledhill (2004, p. 336) and Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky (2008, p. 117) note, there is not one form of neoliberalism, with this ideology able to be pluralised across contexts in a similar way to value. I have not explored this thread for two reasons. Firstly, exploring a multiplicity of neoliberalisms within a multiplicity of values would potentially be too complex within the aims of my study. Secondly, as I will argue across this thesis, there is a clear, definable

version of neoliberalism that is drawn on in my data, which I use to critically assess the value of my participants' engagement. While there is the potential, therefore, to unpack neoliberalism theoretically, as I have argued regarding value, my definition of neoliberalism is both common within the literature (Rose, 1996; 1999; Peters, 2001; McGuigan, 2014; 2016; Sherry and Martin, 2015; Eagleton-Pierce, 2016) and aligns with my participants' conceptual engagement. Such is the cultural dominance of neoliberalism as defined in this way, that it has become entrenched across the digital media marketplace in both explicit and implicit ways. As such, neoliberal selfhood offers an effective framework for analysis across my main narrative threads, as it neither places too much emphasis upon structures (as Marxist discourse does), or agency (as occurs with participatory culture), allowing me to explore how this cultural politics has impacted upon value, engagement, and generation in various ways.

Summary of the literature

In this chapter, I have presented the key concepts of value, engagement, generation, and neoliberal selfhood through structuration theory, identifying the gaps in existing literature, and placing my study within the field. Firstly, I established value through a theoretical framework, contrasting singular Marxist definitions with the duality of value in gift and market economies, and multi-discursive value in Baudrillard and Bourdieu's work. Due to the theoretical plurality of value within this literature, my approach aligns with and develops Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (1987/2006), in which value occurs across differing contextual worlds. Within this framework, I also assessed Marxist digital media discourse against structuration theory, which overemphasised the significance of structures within digital media engagement. Contrasting this position, I then critiqued dominant fan-led discourses of engagement, which are rooted in Fiskean notions of audience productivity (1992), emphasising agency over structures. Having identified the limitations of this discourse, I placed my study within the small, emerging body of literature that reconceptualises engagement as plural (Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018), with my approach further developing this important theoretical position.

Having theorised value and engagement, I then questioned the notion of a universal digital habitus across my cohort of so-called 'digital native' participants. Aligning this concept with participatory culture and engagement, I suggested these various discourses were linked by the agency attributed to users' productivity potential and technological capabilities. To challenge this monolithic concept and explore the differences in my data, I argued for an expanded concept of class, which includes generation, due to the increased significance of

cultural capital for younger digital audiences (Savage, 2015). Finally, I introduced neoliberalism, which emerged surprisingly from my analysis, linking together the other key narratives due to the dominance of this cultural politics. In this chapter, I have identified how my study aligns with and develops existing discourse, suggesting a plural approach to understanding the value of engagement, through interrogating generation within a dominant neoliberal cultural politics. Having introduced these narratives separately, in Chapter 2, I will bring together value and engagement for the first time, introducing my original cascade model, through a critical assessment of my methodological approach.

Chapter 2: Methodology

My interview study uses a qualitative approach to explore the value of digital media engagement for so-called 'digital natives'. In the previous chapter, I outlined the critical focus of this study upon generation, offering an original and important (Bolin, 2017) exploration of media cultures and practices. In this chapter, I will address the research design process, considering how my methodological choices reflect the specific aims of this study, addressing the following research question: What is the value of digital media engagement for the participants of my study? To answer this question, I sought respondents' discourses of digital value and engagement, without imposing my own definitions. My analytical approach to understanding the multi-modality of value and engagement, therefore, is grounded in these interviewee discourses, with no rigid hypotheses in place before entering the field. Although I would define this work as an interview study, which I will discuss in this chapter, this study could be aligned with the ethnographic justification used in cultural studies (Nightingale, 1996) of assessing the practices of people, over any notions of representative quantitative inquiry, prioritising validity through rich data over generalisability.

To justify my methodological approach, this chapter is split into four sections. Firstly, I consider the differing conceptual frameworks of quantitative and qualitative study (Priest, 2010), including a discussion of the potential role of a secondary quantitative dataset, before establishing validity using John Creswell and Dana Miller's framework (2000), demonstrating how my methodology reflects the above research question. My prioritisation of validity over generalisability aligns with qualitative audience research, which seeks 'thick description' (Ryle, 1949/2009; Geertz, 1973). Following this, in the second section, I explore the research design of this study. Beginning with a summary of in-depth interviews, my approach to data collection is outlined, which allowed for participants to structure the interview around their own digital media experiences. Having assessed my approach to interviewing, I consider the use of snowball recruitment, using Toshie Takahashi (2010) and Cornel Sandvoss and Laura Kearns (2014) to establish how this method allowed me to utilise existing social networks, rather than exploring specific scenes, communities or fandoms.

In the third section, I align value and engagement for the first time through the introduction of my cascade model, alongside a critical review of my data collection and 'coding' processes (Urquhart, 2013), and a discussion of the issues relating to building my analytical model after

the fact of my data. Beginning with a review of the pilot study, I outline how the interview questions were developed through rigorous testing, before discussing the expanded recruitment methodology (Heckathorn, 1997). I conclude this section with discussion of my coding process, which uses a critical approach to Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss' grounded theory model (1967). Within this discussion, I outline the four modes of engagement and value within my cascade model, establishing both how the model works within my data, and how it was constructed analytically. Finally, I close this chapter with a thorough overview of my participants, by mapping the various peer networks, before plotting my participants upon a spectrum of engagement practices in relation to age, establishing how I begin to challenge the monolithic 'digital natives' concept (Prensky, 2001). It is essential, however, to assess my methodological position before making any theoretical challenges, beginning with a discussion of differing conceptual approaches.

Utilising a qualitative approach to audience research

The methodology for this study was chosen to reflect the aims outlined at the beginning of this chapter. By assessing varying methodologies within the field of audience research, in this section I aim to justify my qualitative approach by demonstrating how validity occurs within this study. Beginning by contrasting qualitative and quantitative conceptual frameworks, I consider the situational appropriateness of each methodology within the requirements of this study, addressing the potential role of secondary quantitative data to my research. Using Creswell and Miller's framework for qualitative validity (2000) I establish my paradigm assumptions and lens, demonstrating how validity occurs through the constructivist paradigm, with rich, 'thick' description gained through the lens of my participants.

Audience research, and the broader field of communication studies, is intrinsically linked to the divide between social sciences and humanities (Priest, 2010), with quantitative and qualitative methodologies rooted within each research tradition respectively. Each approach to studying audiences offers numerous benefits, limitations, and theoretical implications (Brennen, 2013). In quantitative inquiry, as Michael Bamberger notes, "the researcher's conceptual framework usually leads to the formulation of hypotheses, which are then tested", while conversely, "qualitative conceptual frameworks can often be characterized as having a micro rather than a macro focus, seeking to understand processes starting at the individual rather than the aggregate level" (2000, p. 16). The disparity between these methodological approaches is resultant of this conceptual difference, according to Susanna Hornig Priest, with quantitative work seeking "a large quantity of data and establishing relationships among

different factors with a known degree of certainty" (2010, p. 7), while qualitative research is concerned with subjective explorations of people. As Priest argues: "How can people and their communication be studied in a meaningful way if we limit ourselves to looking at only those aspects that can be captured by numerical representations?" (2010, p. 6; see also Ruddock, 2001, p. 13).

As such, quantitative studies of audiences seek a clear, macro understanding of measurable relationships to confirm or challenge predetermined hypotheses. Examples of this approach include Martin Barker's 2005 study of *Lord of the Rings* fans and 'identification', Jessika ter Wal et al's consideration of ethnicity representation in Dutch news (2005), and Bradley Bond's portrayals of sexuality in gay and lesbian media (2015). The common conceptual framework within these studies is the requirement for generalisable conclusions to hypotheses through content analysis and questionnaire surveys. Barker's study also contains a mixed-methods approach with the inclusion of follow-up interviews, although this qualitative addition does not change the requirement for generalisability within a large-scale project. The quantitative methodologies employed within these studies is appropriate to research which seeks to understand measurable, large-scale relationships between clear factors. As Priest notes, however, "a quantitative approach limits investigation to factors that can be measured; this can mean ignoring important aspects of human social behavior, such as meaning itself, that may be difficult or impossible to quantify" (2010, p. 4; see also Hall, 1982, p. 59; Repko, 2008).

Furthermore, according to David Deacon and Emily Keightley: "Quantitative methods lack flexibility and are not suited to intensive analysis of audiences and their worlds on their own terms" (2011, p. 314). Within a study that seeks to understand digital value and engagement on participants' 'own terms', therefore, a qualitative approach allows for the study of meanings that could not be captured through a quantitative methodology (e.g. Freidson, 1975). My qualitative methodology, therefore, is indicative of this conceptual approach to research, which seeks participants' discourses as opposed to quantifiable data, to understand specific practices of digital media value and engagement over addressing generalisable hypotheses (Shapiro, 2002, p. 492; see also Cook and Campbell, 1979). As Joseph Maxwell notes: "The value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of external generalizability" (2005, p. 115).

In addition to collecting my own data through qualitative methods, I could also have utilised a mixed methods design, by triangulating my interviews with secondary quantitative data. Examples of this approach include Taejin Jung (2008), and Toija Cinque and Jordan Beth

Vincent (2018), who triangulated their own convenience sample of 103 university students with secondary data drawn from the Australian Research Council, "to provide detailed analytics, specifically regarding Australian social media use" (p. 6). By adopting this approach, Cinque and Vincent are able to supplement their own survey data with a substantial existing dataset, providing validity through triangulation, allowing a detailed exploration of "current screen use amidst new digital screen features" (p. 5). As Wendy Olsen notes, this "mixing of methodologies" offers a "more profound form of triangulation" (2004, p. 3), with the employment of secondary data providing validity to analysis that has emerged during primary data collection (Denzin, 1970; 1979; 1989; Flick, 1992). Such an approach, according to Alan Bryman, "provides such a wealth of data that researchers discover uses of the ensuing findings that they had not anticipated" (2006, p. 110; see also Smith, 1986; Deacon et al, 1998).

To explore the potential role of secondary data in my research, I considered various datasets that could have been triangulated with my interviews, including: Office for National Statistics' *Internet Users in the UK* (2016), Pew Research Center's *Social Media Updated* (2016), and Statista's *Social Media Statistics & Facts (2017)*. While utilising any of these resources may have offered triangulation through a greater 'wealth' of data, as Bryman suggests, the scale and purpose of this work is unlikely to have aligned with my own data in a helpful way. Triangulating datasets that have contrasting scopes and research purposes, according to Pamela Hinds et al, risks "invalidating the effort and the findings" of my interviewee discourses (1997, p. 411). Through the methodological approach to generation I outlined in Chapter 1, in this study I am interested in unravelling the nuances within my participants' digital media engagement. This aim of exploring significant differences within a small generational cohort conflicts with the above datasets that are interested in establishing large-scale similarities. The inclusion of secondary quantitative data, therefore, while beneficial within the correct context, is unlikely to provide greater validity to this study, but instead disrupt my aim of complicating the broad concepts of engagement and generation. Having outlined the conceptual approach I have adopted in this study, it is important to explain how I establish validity through my selected methods.

Constructing validity through paradigm assumptions and lens

Defining validity within qualitative research is a complicated task, due to the differing approaches within inquiry of this nature. Work from Lincoln and Guba (1985), Maxwell (1992; 2005), Lather (1993), Altheide and Johnson (1994), Schwandt (1997), and Merriam (1998), advocate numerous approaches to obtaining validity, demonstrating the variety of

perspectives within qualitative work. In their 2000 paper 'Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry', Creswell and Miller define validity as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena" (pp. 124-125; see also Schwandt, 1997), with qualitative validity referring "not to the data but to the inferences drawn from them" (p. 125). According to Creswell and Miller, establishing validity is linked to "the lens researchers choose to validate their studies and researchers' paradigm assumptions" (p. 124), proposing a framework for establishing validity through these two perspectives (p. 129). Creswell and Miller list three differing lenses and paradigm constructions for establishing validity procedures (p. 126), which are shown in Figure 1:

Paradigm assumptions/Lens	Systematic Paradigm	Constructivist Paradigm	Critical Paradigm
Lens of the Researcher	Triangulation	Disconfirming evidence	Researcher reflexivity
Lens of Study Participants	Member checking	Prolonged engagement in the field	Collaboration
Lens of People External to the Study	Audit trail	Thick, rich description	Peer debriefing

Figure 1: Validity procedures within qualitative lens and paradigm assumptions

Validity procedures in this study align with the constructivist paradigm, whereby validity occurs through "pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended, and contextualized (e.g., sensitive to place and situation) perspectives towards reality" (pp. 125-126; see also Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Constructivist research, including Campos (2007), Charmaz (2016), and Reynolds (2016) seek validity through disconfirming evidence (Miles and Huberman, 1994), prolonged engagement with participants (Fetterman, 2010), and obtaining 'thick' description, defined by Norman Denzin as "deep, dense, detailed accounts" (1989, p. 83). Within this study, validity occurs primarily through the thick description obtained during interviews, where participants were asked to frame their own discourses of digital value and engagement.

As validity is rooted within the depth of description obtained during interviews, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is crucial in gaining accurate representations and insights (Mathieu and Brites, p. 58; see also Alasuutari, 1995). Additionally, my approach to coding the interviews also offered validity through the manual search for evidence which confirmed or disconfirmed initial categories, which I will discuss later in this chapter. My qualitative approach aligns with existing interview studies in audience research through the requirement for thick description to understand the practices and meanings of people. As I noted at the outset of this chapter, I define this work as an

interview study, while also noting that its aims can be aligned with work described as 'ethnographic' within a cultural studies tradition. In *Studying Audiences: The Shock of the Real* (1996), Virginia Nightingale notes:

> The term [ethnographic] has acquired conventional status within cultural studies as the way of referring to the empirical audience research undertaken within the field. Accordingly, the term is used not to classify the research as belonging to, or even as having any links with, ethnography, but to signify the allegiance of the research to another academic field – British cultural studies. (p. 113)

'Ethnographic' work within media studies, Nightingale argues, has come to represent a specific version of ethnography, which focuses upon 'culture', 'community', and the 'phenomenal', whereby "the term 'ethnographic' became a way of talking about research which possesses these characteristics" (p. 113). Although it could be argued that my interview study aligns with Nightingale's definition of 'ethnographic' audience research, as the author goes on to observe: "The problem is that the term 'ethnography' has other lives. It has a life within the discipline of anthropology and a life within the research traditions of symbolic interactionism" (p. 114). Although my work is in line with a media studies' version of the 'ethnographic', this concept has been disputed due to the differing traditions and conventions associated with anthropology and symbolic interactionism.

In ethnography, researchers immerse themselves in a cultural environment to observe communities and behaviours (Ocejo, 2013, p. 6), within the anthropological tradition of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), Margaret Mead (1928; 1935), and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1937), whose work "conferred an abiding legitimacy on field observations integrated into a 'cultural whole'" (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004, p. 9). This seminal anthropological research emphasises cultural immersion, with inductive participant observation fundamental in ethnography (Francis, 2013, p. 68). As I will discuss in the following section, my work does not have any element of participant observation, either in situ or online, and thus I refer to it specifically as an interview study of digital media audiences. Having established and positioned my work within the field of qualitative audience research, in the next section I will consider the methods I have selected for this study, starting with a critical discussion of interviewing and participants' performances in an interview setting.

Discussion of selected methods and research design

Beginning with Paul Lazarsfeld's participant interview methodology (1944), before considering the work of Elizabeth Bird (2003), amongst others, in this section I assess the

methodological benefits of in-depth, semi-structured interviews in audience research, as well as considering participants' performance of identity within an interview setting, alongside my own approach to interviewing through existing peer groups. I identified respondents through snowball recruitment, and in this section, I will also evaluate this method through existing examples including Yen Le Espiritu (2001), Toshie Takahashi (2010), and Cornel Sandvoss and Laura Kearns (2014). I suggest that my employment of snowball recruitment enabled the use of existing social networks to identify participants for my interview study. Selecting appropriate methods within the study's conceptual framework is essential to ensure that research aims are met. As validity is established through rich discourses, the employment of in-depth interviews offers an effective method of collecting and understanding my participants' digital value and engagement practices.

Participants' performance of identity in an interview setting

There is a long history of interview studies in audience research (Hobson, 1982; Radway, 1984; Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Schrøder, 1988; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Lewis, 1991; Morley, 1992; Livingstone & Lunt, 1994), with Grant McCracken describing in-depth interviews as "one of the most powerful methods" of qualitative research, allowing researchers to "step into the mind of another person, see and experience the world as they do themselves" (1988, p.9). In 1944, Paul Lazarsfeld described the five objectives of participant interviews, two of which are applicable within this study: to determine what influences a person to form an opinion, or to act in a certain way, and to understand the interpretations that people attribute to their motivations to act (see also Iorio, 2004, p. 111). As Lazarsfeld notes, participant interviews are an 'interpretation' involving several layers of translation, according to Nightingale, whereby "research participants translate their experiences into explanations for the researcher", with researchers then further translating "the recounted experiences into research reports and narratives" (1996, p. 111).

Within an interview setting, therefore, it is important to note that participants' discourses are a representation of what the interviewee chooses to share with the interviewer. As Linda Finlay notes: "The fragility of the results rests on the fact that participants present what they want to be known about themselves in interviews and that the resulting narratives arise from a co-created dialogue between participant and researcher" (2012, p. 321). In her discussion of 'troubling interviews', Ellen Seiter notes the desire of two interview subjects to 'appear cosmopolitan and sophisticated':

> For them it was an honour to talk to us and an opportunity to be heard by persons of authority and standing… Our subjects wanted to present themselves in a good light. Though we were strangers, they knew we were academics and to a large extent that dictated the kinds of things that were said to us. (1990, p. 64)

This was particularly problematic (and uncomfortable) for Seiter, and served to create "antagonistic differences, based on hierarchically arranged cultural differences" (1990, p. 70). While I did not encounter any antagonistic differences amongst my interview respondents, Seiter's experiences underline the performative element involved within the interview setting. This element of performance, however, is not unique to interviewing, but inherent within all verbal communication, as put forward by Erving Goffman in his influential 1959 work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*:

> When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. (p. 10)

According to Goffman, social interactions are a highly influential performance, whereby "the activity of a given participant on a given occasion… serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (p. 8). Applying this within the context of in-depth interviewing, as Catherine Kohler Riessman notes: "Social actors shape their lives retrospectively for particular audiences" (2003, p. 337), with interview discourse thus a 'situated' and 'accomplished' performance:

> [During interviews] informants negotiate how they want to be known by the stories they develop collaboratively with their audiences. Informants do not reveal an essential self as much as they perform a preferred one, selected from the multiplicity of selves or personas that individuals switch among as they go about their lives. (2003, p. 337)

This, as Riessman goes on to argue, is not to suggest that the identities presented within an interview are 'inauthentic' (p. 337), but carefully performed within the specific interview situation and setting, as Goffman notes: "A performance is, in a sense, 'socialised,' moulded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (pp. 22-23). According to Beverley Skeggs and Helen Wood, "conducting audience research itself involves inviting certain performances from our respondents as part of the specific research encounter" (2012, p. 6), with each interview representing "a particular mode of articulation that relates as much to available cultural resources, contexts and social relations as they do to the actual 'findings'" (2012, pp. 117-118).

Within my data, respondents demonstrated differing variations of this theme, by performing their identities in a variety of ways, which I will discuss across the thesis. While performances of identity were more intellectualised regarding fan-like engagement, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, there are variations in Chapters 4 and 5, where respondents also performed identity positively through taste and negatively through self-critique. In Chapter 6, I will further develop this argument by addressing the incoherences that emerged in participants' self-presentation, which were often articulated through mood. In an interview study of this nature, therefore, participants' discourses don't just reflect a person's individual experiences, but represent differing performances of culturally-manifested and situated identities. To ensure the effective representation of these identities, throughout this study, before a respondent is quoted for the first time, I present a brief introduction to each of my participants as a footnote, to offer greater context to each interview. In order to collect this depth of interview discourse from my respondents, I needed to select an appropriate method of interviewing.

Adopting a semi-structured interview design

Semi-structured interviews are an effective method for qualitative data collection, according to Thomas Lindlof and Bryan Taylor, as they create an environment in which "one person (the interviewer) encourages the others to freely articulate their interests and experiences" (2011, pp. 170-171). Lily Canter also advocates a less structured approach to in-depth interviewing that "is more adaptive and responsive to people's individualistic perceptions of the world" (2012, p. 138), while Hilary Arksey and Peter Knight note: "Interviews can explore areas of broad cultural consensus and people's more personal, private and special understandings" (1999, p.4). Elizabeth Bird's study of media within everyday life (2003) epitomises this notion, approaching telephone interviews as "a collaborative dialog, more conversation than interview" (p. 12), in order to "duplicate a social call" (p. 13). To apply this principle within my study, it is essential to design a methodology that explores the 'special understandings' of the participants under study. As Karen Francis notes, interview-led audience research is concerned with gaining "insight into the cultural milieu and the day-to-day relationships that influence how individuals behave and why" (2013, p. 68).

Designing the interviews, therefore, required flexibility, allowing participants to discuss their digital media practices within a framework that guided the conversation towards a clear objective. My interview schedule can be seen in Appendix 3, with questions, sub-questions and prompts included within four sections: introductory questions, general media

engagement, value of specific engagement, and closing questions. In the interviews, I asked participants to name digital communities, subjects, texts and platforms they engaged with, before asking them to consider the reasons behind their choices. Aligning with the above assertions from Bird, and Marshall and Rossman, the interview schedule acted as a guide rather than a firm script, steering the conversation when required, with this process designed via extensive piloting. To assist this process, I began the two largest sections of questioning with brief explanations, outlining what was expected from the participant, and helping to guide the conversation without imposing any specific definitions. The statement below is one such example of this approach, which preceded a series of questions designed to explore participants' engagement with specific interests:

> I'm going to ask you some questions that look at a topic or issue that interests you. This can be something specific you enjoy (e.g. a TV programme, sports team, artist, etc.), a topic that interests you generally (e.g. sport, film, fashion, etc.), or an issue that interests you specifically (e.g. politics, social issues).

While I did not always provide this explanation verbatim in each interview (often specific examples were included), this description offered clear and concise guidance on what was required from the main sections of questioning. After providing this explanation, I asked questions which sought general answers, such as "do you have any favourite sources for this topic?", before exploring specific reasons for engagement, including "what appeals to you most about this source?", and "what would it take for you to lose confidence in the source?". Through this approach, I discussed a wide variety of topics, fandoms, sources, and texts with my participants, without drifting outside of the specific objectives of the interview framework, with each respondent thus able to frame the value of their own digital media engagement. My analysis is grounded in this data, with this depth of discourse allowing me to assess engagement and value through the lens of my participants' digital media experiences. Having designed my approach to interviewing, selecting an appropriate strategy for identifying participants was essential, but complicated, due to the lack of an obvious population within the aims of this study. In the next section, I will discuss my selection of snowball recruitment, which allowed me to identify participants through existing peer groups.

Recruiting participants through a snowball method

Snowball recruitment identifies participants "through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p. 141), building a 'snowball' of research participants

recommended by the people under study. As Rowland Atkinson and John Flint suggest, snowball recruitment "seeks to take advantage of the social networks of identified interviewees" (2001, p. 275; see also Thomson, 1997; Vogt, 1999). Studies including Monique Hennink and Padam Simkhada (2004), Amanda Lenhart and Susannah Fox (2006), and David Brake (2012) successfully employed a snowball method to identify participants. As this recruitment method identifies appropriate respondents in hard-to-reach networks (Gitlin, 1983), it is appropriate for my study which seeks digital media practice outside of specific fandoms, scenes, or texts.

Snowball recruitment is prominent within qualitative audience research methodologies, including Yen Le Espiritu's study of Filipina Americans' constructions of sexuality, which sought referrals within a broad range of Filipinas in the San Diego community. Participants ranged from "poor working-class immigrants who barely eked out a living [to] educated professionals who thrived in middle and upper class suburban neighbourhoods" (2001, p. 418), allowing Espiritu to gain a range of experiences across a dispersed network. Although this example sought participants within an explicit community, it demonstrates how snowball recruitment identifies appropriate (and often hard-to-reach) participants through exploring existing relationship networks. While my participants are not 'hard-to-reach' in a sociological sense, recruiting non-fans for this study is difficult due to their lack of visibility in defined social spaces, as Jonathan Gray notes in 'New audiences, new textualities' (2003):

> Fan research offers a certain level of convenience, to the point that many projects that we may refer to as 'fan studies' likely set out simply as reception studies, but found it convenient to study fans. Fans, let us be honest, are easy to find. To begin with, they are often highly socially organized, meaning that one need only tap into existing group networks. Then, the issue of what is in the interview for them – frequently a barrier to finding research participants – is easily answered. (pp. 76-77)

Recruiting outside of fan spaces is potentially challenging, with non-fans less accessible due to their lowered visibility, and reduced interest in the research process. While fans are 'willing informants', according to Gray, as "they feel strongly about the text(s) in question and have considerable interest in them" (p. 77), non-fans demonstrate a lack of 'intense involvement' with a text (p. 74) making them 'disinterested' in being interviewed (p. 77). Recruiting participants who are not defined as 'fans' for my study is vital, however, to challenge the notion of fandom as the predominant form of engagement. To successfully theorise a range of engagement modes, I require participants who are not easy-to-find, self-defined fans. As Gray suggests:

Fan studies have taken us to one end of a spectrum of involvement with a text, but we should also look at the other end to those individuals spinning around a text in its electron cloud, variously bothered, insulted or otherwise assaulted by its presence. (p. 70)

To complicate fan engagement into numerous modes of practice, therefore, audience research needs to look beyond fandom, and "attempt to fill out… the largely uncharted area of non-fan engagement with media texts" (p. 75). Identifying potential non-fan respondents, however, is challenging, with snowball recruitment offering a viable solution through the exploration of existing social networks. Toshie Takahashi used this method to explore engagement on the social networking sites MySpace and Mixi in Japan: "A snowball sample… suits the nature of my study. My method of 'following the uchi', that is, following people's social networks in communication and cultural spaces, required introductions to new informants by my initial informants" (2010, p. 457). Through a snowball approach, Takahashi identified participants within existing networks, aligning with my requirements, although outside of a specific social networking platform. Similarly, Cornel Sandvoss and Laura Kearns (2014) explored 'ordinary fandom' through snowball recruitment, leading to 10 semi-structured interviews. This approach, as the authors note, "facilitates the study of fans who lack high levels of fan-based social connectivity and textual productivity" (p. 93). Sandvoss and Kearns sought participants outside of specific fan communities "across different genres of popular entertainment including film, television and gaming" (p. 93), to examine differing, non-productive notions of fandom. My study, therefore, develops Sandvoss and Kearns approach, identifying participants within numerous social groups, offering a wider analysis of digital engagement.

To assess digital value and engagement through existing peer groups, I sought participants within a specific age range (20-30), who were based nearby in Huddersfield for accessibility. While I initially chose to look at this age range partly for 'convenience' (Babbie, 2001), as I had access to members of this cohort at the University of Huddersfield and within my own networks, I also wanted to interrogate the monolithic 'digital natives' concept through exploring the range of digital media experiences amongst this cohort. Using a snowball method with these specific parameters, I was able to utilise existing relationships and networks to identify appropriate participants for a generational methodology. As such, I started my data collection from the point of examining the practices of a certain age group, and through the 'surprise' (Willis, 1980) of empirical research, I am able to make the argument in this study that the notion of 'digital natives' is not only reductive, but unhelpful in understanding the variety of neoliberal practices that are happening across my data, and which I would speculate is also likely to occur across other age ranges. To achieve these

aims, the research design remained adaptive during fieldwork, ensuring the richness of data that was required for a qualitative interview study of this nature. In the next section, therefore, I will critically review my data collection and 'coding' processes, offering further validity to the research design, and assessing how the methodology translated practically during my fieldwork.

Critical review of data collection and coding

In this section I will first discuss testing my interview method through a pilot study, explaining how I finalised my semi-structured approach to interviewing, before addressing my expanded recruitment methodology. Finally, I conclude this section by introducing the cascade model of digital media engagement, bringing together value and engagement analytically within this study, through a discussion of my coding process and the issues associated with the a posteriori classification of my data. My approach aligns with a Glaserian interpretation of grounded theory (1967), exploring digital engagement and value through participants' discourses, with analysis grounded in the data gathered during interviews. Categories were formed around respondents' digital media practices, which are further aligned with larger codes of engagement and distinct forms of value in the constructivist paradigm. Through the coding process, participants demonstrated a multi-modal approach to engagement, which complicated the fan-like definitions established by Fiske (1992) and Jenkins (2006), suggesting that digital engagement (and thus the value of such practice) is a much more fluid and differentiated process. Before considering this analysis, it is important to first discuss the research ethics of managing anonymity within a study of this nature (Crow and Wiles, 2006, p. 2).

Using pseudonyms is an established method of ensuring participant confidentiality and anonymity (Crow and Maclean, 2000, p. 226), which is particularly essential "when the research touches upon sensitive issues" (Bober, 2004, p. 308). While my study does not specifically seek 'sensitive' information, I do ask participants for detailed accounts of hobbies, interests, and online practice, therefore carrying the potential for sensitive information to occur. Furthermore, according to Amy Bruckman et al: "The participants in our studies of the internet are more than capable of finding our research reports" (2015, p. 248), indicating the importance of confidentiality, particularly in digital audience research. Any measures for ensuring anonymity, however, must not interfere with the integrity of the analysis (Biskup and Flegel, 2000, p. 33) by diluting respondents' identity within the context of the study (Chadwick et al, 2003, p. 333). Using consistent pseudonyms, therefore,

enables analyses of identity, allowing me to profile participants while maintaining confidentiality.

Additionally, participants' original names are an indicator of identity in themselves (Keats-Rohan, 2007, p. 159), with notions of gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, and age (amongst other demographic indicators) tied to a person's name (Plutschow, 1995, p. 2). A pseudonym should thus mirror the identity of the participant's original name to maintain an accurate representation of that individual. As Chadwick et al state: "Pseudonyms are fundamentally different to anonymous identities. The former have a direct link to the person, the latter have no link" (2003, p. 333). When assigning pseudonyms, I attempted to mirror any existing cultural, religious, ethnicity, nationality, and class-related implications within a person's name, to maintain a 'direct link' to each participant. For respondents with names of Latin origin, for example, I assigned similarly derived pseudonyms, while names that imply elements of class and religion have also been given appropriate pseudonyms to indicate this identity. My employment of pseudonyms serves as an ethical insurance of participants' confidentiality, a method of maintaining links to each person's identity, and to ensure that participants' discourses are not compromised by anonymisation. A full list of my participants (and the dates of interview) is included in Appendix 4. Before any respondents were interviewed, however, it was essential to test my interview method, refine my research aims, and develop my methodological approach to data collection, which I achieved through a pilot study.

Developing my approach to interviewing through a pilot study

To develop and test the theoretical and practical elements of my interview process (Sampson, 2004, p. 383; Maxwell, 2005, p. 67; Yin, 2015, p. 39), I conducted a pilot study, consisting of two preparatory interviews, which took place in June 2014, before a final pilot interview in August 2014. I conducted the first two interviews in my home with long-term associates for convenience, and to avoid formally recruiting a participant whose responses would be ineligible for the final study. In the first pilot interview, I adopted a structured approach to trial a variety of questions and assess what works best in the field (Padgett, 2008, p. 52; Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 96). While the interview was too short to gather the thickness of description required, it highlighted areas of questioning that could be developed, and those that the participant struggled to answer. These initial pilot questions are included in Appendix 1. In the first pilot interview, many of the responses were vague, due to the broad nature of questions such as: "Would you say you use a lot of media?", and because I did not provide any guidance on my expectations. Some of my terminology also

caused confusion (Shepherd, 2015), as it was not properly defined (e.g. 'media' and 'engagement'), while asking participants to discuss "the most important factor" in their engagement proved to be confusing and resulted in the conversation falling apart.

For the second pilot interview, I developed the questions by rephrasing and removing problematic or similar questions, including two questions close to each other regarding technology, adding clearer guidance and definitions, and reshuffling the questions into firmer categories. The second draft of pilot questions is included as Appendix 2. The brief introductions, which preceded categories of questioning (as I noted during discussion of the interview process), proved particularly helpful, improving the participant's understanding and facilitating much clearer conversation (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). The second pilot interview lasted 30 minutes, with my changes resulting in expanded description from the respondent and a greater conversational flow. Despite the rephrasing of the final engagement factor questions in this draft, there were still issues with the responses, due to the narrow focus of these questions upon the participant's favourite source.

It also became apparent after only two interviews that a structured approach to questioning the participant's engagement with their interests (the 'audience value' section in Appendix 2) only worked if that person had a clearly defined, fan-like interest in a subject or text. In these interviews I followed a structured approach to questioning (Patton, 2002) to attain consistent, 'detailed insight' from both participants (Klenke, 2008, p. 125). However, to understand a variety of engagement, as opposed to focusing on fan-like definitions, I decided to adopt a semi-structured approach to offer greater flexibility in questioning (Rapley, 2001; Rubin and Rubin, 2005), allowing participants to express themselves "in their own terms" (Gubrium and Holstien, 2001, p. 197; see also Taylor and Rupp, 1991). This less rigid approach to fieldwork, which Robert Burgess describes as a "conversation with a purpose" (1984, p. 102), maintains the need for rich description through informal discussion between interviewer and participant. As such, semi-structured interviews are used widely in audience research (e.g. Tulloch and Jenkins 1995; Couldry et al 2010; Baym, 2012; Zubernis and Larsen, 2012; Booth and Kelly, 2013; Sandvoss and Kearns, 2014).

To facilitate less-structured discussion, and align with this tradition, for the final pilot interview (Appendix 3), the 'engagement factor' questions were expanded outside of a specific topic and included within a final category. Expanding these questions worked well as a closing section to the interview, allowing the participant to reflect on their answers throughout the interview and summarise their thoughts (Shepherd, 2015, p. 191; see also Robson, 2011, p. 284). Additionally, the word 'fan' was removed from this set of questions as

this term felt too leading (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005, p. 128; see also Hyman, 1954, p. 61; Mouton and Morais, 1988, p. 85), while also potentially defining respondents' engagement in a way I did not wish to occur. I conducted the final pilot interview at a neutral location (the University of Huddersfield), recording a 60-minute interview, with thick descriptions facilitated by the change from structured to semi-structured questioning. I retained the third draft of pilot questions as the finalised interview schedule, with the inclusion of discussion categories facilitating more responsive and reactive conversation within the "meaning-making partnership" between interviewer and interviewee (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p. 105; see also Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Due to the specific aims of this study regarding digital media engagement and value, trialling differing interview methods was essential, with semi-structured interviews facilitating longer, more in-depth discourse, ensuring validity within my data collection process. After this successful testing of the research design, I was able to begin identifying respondents through my snowball recruitment strategy, starting this chain through an initial respondent referred during the pilot process.

Expanding recruitment to include additional peer networks

In the initial research design, my intention was to create a network of peers using a series of rolling referrals stemming from a singular starting point, building a clear generational cohort analysis. I conducted the first interview on the 17th of October 2014, with 20 further interviews taking place up until February 4th 2015, before the snowball 'melted', concluding at 21 participants, with no more referrals forthcoming. As Thomas Lindlof and Bryan Taylor note: "Snowball samples do not always roll towards a satisfactory result… it is not uncommon for the snowball to hit a dead end ('freeze') or 'melt' prematurely" (2011, p. 115). Aside from Lindlof and Taylor's brief description, few other methodology books discussed this potential issue, with much of the preparatory work suggesting that the snowball would gather momentum as participants were recruited (e.g. Monge and Contractor, 1988; Bailey, 1994; Rubin and Babbie, 2010; Babbie, 2011). This phenomenon did not occur during my fieldwork, with most recruited participants offering fewer than the five referrals asked of them, and many failing to identify any further respondents at all.

As Gray noted in his discussion of non-fans (2003, p. 77), it became apparent as the study progressed that recruiting participants for a lengthy interview (30-60 minutes), with no incentive for taking part was ambitious - both in terms of converting referred individuals into participants and obtaining new referrals from those who had been interviewed. While I anticipated the former point as a potential problem (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p. 145), the failure of respondents to provide referrals for further interviews was an unanticipated issue.

The compactness of my respondents' network became obvious when two potential participants were referred twice after only 10 interviews had been conducted, and an exclusive network consisting of a student-majority (both undergraduate and postgraduate) formed. While the data I collected during these interviews was of the thickness required, and included various ages within my specified generational cohort, the transient nature of student participants meant that many struggled to identify local peers, due to the closed nature of their social networks. As Duane Monette et al note, this is a potential drawback of snowball recruitment: "Although it taps people who are involved in social networks, it misses people who are isolated from such networks" (2014, p. 152). A large network of people who lived in the Huddersfield area, therefore, were unable to be approached, due to the specific network formed within my snowball. To increase validity within my empirical data through a larger network, I decided to expand recruitment to explore additional peer networks using three further referral chains.

Due to the drawbacks associated with snowball recruitment, multi-chain methodologies are reasonably common in qualitative research, including respondent-driven recruitment (Heckathorn, 2002; 2007; Thompson, 2006; 2011; Goel and Salganik, 2010). This approach, which was proposed by Douglas Heckathorn in 1997, specifically targets 'hidden' networks (p. 174), and, according to Pierre Lavallée, offers an 'advanced version' of snowball recruitment as it considers multiple 'clusters', rather than a singular chain of participants (2014, p. 462). Clusters are formed from different networks by identifying various 'seeds', with multiple referral chains built from these entrance points. Nora Hamilton and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla's study of Guatemalans and Salvadorans in Los Angeles offers a prominent example of this method of recruitment; as it sought "multiple points of entry" in order "to replicate the proportions of different groups" (2001, p. 14). While I am not concerned with 'replicating proportions of different groups', expanding recruitment in this way would allow for greater analysis of participants' value and engagement practices. Developing my recruitment strategy to include multiple points of entry would facilitate a larger pool for potential recruitment, adding validity to my generational aims through considering the practices of a larger group of participants.

My expanded recruitment would utilise 'opportunity' or 'convenience' sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981; Fogelman, 2002; Babbie, 2011) to create three additional social chains, using referrals from the pilot respondents, who were asked to recommend potential participants from their extended networks. This approach "can allow researchers access to groups that would remain hidden" (Brady, 2006, p. 206), allowing me to identify accessible respondents who fitted with my initial aims and objectives. While generation was designed

into my data from the outset, expanding the recruitment methodology in this way added an additional element of location, which was not an explicit aim of the project. This occurred due to my identification of three new seeds in differing nearby locations, who I selected to avoid building another singular closed network, as occurred with my initial snowball. Through this approach, my data includes four referral chains, which each exploiting a specific social network in a differing nearby location. As I discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, this element of location was not a factor I had explicitly designed into my recruitment methodology, but occurred due to a clear limitation of recruiting through an opportunity sample, whereby respondents tend to be clustered within specific demographics - in this case localities.

Lynn Weber Cannon et al note a similar phenomenon in their discussion of the race and class biases inherent in qualitative feminist research, noting that "the small samples under study" are often limited to representing the "white and middle-class experience" (1988, pp. 459-460). While this limitation of small convenience samples is predominantly assessed with regards to class and ethnicity (see also Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Silke, 2004; Qu and Dumay, 2011), it also relates to location, whereby the respondents I recruited were located in specific areas due to their accessibility and the permutations of recruiting a small number of respondents through a snowball methodology. Other approaches I could have adopted to expand my recruitment, such as selecting passers-by or people at a specific fan event (e.g. Booth and Kelly, 2013), may have produced a higher yield of participants (Rubin and Babbie, 2011, p. 151) by exploring larger networks (Monette et al, 2014). Interviewing people at events, however, would potentially result in like-minded (and particularly fan-like) discourses, while 'person-on-the-street' interviews (Babbie, 2011, p. 206) would not allow for appropriate depth due to the time restraints and inconvenience for those being interviewed. Significantly, expanding recruitment through introducing additional clusters allows for the inclusion of participants in additional social networks through exploring distinct peer groups (Robson and Butler, 2001; Savage et al, 2005).

The second round of interviewing commenced on the 1st of March 2015, and concluded on the 28th of April 2015, after each of the three additional clusters concluded with no further referrals. The clusters varied in size from three to five participants (each of which also had a number of unsuccessful referrals), and served to validate the initial data collection, through 'theoretical saturation' occurring (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) whereby "gathering more data sheds no further light on the properties of their theoretical category" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 167).

Recruiting in these additional clusters was more efficient than with the initially selected snowball method, as delays did not occur when chasing referrals. Furthermore, the conclusion of a singular cluster did not derail the data collection process, as other clusters remained active. I felt the final number of 34 participants was an appropriate size for my analysis, due to the theoretical saturation of new data occurring, which enabled a cultural analysis of digital value and engagement to take place through my participants' interview discourses. As the notions of value and engagement are built empirically in this way, my study aligns with a grounded theory approach to qualitative research. Before introducing my cascade model of digital engagement, therefore, it is essential to discuss my coding process through grounded theory, and evaluate both the epistemological benefits and issues of such an approach to classifying data within an interview study.

Coding my cascade model of digital media engagement using grounded theory

Grounded theory is a methodology that is rooted within inductive qualitative research in sociological fields of study (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Toraskar, 1991; Urquhart, 1997; Trauth, 2000; Barker, 2008; Hadas and Shifman, 2013), serving to both challenge the "hegemony of quantitative research" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 511), and legitimise qualitative research as a method "intended to construct abstract theoretical explanations of social processes" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5). Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss' *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967) urged sociologists to refocus qualitative enquiry upon "data systematically obtained from social research" instead of the "overemphasis" placed upon "the verification of theory" (p. 1) within the social sciences of that era. At its core, Kathy Charmaz notes: "Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing data" (2006, p. 2). Through grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss advocated the need for exploratory understandings of the subjects being researched, which were grounded in the data collected.

In 1978, Glaser proposed the addendum of 'theoretical sensitivity', suggesting that researchers enter fieldwork without fixed concepts or theories (see also Urquhart, 2000, p. 130). My approach to data collection aligns with a Glaserian interpretation of grounded theory, as research was conducted with no predetermined hypotheses, with analysis instead grounded in participants' discourses. Glaser refers to this ground-up approach as 'open coding' (1978, p. 56), which avoids imposing preconceptions through a top-down method of analysis, offering a valid discussion of the value and engagement practices observed during data collection. I adopted a manual approach to coding within this theoretical approach, beginning by categorising the transcripts through identifying the prominent, reoccurring

practices across the various interviews. As I discussed previously with regards to validity, my empirical analysis takes place within the constructivist paradigm through thick description, while the codes that emerged during initial analysis of the interview transcripts were reassessed to add validity through 'the lens of the researcher'. I undertook multiple re-readings and 'constant comparison' (Urquhart, 2013, p. 23) of the interview transcripts, with categories refined into specific codes of practice, which occurred within larger codes of engagement. The codes are listed below within my cascade model for digital media engagement (Figure 2), with the specific practices listed beside the larger codes of engagement:

FAN-LIKE ENGAGEMENT

Codes of practice
- Platform-specific practice of identities
- Responsible policing of digital communities
- Affirming fan enthusiasm through media that enrages
- Social activity online with friends and strangers
- Self-branding

GUARDED ENGAGEMENT

Codes of practice
- Unproductive engagement
- Restored private engagement
- Guilty pleasures and ironic consumption
- Apathetic disengagement with media

ROUTINISED ENGAGEMENT

Codes of practice
- Habitual engagement
- Casual and impulsive use
- Time-filling and boredom
- Digital surveillance

RESTRICTED ENGAGEMENT

Codes of practice
- Perceived overreliance on digital media
- Hypercritical of negative practice

Figure 2: Cascade model of digital media engagement modes and codes of practice

During the coding process, it became apparent that the predominant literature on engagement (which I reviewed in Chapter 1), only really applied to a productive fan-like section of my participants' engagement, which is rooted in the works of Fiske (1992) and Jenkins (2006). The fan-like engagement category, therefore, consists of the various codes

of practice that align most closely with existing literature. The practices within this category of engagement, however, were far from ubiquitous, with only a select number of participants engaging with digital media in a fan-like manner. I organised the various other codes of practice into three additional categories of engagement, with each of these differing modes including a wide variety of practices discussed by my respondents.

The four modes of engagement are organised in the cascade model to indicate how participants' various engagement discourses hybridise, with most respondents negotiating numerous, fluid forms of engagement within their daily digital media use. In this model, the engagement modes blur down the levels, but do not combine upwards. As an example of the model in practice, if a participant engaged with digital media in a fan-like manner, then they can also hybridise this engagement with any (and all) of the three other modes. If, however, a participant entered the model via the second level (guarded engagement), they will not engage in a fan-like manner but will blur this engagement with either (or both) of the other two modes below. Participants cannot enter the model at the fourth level, as the practices aligned with this mode of engagement were based upon self-reflection of the other types of engagement, and thus this mode cannot occur in isolation. In addition to categorising participants' varied digital media practice, the cascade model also aligns these modes of engagement alongside specific forms of value. Having introduced my coding of engagement within this model, I will now demonstrate how my theoretical framework of value has been applied alongside engagement, before reflecting upon this a posteriori approach to classifying data.

In Chapter 1, by assessing value across numerous discourses, I demonstrated the requirement for a plural approach to value in my study (Bolin, 2011, p. 122), aligning with Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006), whereby value is negotiated across varying contextual worlds. Within my cascade model, value is similarly multi-contextual, and able to be negotiated fluidly by my participants, with my work drawing on specific 'axioms' within Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (pp. 74-76) that share analytical similarities to my participants' discourses. The forms of value I identify in my model develop Boltanski and Thévenot's approach in three specific ways. Firstly, my concepts of value are grounded within participants' discourses, and are applicable to the specific modes of engagement within my cascade model. Secondly, by aligning value with engagement in a digital media context, my extrapolation of Boltanski and Thévenot's model explores value through respondents' lived engagement. Finally, through my specific methodological approach and, crucially, my neoliberal analysis, I assess how multi-modal value is shaped by participants' dispositions regarding this dominant cultural

ideology. My cascade model, therefore, develops the plural approach to value utilised by Boltanski and Thévenot, in various original ways, by aligning value alongside engagement, as illustrated in Figure 3:
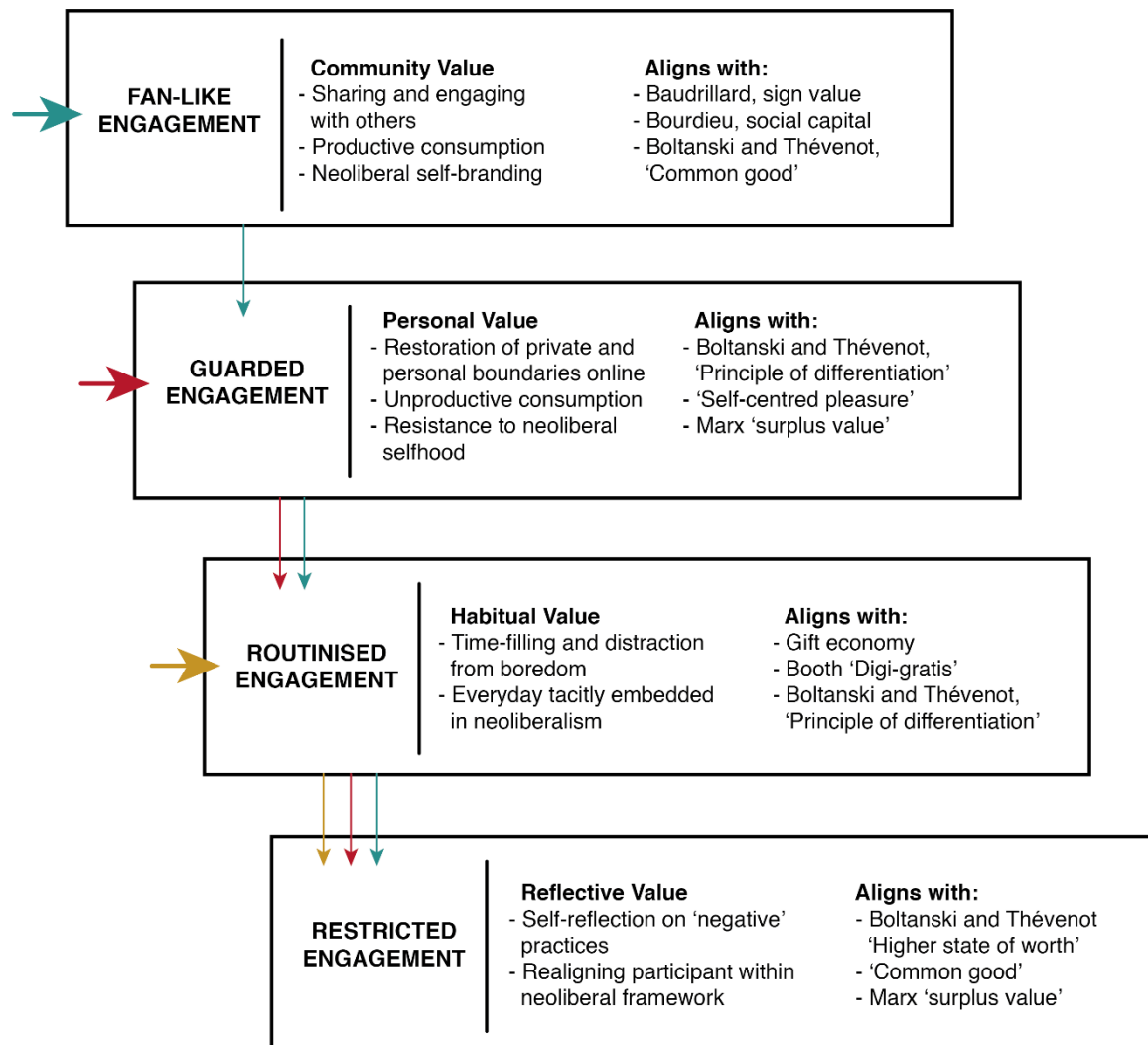
Figure 3: Forms of value within the cascade model of digital media engagement

Each mode of engagement within the cascade model carries a specific form of value, which is hybridised by participants down the model in parallel with engagement. The four value forms outlined in Figure 3 are further grounded within my theoretical framework of value through existing work, including two of Boltanski and Thévenot's axioms - the 'common good' (p. 74), which is "opposed to the self-centered pleasure that has to be sacrificed to reach a higher state of worth" (p. 76), and the 'principle of differentiation', which preserves "personal particularities" (p. 75). This is not to suggest, however, that the forms of value I propose within my model are identical to these existing theories, rather that value within the cascade model draws on various discourses to demonstrate the plurality of value that participants negotiate within their multi-modal digital media engagement. Applying this

approach within the context of structuration theory, my participants value their digital media engagement in numerous forms (and engage in numerous modes), within the structures of both the cascade model, and the larger media environment. In this sense, the predominance of either agency or structure may vary between differing forms of value, but the duality of both is present in all modes, aligning with the structurationist approach I advocated in Chapter 1. My cascade model, therefore, not only demonstrates the plurality of value, as argued by Boltanski and Thévenot (1987/2006) and Bolin (2011), but critically, the differing value inherent within my participants' multi-modal engagement.

Before developing my approach to engagement and value through an overview of my participants in the following section, it is worthwhile to consider the epistemological implications of my grounded theory approach to coding and analysing my data. While I have noted the significance of approaching fieldwork without any predetermined hypotheses, by allowing my participants to frame engagement and value, and building analysis upon these discourses, I subsequently created my cascade model after the fact of my interviews. This a posteriori approach to analysis aligns with the grounded theory approach I have outlined in this chapter and is thus common within work of this nature (Crabtree and Miller, 1999, p. 21; see also Altheide, 1987). Such an approach, as I have noted above, is essential to assessing the cultural meanings within my respondents' practices, although as this analysis was constructed through 'the lens of the researcher', and thus my own observations, "one must decide whether or not that which was being sought was, in fact, detected" (Currie, 1968, p. 587). By creating my cascade model after the fact of my data, analysis was constructed through my own observations of perceived similarities amongst my respondents' discourses, with potential issues, according to Staffan Larsson, associated with "the difficulties in judging when a similarity is present" (2009, p. 33). I have addressed these potential issues by following a grounded theory approach, ensuring that validity was prioritised during the coding process, aligning my work within this tradition. I will reflect upon the limitations of this approach in the Conclusion. Having thoroughly established how my cascade model was analysed through grounded theory, I will now further assess my methodological approach with an overview of the respondents I recruited for this study.

An overview of my participants through peer networks and age

Beginning with diagrams of the recruitment process, in this section I will illustrate my snowball recruitment, by presenting the four peer networks from which my interviews were collected. After addressing this, my participants' engagement will be plotted within a spectrum of age, establishing my challenge to the notion of a united generation of so-called

'digital natives' in this study (Prensky, 2001). Before assessing generation, my participants are first grouped into four peer networks, with each network beginning with one seed that I identified through referrals from my pilot interviewees. This recruitment method exploits existing social networks to identify participants within the generational criteria of my methodology. The following diagrams show the participants within each peer network, beginning with the initial snowball (Figure 4), Cluster 2 (Figure 5), Cluster 3 (Figure 6), and Cluster 4 (Figure 7). Referred individuals who could not be recruited are indicated with a strikethrough.

Initial snowball
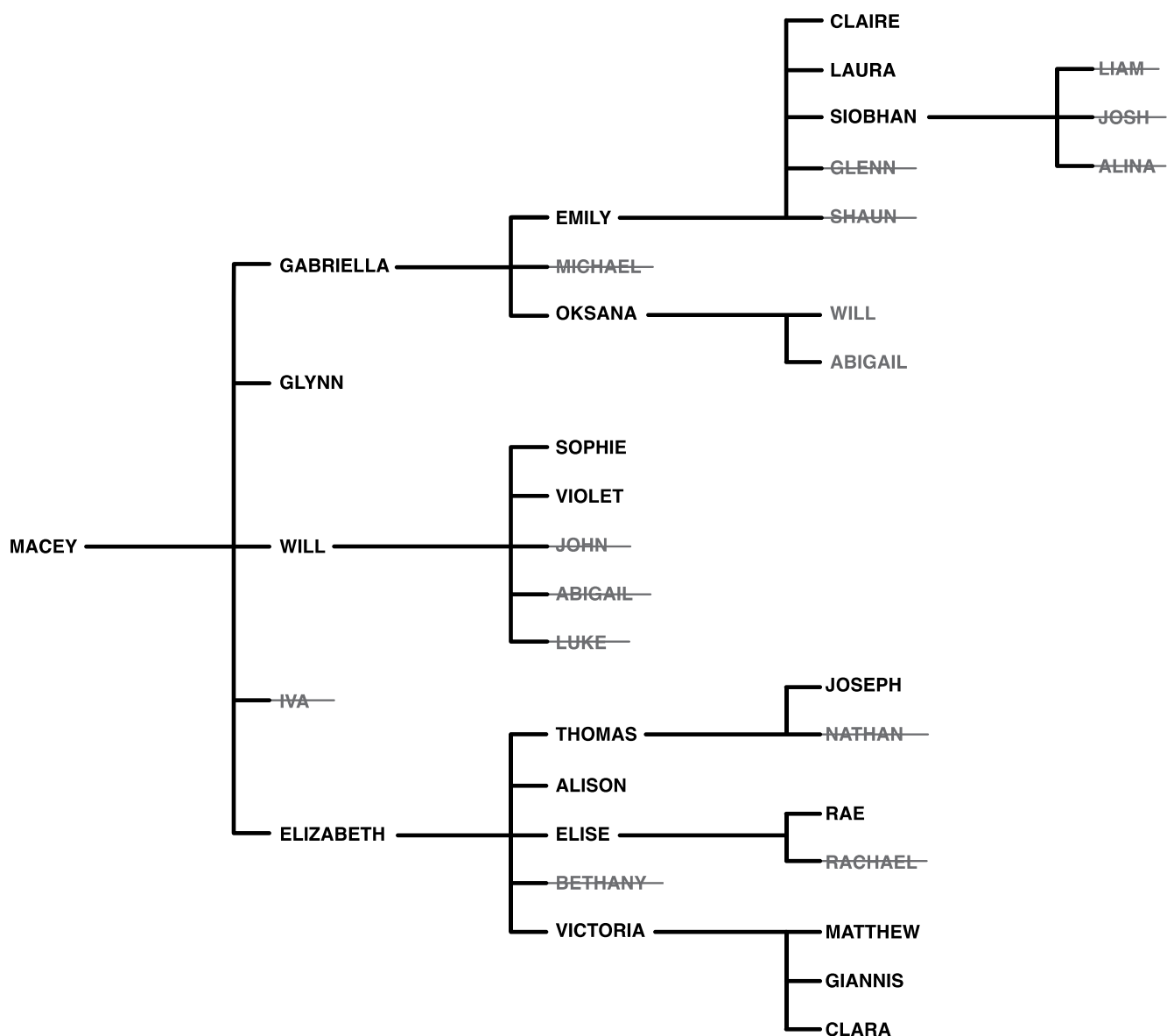
Figure 4: Network of initial recruitment in Huddersfield

Cluster 2
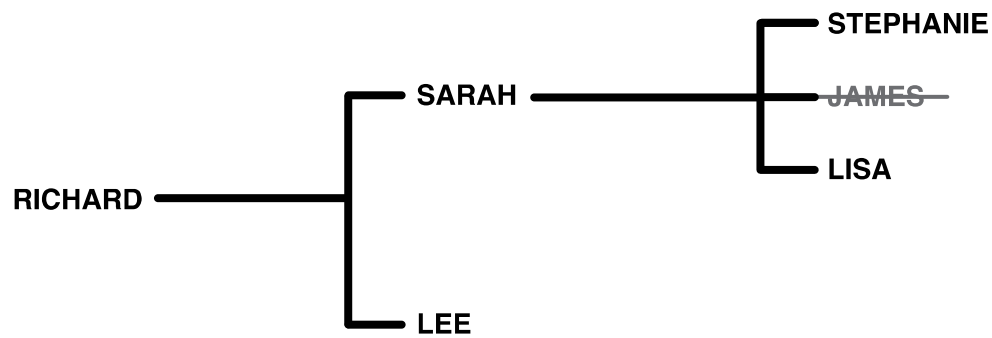
Figure 5: Network of recruitment in second cluster (Ackworth)

Cluster 3
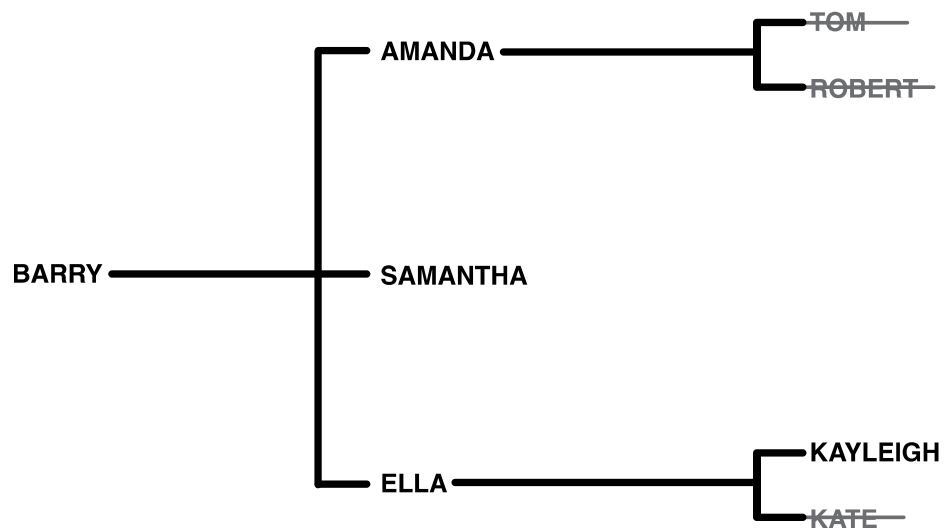
Figure 6: Network of recruitment in third cluster (Penistone)

Cluster 4
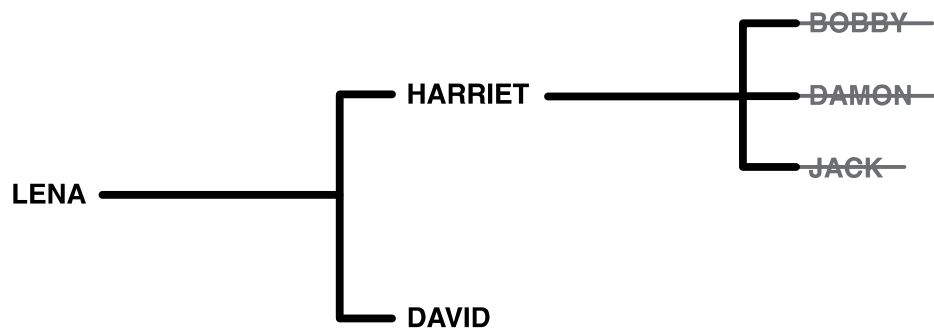
Figure 7: Network of recruitment in the final cluster (Pudsey)

The four diagrams illustrate how recruitment occurred, with each cluster creating a short chain, infiltrating various networks as it developed. As can be seen in Figure 4, the difficulties faced in obtaining referrals from interviewed participants in in the initial snowball ultimately led to numerous chains ending quickly, with only three respondents (Will, Elizabeth, and Emily) offering the full five referrals asked of them when recruited, while 19 participants, across all four clusters, provided no further referrals, ending the chain at that point. Identifying multiple seeds through the expanded recruitment methodology ensured that I was no longer dependent on a singular network, with the additional clusters offering access to further peer groups that were not available in the closed Huddersfield cluster. A full map of the recruitment chains including every participant is included in Appendix 5. For researchers considering recruitment based around peer referrals, my experience suggests that respondent-driven recruitment offers a superior design, de-emphasising the importance of a singular social chain in a snowball method, by negotiating numerous peer networks. In the following section, I will further establish the makeup of my participants, by plotting their engagement upon a spectrum.

Challenging 'digital natives' discourse through a spectrum of age and engagement

In Chapter 1, I critiqued the 'digital natives' concept by proposing a challenge to the popular and scholarly narrative of 'digital natives' as a singular generation of tech-savvy digital users (Prensky, 2001; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). Within my participants' digital media practices there was no universal generational identity apparent, with respondents demonstrating a spectrum of engagement that was not clearly linked to their age. The diagram overleaf (Figure 8) plots my participants upon a spectrum between fan-like and routinised engagement, and suggests no clear united digital habitus or manner of engaging based solely upon age, with participants of various ages, born in different decades, appearing across the spectrum.
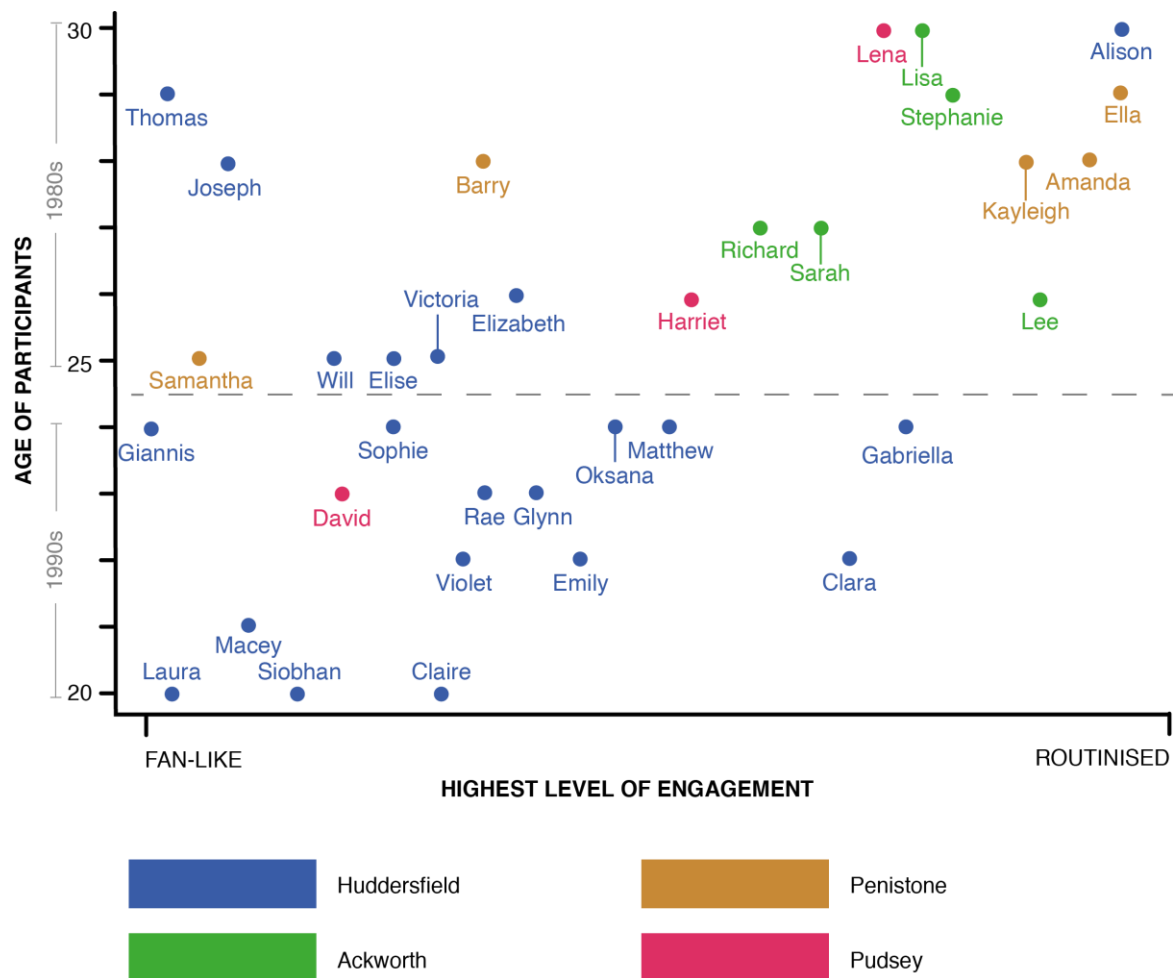
Figure 8: Participants' age within a spectrum of engagement

(Age is listed at the time of interview, with all interviews occurring between October 2014 and April 2015. For exact dates of each interview see Appendix 4).

In Figure 8, participants are plotted within the spectrum based on their highest level of engagement, with those who entered via the fan-like mode at one end, and participants entering via routinised engagement at the other. This illustration suggests that participants' engagement is not linked solely to their age, with respondents of varying ages appearing across the spectrum. The participants who can be aligned most closely with the 'digital natives' concept are those who engage in a fan-like manner. As the spectrum progresses away from this mode of engagement, however, participants no longer display the types of characteristics that are associated with 'digital natives', with some explicitly discussing their lack of tech-savvy during their interviews. Instead, my participants demonstrate a mixture of digital capabilities, extending beyond the digital native and immigrant binary (Prensky, 2012). Even within the narrow age range of my participants, this spectrum of differences suggests there is no clear generational digital proclivity, identity or habitus in my data. This spectrum of age and engagement practices enables me to challenge the popular 'digital natives'

discourse, with my data suggesting there is no united digital habitus within respondents born between 1980 and 1994 (Sue Bennett et al, 2008, p. 776). This overview of my participants helps to establish how these factors begin to align with digital media engagement. This analysis will be further developed across the study, as I begin to assess the various modes of engagement and value within my cascade model.

Summary of the methodology

Through a close appraisal of my methodology, in this chapter I have demonstrated how and why the research design was selected to facilitate the specific aims of this study. Beginning with a discussion of the differing qualitative and quantitative conceptual frameworks, I framed my study within the field of qualitative interview studies in audience research, exploring participants' non-quantifiable discourses of value and engagement. Through Creswell and Miller's qualitative framework (2000), my prioritising of validity over generalisability was established through thick description, aligning with the specific aims of this study. Within a long tradition of interview studies, my methodology allowed me to address the research question posed at the beginning of this chapter: What is the value of digital media engagement for the participants of my study? My research design reflects this aim, with semi-structured interviews through snowball recruitment selected to gather participants' discourses across existing social networks. By selecting this method, I addressed the performativity inherent within the interview setting, identifying how and why respondents 'perform' their identities (Goffman, 1959) within my data. Developing existing methodological approaches within this field, I explore digital media engagement beyond specific texts and communities, through a generation-based methodology, aligning with the "increased interest in generational theory" (Bolin, 2017, p. 4).

Having established value as multi-discursive within my theoretical framework in Chapter 1, aligning with Boltanski and Thévenot's (1987/2006) model for plurality, in this chapter, I positioned my approach to value alongside engagement analytically through the introduction of my cascade model, challenging reductive discourses of engagement (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006). Within this model, engagement is conceptualised as four fluid modes: fan-like, guarded, routinised, and restricted, which are aligned respectively with four distinct forms of value: community, personal, habitual, and reflective. Participants enter the cascade model via one of three levels, hybridising engagement and value downwards. While I have critically theorised value and engagement as separate entities so far, I have only begun to establish the value *of* engagement. In Chapter 3, I will begin my analysis by exploring the

community value of fan-like engagement, introducing my neoliberal analytical framework by assessing the significance of self-branding for participants at this level of the cascade model.

Chapter 3: 'One for Politics, and One for Football' - The Community Value of Fan-like Engagement

In Chapter 1, I critically assessed existing discourses of value and engagement as separate entities. Value was addressed first through establishing singular Marxist notions of value (Marx, 1867/1976; Andrejevic, 2009; Fuchs, 2014), before seeking two contrasting pathways from this discourse, by considering the duality of market and gift economies within the digital media marketplace (Booth 2010; Lobato and Thomas, 2015), and value as multi-discursive through Baudrillard (1972/1981) and Bourdieu (1993). Within this theoretical framework, I argued for the exploration of value beyond these singular theories, aligning with and developing Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006). I then critiqued reductive notions of engagement that were limited to fan-like audience productivity (e.g. Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Bruns 2008a; Davis, 2013), positioning my work within a small body of emergent conceptual work on engagement (Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018). Having outlined the need to complicate these various concepts, in Chapter 2, value and engagement were brought together through four aligned modes of each within my cascade model for digital media engagement. In this chapter, I will begin to analyse the value *of* engagement, by presenting the first mode in the cascade model: fan-like engagement, and the specific community value of this practice for my participants.

As I aim to complicate digital media engagement beyond the fan-led discourse noted above, it is important to understand why the mode of engagement that aligns most closely with this literature has been selected as the starting point for empirical analysis. During my introduction of the cascade model (see p. 78), I suggested that participants who enter via the top level (fan-like engagement) can hybridise their engagement across all four modes. Beginning with fan-like engagement, therefore, is essential to understand the differing levels of digital media engagement in my study, and how value is simultaneously negotiated by participants. For the purposes of analysis, the value and engagement pairings proposed in Chapter 2 will be artificially separated from the cascade model to offer a thorough introduction to these varying concepts. In this chapter, therefore, I will consider the community value of fan-like engagement, through the generational approach of this study, positioning this mode at one end of the neoliberal framework. The other modes of value and engagement will be addressed over the following two chapters, before these fully theorised

modes are reintegrated into the cascade model in Chapter 6, to explore how participants hybridise engagement and value.

This chapter is split into three sections to address this aim. In the first section, I present the digital media practices associated with fan-like engagement through participants' discourses, demonstrating the significance of identity performance (Goffman, 1959; Hall, 1992) and productive consumption, which links these practices together. Having established these fan-like practices, I will outline the distinct form of community value for participants who enter the cascade model via this level in relation to structuration theory, aligning with and developing existing work (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In the final section, the remaining practice of fan-like engagement will be assessed, aligning participants' apparently vain and individualistic digital media use with neoliberal selfhood (McGuigan, 2014; 2016), demonstrating the specific form of community value inherent within 'self-branding' (Marwick, 2013), which resonates beyond digital 'vanity' (Twenge and Campbell, 2009, p. 142) and occurs as a cultural and social practice. For participants who enter the cascade model via this level, value occurs through engaging with others, and 'productive consumption'. While this aligns with much of the work I critiqued in Chapter 1, only some of my participants demonstrated fan-like practices, all of whom also hybridised this 'productive' engagement with other 'unproductive' digital media use. My work, therefore, differs to much of the prevalent discourse, as I suggest that while fan-like engagement does exist in my data, it is one of numerous forms of digital media engagement within my cascade model. Furthermore, this productive engagement holds a distinct form of value for respondents, which differs to the other modes, with fan-like engagement offering community value for participants who engage in this manner. This concept of community value will be further explored in the following section, after first establishing the various digital media practices that can be aligned with fan-like engagement.

The interlinked practices of fan-like engagement

Figure 9: Participants' digital media practices associated with fan-like engagement

In Figure 9 the five digital media practices aligned with the fan-like mode of engagement are listed, which emerged during the interviews. Within this section, I will outline four of these five practices - with self-branding considered later in this chapter, due to the way in which it develops the concept of community value. Through analysis of my participants' discourses, in this section I assess how fan-like engagement is formed through interlinked digital media practices, which are rooted in identity performance and engaging socially and responsibly within online community spaces. Beginning with platform-specific practice of identities, I establish the critical notion of postmodern identity through Stuart Hall (1992) before considering digital identity performance, including work from Sherry Turkle (2011), and Nancy Baym (2015). Through this discourse, I assess the practice of participants splintering their engagement (and identities) across numerous platforms, demonstrating how, through purposeful and well-managed engagement with selected audiences, participants avoid issues relating to 'context collapse' within their favoured digital communities (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 4). Following this, I discuss participants' sense of responsibility within their networks, before addressing how identity is reaffirmed through media that enrages, developing Jonathan Gray's work on anti-fandom (2003). Finally, I explore how respondents interact with both friends and strangers for positive and negative reasons online, aligning these various practices together through carefully managed identity performance and productive engagement. I will begin this analysis with my participants' platform-specific practice of identities, through a discussion of digital identity performance.

Platform-specific practice of identities

Participants who engaged with digital media in a fan-like manner intentionally separated their consumption across numerous platforms, usually with a clear purpose, such as engaging with differing communities and interests (Madianou and Miller, 2012). As such, respondents often identified specific digital communities and networks across which they divided their differing engagement practices. While I will address participants' hybridising of engagement in Chapter 6, in the context of this section, participants also demonstrated platform-specific practice of identities, dividing their identity performance across differing digital communities. In Stuart Hall's 1992 essay, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', postmodern identity occurs within the structures of societal constructs, 'group processes' and 'collective norms' (p. 284; see also Ang and Hermes, 1991, p. 308; Morley, 1992, p. 209; 1993, p. 16). Aligning Hall's understanding with symbolic interactionism, identity is constructed through interaction, and thus a person's concept of the self is rooted in how they are viewed by others, as Nancy Baym suggests: "Identities are always social. They are made, displayed, and reshaped

through interaction" (2015, p. 118; see also Mead, 1967, p. 140; Jenkins, 1996, p. 98). According to Hall:

> Identity, in the sociological conception, bridges the gap between the 'inside' and 'outside' – between the personal and the public worlds. The fact that we project 'ourselves' into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them 'part of us', helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world. (p. 276)

Kathryn Woodward also notes: "Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions which we might adopt" (1997, p. 2). Within contemporary postmodern discourse, identity is often framed as fragmented (Cerulo, 1997, p. 393; Awan, 2007, p. 9), which Hall attributes to the rise of identity politics, leading to "several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved identities" (pp. 276-277). While Hall's work occurs before the rise of Web 2.0, his theory is still applicable within a contemporary context, with the fragmentation of identity he proposes perhaps 'enhanced' by digital media (Baym, 2015, p. 119; see also Serfaty, 2004, p. 28). Sherry Turkle explores the 'nuanced' approach to identity performance in social networking sites, including Facebook, where users 'compose' their identity across numerous "sites, games, and worlds" (2011, p. 273). In *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Nancy Baym discusses her own multiple 'disembodied identities' across various online spaces:

> On Spotify and Last.fm, for instance, I am popgurl, a self-representation I took great pains to keep separate from Nancy Baym for some time before publicly claiming her. In the fan board discussing my favourite band, I used my cat's name, not because I didn't want others in the group knowing who I am, but because I didn't want that fangirl to show up when people search for this scholar. (2015, p. 119; see also Baym and boyd, 2012, pp. 321-322).

As Amanda Lenhart summarises, social networking sites allow individuals to create a "constructed, idealized and public version" of themselves (2006, p. 63). This idealised version of the user is, according to David Brake, a performance (2009, p. 21), and as Baym and boyd note: "People actively construct identities and publics through social media, working their way through challenges over time, influenced by the media, the broader contexts within which they use them, and their personal proclivities" (2012, p. 327). Identity within digital spaces is best conceptualised as a fluid 'production', according to Hall:

> Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as necessarily a phenomena [sic]; an already accomplished historical fact... we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (1990, p. 51; see also Hall, 1987; 1990; 1992)

Hall's conceptualisation of postmodern identity as a 'production' aligns with the seminal work of Erving Goffman, which considers identity as manifested through performance (1959, p. 32), and is particularly relevant within digital media discourse, where users "crave an audience and credit for their accomplishments" (Danet, 2001, p. 19). As Zizi Papacharissi argues: "The expression of public opinion on private forums becomes a carefully orchestrated performance with the other in mind" (2009b, p. 147; see also Baym and boyd, 2012, p. 323). My participants' fan-like practice aligns with Papacharissi's understanding of identity performance as 'carefully orchestrated', with this mode of engagement driven by purposeful and controlled platform-specific practices of identity. This practice can also be aligned with 'polymedia' (Madianou and Miller, 2012), which considers how different sources are used for various purposes: "Polymedia is not simply the environment; it is how users exploit these affordances in order to manage their emotions and their relationships" (p. 172). Within a polymedia environment, users integrate platforms (or 'mediums'), switching their engagement according to specific purpose:

> Few individuals confine themselves to a single medium, most operate a repertoire of alternative media which may relate to different people, different kinds of messages, but also to these issues of emotional control and expression. For each individual, polymedia represents their personal repertoire of communication media and of emotional registers. (p. 180)

While my participants similarly divided their identity-led engagement across a broad repertoire of media sources, the practice of splitting identity also occurred within singular mediums. Giannis [4], a 24-year-old PhD student, offers a clear example of this practice, intentionally splitting his identity performance across four profiles on the same platform (Twitter). Each profile represents a different selection of his identity (music, academic work, beer, and a professional account) and the corresponding section of his identity that coincides with that interest: "I have separate accounts, because I understand that some people may not want to read loads and loads of geeky ramblings about beer". Giannis' identity management across a singular platform represents a development of polymedia discourse, as Giannis demonstrates that purposefully divided engagement can occur within the same platform, through differing profiles. During his interview Giannis also noted that he had

---

[4] In addition to his PhD in music, Giannis also has several part-time jobs, including working at a local real ale pub, and lecturing occasionally at the University of Huddersfield. Originally of Greek descent, he has lived in numerous locations in the UK, including a year in Scotland during his undergraduate degree. Giannis is in a same-sex relationship and is heavily involved in on- and offline beer communities.

begun to spread his identity across so many accounts that he was struggling to differentiate his profiles.

Similarly, Will [5], 25, a master's student, maintains two separate Twitter accounts, "one for politics, and one for football", as "[I] don't want to get the two confused because, as a Sheffield United fan, tweeting things about the glorious Conservative era gets you into a lot of trouble with people from South Yorkshire". As a Sheffield native, Will is particularly aware of the differing audiences for his political beliefs and his football fandom, and intentionally separates his identity across two networks. This contrast of identities is illustrated by his use of the *Sheffield Star*, which relates to his football fandom, but conflicts with his political beliefs: "I think it might be a Trinity paper, which then of course makes me really confused because I know the *Mirror's* no good".

This platform-specific practice of identities across various networks demonstrates a clear awareness of the differing audiences Will and Giannis maintain within their online networks, and the identity performances required as a result. Even within fan-like textual productivity, participants' identity performance (through production) is aimed at specific "differentiated" (Baym, 2012, p. 290) networks of peers, as opposed to occurring as a generalised output to an imprecise 'imagined audience' (Thompson, 1995, p. 99; Brake, 2012, p. 1069; Litt, 2012, p. 330). Giannis discussed this during his interview:

> As much as people might try and pretend they're not playing to an audience, it's not something that's at the front of my mind most of the time, people will put different things depending on what their perceived audience is, whether they think about it like that or not. It sounds a bit egotistical when you think about it.

Fan-like engagement for these participants is dependent upon purposeful identity performance, specifically the profiles Giannis and Will are performing from, and a knowledge of the expectations held by the audiences within each network. Giannis' acknowledgement of the separate interests of his audiences also demonstrates an awareness of issues relating to 'context collapse' (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 4), "in which people must address diverse audiences with the same messages, presenting only one identity to sets of people who would normally merit different sorts of identity performances" (Baym, 2012, p. 290; see also van Dijk, 2013, p. 200). Careful self-presentation of identities across specific platforms is

---

[5] Will is studying politics, while also working part-time at a hotel and for Jason McCartney - the Conservative MP for Colne Valley at the time of interview. Originally from Sheffield, Will is an avid Sheffield United fan. He is in a relationship with another participant, Sophie, with whom he has one child.

prominent within my participants' fan-like engagement. Laura [6], a 20-year-old undergraduate student, discusses context collapse in her Facebook networks:

Laura: I share stuff I'm passionate about on Facebook, so if there's something in the news recently that has sparked up any emotions, people know about it, which has got me into a lot of trouble, because I have my family on Facebook [laughs]!

Interviewer: Right!

Laura: There was the whole Jennifer Lawrence thing a while ago [hacking of private pictures], and I made a comment on Facebook saying how much I appreciated how the media were portraying it. They weren't saying, 'oh look at these pictures'; they were saying, you know, it is a sex crime at the end of day. And I said that, and my auntie was like, 'it's her own fault for taking the pictures' and all this, and I was like, 'oh no!' I've got the whole feminist society as Facebook friends, and they're going to see my auntie saying all this!

Laura's involvement with the University's Feminism Society is linked to a younger generational cohort, while her family (in this case an older relative) represents a differing generation. Context collapse occurs for Laura when she is unable to manage these networks within the same identity on Facebook, performing across generations as a result. To maintain agency over her performance, Laura separates her identity over numerous profiles across the social networking sites she uses, including Facebook, Tumblr, and three different Twitter accounts. Other participants also demonstrated an understanding of the distinct audiences they perform to, with platform-specific identity performance essential when considering the other interlinked practices in this mode of engagement. For participants who engage in a fan-like manner, which involves purposeful and enthusiastic posting in identity-driven digital communities, membership of relevant networks also requires a sense of responsibility. Much fan-like engagement occurred with a greater sense of accountability for both the participant and other users within digital communities.

Responsible policing of digital communities

Within their identity-driven practice, some respondents assumed the role of moderator, only entering debates when they deem that a sense of responsible perspective is required, as Laura demonstrates: "I'll offer my opinion if I feel like it's needed, [or] if I feel like people are

---

[6] Laura is in the final semester of her undergraduate degree, studying Music Journalism at the University of Huddersfield. In addition to her studies, Laura works part-time in retail, is the deputy editor for the student paper, and runs the University's Feminism Society. She is originally from Merseyside.

going off on one about ridiculous things". Laura polices her community spaces to ensure that debate does not get out of hand. Despite her young age within my generational cohort (20), Laura's sense of responsibility is perhaps linked to her positions of authority in the student newspaper and Feminism Society, with her responsible identity reflected within her networks. Similarly, Samantha enters online debates in a selective manner, often to correct what she perceives as misinformation:

> Samantha: A friend of mine recently posted something about the NHS 111 service and I disagreed with what it was saying. I clicked the link and disagreed even more, so I gave them a what-for on that one!
>
> Interviewer: So you like a debate?
>
> Samantha: Well it's not a debate because I'm always right [laughs]! I mean sometimes people are focused on one opinion, like 'I hate this'. They need to see the bigger picture! Spend all your energy in being one sided, there's no point.

Samantha's choice to enter this online debate occurs due to a sense of responsibility within a network where she feels a sense of belonging. While Laura's approach to policing her community is similar to a moderator, Samantha adopts a more assertive role in her selected networks: "I'll tell them that I don't want to be seeing shit like that, you know! 'You're wrong - I don't want to see it mate'. That sort of thing really. If I think you're so wrong that it's not even worth commenting, then I'll block the post". Samantha's impassioned policing of a digital community is also a performance of identity, both in terms of confirming her interests and acting in a perceived 'responsible' manner within her networks. In addition to platform-specific identity practices and community policing, fan-like participants also regularly used digital media they found unlikeable or enraging to reaffirm their fandoms and identities.

Affirming fan enthusiasm through media that enrages

In his discussion of anti-fandom, Jonathan Gray notes that a 'dispassion' for a text must be formed in some way, with anti-fans or 'oppositional' readers (see also Hall, 1980) "just as organized as their fan counterparts" (2003, p. 71), indicating the commonalities between the positions of 'fan' and 'anti-fan'. Anti-fans, as Gray notes, are passionate in their dislike of a text, and my participants who used digital media in a fan-like manner aligned with this notion, often engaging with both fan *and* anti-fan texts, with this purposeful, often negative,

engagement affirming their interest in a topic. Sophie (24) [7] and Macey (21) [8] both engage in an anti-fan-like manner with texts that enrage them to reaffirm their fandoms. Sophie's engagement with content relating to her interest in dance through the Twitter page 'Dance UK' offers a clear example of this practice: "[Dance UK] often tweet about politicians thinking that things like the arts and the softer subjects are no good in schools and they should be banished, so I'm always reading them and getting really angry". This engagement affirms Sophie's interests within a community, and by engaging with negative texts through a source for fans of dance, Sophie is aligning herself with a group of peers, and the opinions of that community through this practice of fan-like engagement.

Similarly, Macey discussed her regular engagement with *The Guardian's* feminism content: *"The Guardian* have fallen into the trap of being quite polarising for the sake of being polarising. I understand why they do that, because it's better for clicks. Especially for people like me who'll click on things they know are going to annoy them". In addition to reaffirming fan-like opinions, engaging with negative content also affirms Macey's identity as a feminist, which she performs through blogging, using negative texts to fuel her textual productivity, with this 'antagonistic' content serving to "weaponize existing cultural logics and thus reflect the antagonisms pervasive in embodied spaces" (Phillips and Milner, 2017, p. 37). As Macey discusses: "If I see something that I do find interesting, I tend to use that to write a blog about, rather than directly interacting with that". Macey chooses to engage with this content despite knowing that it may not lead to pleasure or enjoyment - an understanding that has perhaps increased due to her profession. This purposeful consumption of negative texts conflicts with fan studies discourse which suggests fans derive pleasure from their engagement (Raney and Bryant, 2002; Miron, 2003; Raney, 2003; Tamborini, 2003; Vorderer et al, 2004), as Kristyn Gorton suggests: "The pleasure of 'meaning making' underlines the experience of the fan – the fan can unpick, unravel and reveal the secret meanings of a text and produce [their] own online which secures [their] place within a community" (2009, p. 35). Macey's engagement with *The Guardian* and her subsequent textual productivity through blogging aligns with Gorton's concept of the fan experience for the most part, although this productive fan-like engagement is crucially not restricted to pleasure for Macey or Sophie.

---

[7] Sophie lives with her partner Will and their new-born baby. She works in Eureka! – a children's museum in Halifax and is currently on maternity leave. As a first-time mother, she engages regularly with various mummy blogs and other parenting digital communities, although she does so without participating productively.

[8] Macey is a professional copywriter for a digital marketing agency in Leeds. Macey is a keen blogger, focusing on feminism, fashion and music, but notes that working in digital marketing has ruined her enjoyment of reading other peoples' blogs.

Other participants also engage with negative content to challenge their identities in a way that develops beyond anti-fandom, through an intellectual appreciation of contrary opinions. Laura's consumption of *The Guardian's* online Comment is Free (CiF) section demonstrates a desire to challenge her identity through engaging with polarising content: "I do appreciate [CiF] – it's people sharing their opinion, and I don't necessarily always agree with that opinion, but it's a nice platform". This is not to imply that so-called 'intellectual' digital media consumption is solely a passage of discovery, as Cornel Sandvoss and Laura Kearns note (2014, p. 99), with this practice often occurring to reaffirm participants' existing sense of intellectuality, as well as identity. Samantha, in particular, engages with texts that are enraging or negative in an ironic manner to confirm an internal sense of superiority:

> Samantha: *HuffPost* tend to talk out their arse a lot.
>
> Interviewer: But you still go on it?
>
> Samantha: Yeah because it's amusing. They can't spell or anything, but it's quite funny to read. It's one of those things where you sort of sit there and think, 'oh my god that's terrible'. We'll sift through stuff on there and look for typos! It's kind of wired in the brain to be derisory about other people's articles!
>
> Interviewer: *HuffPost* is a good example to point and laugh at?
>
> Samantha: Yeah. I mean one person I'll never read is Richard Littlejohn of the Daily Fail. It's like he just plucks things from thin air and it really irritates me. I don't like reading newspapers full of people like him who grab things out the air and make a big stinking essay about it.

Samantha's engagement with *The Huffington Post* is ironic, using a source she considers 'terrible' to gain a sense of intellectual superiority, thus reaffirming her fan-like intellectuality and identity (Gorton, 2009, p. 35; see also Bordwell, 1989, p. 40; Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998). Through referencing the 'Daily Fail' meme (RationalWiki, 2018), Samantha's identification of the *Daily Mail* as substandard is also indicative of a specific populist trend that emerged throughout the interviews, where participants exhibited a dislike of media outlets they felt they ought to be negative towards. Participants asserting their dislike of a platform or opinion in an interview environment indicates a level of intellectual expectation because of speaking, even semi-formally, in a situation they conceive as intellectualised (Hyman, 1954, p. 61; Mouton and Morais, 1988, p. 85). For Samantha, who did not attend university, by stating a dislike of the *Daily Mail*, she is aligning herself with a populist opinion which both conforms to perceived interviewer expectations (as I belong to

the same generational cohort as Samantha), and addresses the expectation that as a fan-like 'digital native' she should have an intellectual, semiotically productive approach to consuming digital media (e.g. Bordwell, 1989, p. 40). Samantha's discussion of this opinion also demonstrates her reading of the interview setting as a respondent, whereby she performs a specific, 'situated' version of her identity (Riessman, 2003, p. 337) within a context perceived as authoritative and intellectualised. According to Goffman:

> When the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society… we may look upon it, in the manner of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, as a ceremony - as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community. (1959, p. 23)

By offering this specific opinion of the *Daily Mail*, Samantha is intentionally 'exemplifying' the 'moral values' of her cohort. Additionally, Samantha's performance could also align with Ellen Seiter's observation that some interview participants wish to "appear cosmopolitan and sophisticated" (1990, p. 64), particularly when there is a perceived difference in levels of cultural or educational capital and class between interviewer and interviewee. As Bourdieu argues: "Torn by all the contradictions between an objectively dominated condition and would-be participation in the dominant values, the petit bourgeois is haunted by the appearance he offers to others and the judgment they make of it" (1984, p. 253). Samantha's performance is carefully constructed in this context, as a demonstration of her intellectualised identity. Other respondents entering at the fan-like level of the cascade model (such as Thomas and Giannis) also performed in a similar way, demonstrating an intellectualised and highly analytical understanding of digital media, which they perhaps perceived as suitable for the interview setting.

As Neil Selwyn notes, possessing an innate understanding of digital media is "an accepted and expected condition under which young people now conduct their lives" (2009, p. 365), with these various respondents demonstrating an understanding of this digital native expectation. My participants' reaffirmation of fan enthusiasm, identity, and intellectuality through engaging with enraging media content develops fan studies' discourse which positions fan-like engagement as the intellectual search for pleasure. My participants demonstrated a broader approach to consuming media texts, engaging with both positive and negative - fan, and anti-fan texts - which were not necessarily linked to pleasure. This approach to fan-like engagement that includes both positive and negative texts is also applicable within participants' online social activity, as many respondents interacted with both friends and strangers in a positive and negative manner.

Social activity online with friends and strangers

Siobhan [9], a 20-year-old student, discussed her interactions online: "It's about dialogues, isn't it? And it's about creating that personal relationship with someone that could be 700 miles away and be completely different from you". The 'personal relationships' Siobhan creates within her selected digital communities are not restricted to existing friends, extending to strangers who are 'completely different' to her. Siobhan engages with local pet communities in numerous locations, combining her interests in animal welfare and local journalism, while also using digital networks to create social connections for her impending move: "I'm moving to the Isle of Wight next year so everything kind of gets related to there. I'm trying to get the best sense of it as possible". Similarly, Giannis' interactions in beer communities through Twitter have also led to offline social benefits:

> Giannis: A guy I bumped into who follows me on Twitter… I mentioned this particular brewery, which is incredibly difficult to find, and supposedly overrated, which is kind of why I was intrigued to try it. Like, you have to book an appointment at the abbey in Belgium to pick up this beer.
>
> Interviewer: That's amazing.
>
> Giannis: I know yeah, but in loads of places in Belgium they'll sell it on, even though they're not allowed, it's part of the thing, but places do anyway, and the monks aren't exactly hard litigators.
>
> Interviewer: [laughs] Weirdly!
>
> Giannis: [laughs] Yeah, yeah! So then this guy out of the blue tweeted me saying, 'I've dropped you off this bottle of beer', which if you bought it in the UK, because I think there's one or two pubs that sell it, you'd be looking at £15-20 a bottle, and he just gave one to me. I offered to give him money and he was like, 'ah no, it only cost me like two euros'… I don't think he would have just bought me something like that out of the blue, had he not felt like he knew me a bit from Twitter.

While Siobhan and Giannis gained obvious social benefits from interacting with friends and strangers, much like with the consumption of fan and anti-fan content, these interactions were both positive and negative for participants who entered the cascade model via this level, with Laura exemplifying negative social practice: "I enjoy having, like, a little bit of a

---

[9] Siobhan is a final year PR and Journalism undergraduate, who works part-time for an academic publisher. Siobhan is living in Huddersfield until finishing her degree, and after graduating is planning on moving to the Isle of Wight. She has a keen interest in animal rights, particularly pet welfare, and combines this with her journalism career aspirations.

Facebook debate. There's trolls and keyboard warriors that are always wrong, they just always want to start a fight, but I enjoy it sometimes". 'Trolls' - anonymous users who disingenuously aim to solicit a reaction from others - are, as Whitney Phillips notes, "agents of cultural digestion. Scavengers to their core, they have the time, the energy, and the inclination to scour the landscape for exploitable materials, which they subsequently weaponize into lulz extraction tools" (2015, p. 135). Laura's engagement with trolls demonstrates what Phillips describes as the mainstreaming of trolling culture (p. 137), which has expanded from specific networks across social platforms (p. 152). As such, Laura's response is measured, and links to previous practices as it reaffirms her fan-like identity through the policing of a specific community platform: "I engage with people when I think it's needed, but if there's a debate that's a bit far gone and a bit too stupid then I'll just read it for the craic, and probably feel a bit bad about humanity, but better at myself for not getting involved". In addition to policing her community by interacting socially with strangers, Laura's controlled interactions also serve to challenge, validate and further confirm Laura's identity:

> If it's something I genuinely feel really passionate about and they're arguing with me saying I'm wrong, then I get more angry than anything else. But, if it's just someone else's opinion on something I've said, genuine opinion, then I enjoy listening to them and, like, talking about it.

Laura's engagement with polarising strangers online challenges and reaffirms both her online identity performance, and the digital communities she belongs to. This engagement through a conceptual involvement in a community aligns with symbolic interactionism, as Marwick and boyd note: "Symbolic interactionism claims that identity and self are constituted through constant interactions with others… self-presentation is collaborative. Individuals work together to uphold preferred self-images of themselves" (2010, p. 10). The various participant practices within fan-like engagement are not singular concepts, but interlocking practices that hold a distinct form of value, as indicated in Figure 9. Through analysing participants' discourses, I suggest that the practices associated with fan-like engagement - platform-specific performance, community policing, affirmation of fan enthusiasm through negative media, and social activity - are rooted in productive identity performance through digital communities, indicating the value of such practice. This distinct 'community value' is specific to the fan-like mode of engagement, and in the following section, I will explore these practices further to understand this form of value.

Community value of fan-like engagement through participants' agency

Having established the various participant practices within fan-like engagement, in this section I introduce community value, assessing the distinct value for participants of this mode of engagement, which represents respondents' agency within the structures of digital media platforms. Aligning this work with existing discourses of value, including Jean Baudrillard (1970/1998; 1972/1981) Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant (1992), and Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1987/2006), I consider how community value develops these separate discourses through analysis of my participants' fan-like engagement practices. Finally, I will bring together the various generation concepts that have been discussed in the previous section, assessing the impact upon fan-like engagement and community value. For participants who engage in a fan-like manner, community value is rooted in productive engagement with other users, with the above practices offering this form of value singularly and when interlinked. Community value can be aligned with Baudrillard's sign value (1970/1998; 1972/1981) applied in a digital media setting, according to Göran Bolin, whereby "the means of consumption is most often also the means of production" (2011, p. 26).

Sign value within the digital media marketplace (Benkler, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2007) also aligns with productive 'self-branding', which, according to Alice Marwick, is "the strategic creation of identity to be promoted and sold to others" (2010, p. 231). While Baudrillard uses sign value with regards to brands in a consumer society, self-branding extrapolates this notion of prestige and status into digital identity performance. As Ruth Page notes: "Self-branding and micro-celebrity are forms of labour undertaken by both elite and ordinary persons in order to achieve the visibility and influence deemed necessary to achieve status or fame in the offline world" (2012, p. 182). Productive consumption represents sign value, as it signals the social difference, status and legitimacy (Bolin, 2011, p. 26) of my participants' fan-like engagement practices, and thus denotes agency within the digital media marketplace. This discourse aligns with community value, therefore, which is representative of my participants' agency, through their potential capacity to act within the structures of the digital media marketplace. Purposeful performance and policing online is an exercise of agency by my respondents, who "rely on structures to exercise their agency and, in doing so, reproduce and alter those very structures" (Webster, 2011, p. 48), with community value occurring through this mutually constituted duality of structure and agency. In addition to this structurationist reading of sign value, the significance of engaging with others further links community value to social capital, which represents "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a

durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Social capital can thus be aligned with community value due to the significance of mutual relationships within a digital community.

Community value lies within my respondents' productive consumption, and interacting (in a variety of ways) with both friends and strangers online, expanding the above discourses of value in a digital setting, while also developing Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's polity model (1987/2006). Within their model, Boltanski and Thévenot outline six axioms: common humanity, common dignity, principle of differentiation, an order of different states, an investment formula, and a common good (pp. 74-76), within which lies the 'economy of worth'. These axioms exist in various 'polities' (which can be loosely defined as contexts), according to the authors, demonstrating the multi-modality of worth across various contexts. How individuals negotiate value, in Boltanski and Thévenot's model, differs across polities (p. 65), with value conceptualised as a "higher common principle" (p. 66) which meets the six axioms. In my cascade model, participants negotiate value within one 'polity' - the digital media marketplace - whereby value is not conceptualised through a combination of axioms, but as distinct forms aligned with various modes of engagement. As such, value is negotiated not across *polity* contexts, but across *engagement* contexts, and I subsequently align two of the authors' axioms with community value. The 'common good', which Boltanski and Thévenot describe as "opposed to the self-centred pleasure that has to be sacrificed to reach a higher state of worth" (p. 75) and 'common humanity', which represents the shared principles of worth within a group (p. 74), are applicable within this context as representing the community value of digital networks. My application of these axioms, however, is distorted by the individualism of neoliberal cultural politics, with community value not representative of the common good in a traditional way, but through socially-mediated self-branding, which I will develop later in this chapter. The community value of fan-like engagement links these various discourses of value, demonstrating the significance of fan-like practice for my participants.

To align community value with fan-like engagement, I will further assess the previously outlined practices with emphasis upon the *value* of this engagement. Various participants, I suggested previously, divided their productive identity performance across platforms, avoiding context collapse through targeting specific audiences, and involving themselves within relevant communities. Many participants, including Thomas [10], Laura, and Giannis,

---

[10] Thomas is a 29-year-old freelance music producer. Originally from Suffolk, he moved to Huddersfield to study, before settling in the area with his partner (another participant – Elise). Thomas is a long-term user of various forums and digital community sites, including Reddit.

demonstrated a clear dislike of this platform-specific separation being breached, particularly regarding their personal and professional profiles. Laura, in particular, who separated her personal identities and engagement across several social media platforms, showed a dislike of other users blurring this divide:

> I don't understand how people can link [social network accounts] all together. I have Instagram and that's private, because although my tagged pictures are hidden on Facebook, I'm sure I have people that actually genuinely want to know what I'm up to, so my Instagram is, it's not even private, but if a member of my family follows me I'll block them. And that's not linked to any social network; it's not linked to Twitter or Facebook because, again, it's a bit more private, a bit more isolated. I like that.

Laura's platform-specific engagement with various social networking sites is carefully managed, with each profile aimed at a different section of her audience (Postmes and Baym, 2005, p. 222). When this separation is breached by a user entering a network that does not fit into Laura's vision for that particular identity performance, they are removed to maintain that separation. For Laura, the community value of this practice lies within separation of her networks, to "reveal different aspects of herself in different places" (Light, 2014, p. 104). When her carefully managed networks mix, Laura's engagement with these communities is devalued, as she is no longer able to share and engage with the audience she wants to, creating context collapse. Laura discusses her careful self-branding across numerous networks:

> Facebook, like I said, I very rarely post on it, and if I do it will be just a general post and it won't really be anything personal. If it's something personal, it's very, very rare. Twitter I'm a bit more opinionated, I use a lot more bad language because my family aren't on Twitter. And, you know, sometimes I do say personal things on Twitter, because again, my closer friends from home will follow me on Twitter and like to know what's going on in my life. But the personal things are also quite vague at times, so the people that are involved will know what I'm on about, but outsiders won't… And then, there's Tumblr that I use as sort of a private blog, so there's no one that I know that follows me on Tumblr in real life, aside from one guy who approached me and said, 'I found your Tumblr and I was really creeped out and I blocked him, like, 'okay, no'.

In Laura's case, community value is linked to agency through posting across identity-specific platforms, self-branding herself "as a way to find personal fulfillment" (Marwick, 2010, p. 15; see also Duffy and Hund, 2015; Gandini, 2016). For Laura, community value is lessened both by the agency of others, and the restriction implicit within the structures of each platform - or the sphere of power within this field (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 164). Other participants also discussed this link between community value and agency with regards to control of their

networks, with much fan-like engagement occurring within carefully curated communities. Siobhan offers an example: "I don't think there is anyone that posts anything negative on my feed. I think it's a case of finding the right people and following the ones that fit with your viewpoints on things". In addition to performing identities across various platforms, Siobhan has tailored the communities within these platforms to her identity-related interests, managing the 'laws' and 'institutions' of this platform (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 163), and thus moulding these structures through her agency (Webster, 2014, p. 11). The practice of community policing, therefore, occurs within tailored networks, with value linked to responsibly maintaining these community platforms. Giannis illustrates this practice in the beer community he engages with through Twitter:

> Giannis: I'm on a bit of a campaign at the moment calling out so-called liberal or progressive people who are normally just as bad as all the people they proclaim to hate.
>
> Interviewer: Right.
>
> Giannis: So it's not even like a fun thing, because I hate doing it. To me, I like to tweet about beer, and I like to get into discussions with people about beer. But in terms of stuff I actively tweet about these days, I tend to normally have a pretty strong agenda of things that I don't want to have to say, but I feel I have to.

The sense of responsibility Giannis feels he must maintain within his network supersedes any notions of enjoyment, with Giannis also describing this interaction as "stressful". I previously contrasted this practice with fan studies' discourse (e.g. Vorderer et al, 2004; Gorton, 2009), noting that my participants' interactions within digital communities were more diverse than a fan-like search for pleasure. The value of fan-like engagement is not necessarily tied to pleasure for Giannis but is rooted instead in his responsible network policing, maintaining the 'common good' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 76). Despite the lack of enjoyment in network policing, assuming this role within a community affirms Giannis' identity in numerous ways. Firstly, it addresses his 'fandom' of beer (see Thomas Thurnell-Read's 2016 work on beer drinking and identity) through peer interaction in an online community. Secondly, it reaffirms his personal offline identity (i.e. his belief regarding masculine culture and homophobia, as well as his own sexual orientation); and finally, it allows the self-expression and identity performance that is crucial to the way he engages with Twitter. The value of a digital community is not necessarily tied to pleasure, or even within fan-like appreciation of positive texts for these participants. Conversely, community value lies in the sense of belonging to a relevant community for respondents, and

engaging within that community in a responsible manner - aligning social capital with both the common good and common humanity derived from a specific digital community.

A sense of purpose is critical in understanding the community value of social activity for fan-like participants, with online interactions in my data more nuanced than many 'celebratory accounts' (Das et al, 2014, p. 37) of fan engagement would suggest (e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2007; 2008a; 2008b; Davis, 2013; Jenkins et al, 2013). Even for the most textually productive participants, such as Giannis, Laura, Macey, and Siobhan, posting within this mode of engagement is purposeful and carries a specific communicative worth. During the previous discussion of social activity online, I framed posting and interacting with others as communicative in its purpose. Siobhan's discussion of creating 'personal dialogues' with distant users demonstrated the positive aspect of this practice, while Laura's negative interaction with trolls was still indicative of the community value of social activity. Posting, however, occurred for more than social reasons, as demonstrated by Giannis: "Some days I won't talk to anyone, so it's a nice way of having that kind of almost faux social interaction. Sometimes it develops into actual social interaction, but a lot of the time it's just me getting thoughts out there". Joseph [11], a 28-year-old musician, also discussed a similar approach to posting: "It is kind of nice sometimes to be able to sort of share thoughts with anybody who happens to see them".

Both Giannis and Joseph's 'cathartic' (Lin, 2002, p. 4; Vorderer et al, 2004, p. 402) interaction highlights the diversity of posting in digital communities for some participants, with fan-like engagement not restricted to communication with like-minded peers. I will further develop this concept through examining 'diary like' digital 'new vanity' (Reed, 2005; Kendall, 2007; Twenge and Campbell, 2009) and the social nature of this self-branding (Humphreys, 2018) in the final section of this chapter. The community value for Giannis and Joseph in this instance is not linked to members of the community specifically, but within the platforms that facilitate this self-expression, with these participants valuing the agency of expression within the platform structures. This distinct form of value aligns sign value and social capital, as well as Boltanski and Thévenot's axioms of worth, with a specific mode of digital media engagement. The 'community value' for my participants who enter the cascade model via this level, specifically relates to these fan-like engagement practices, with the value of this mode of engagement tied to the cohesion of productive consumption and interacting (in various ways) with both friends and strangers in digital communities. Before

---

[11] Joseph is a freelance musician and a practicing Christian, identifying himself as progressive, particularly with regards to LGBT inclusion in the church. He is also a fan of comic books and video games.

further developing this specific value of engagement through my neoliberal framework, in the following section, I will first address the impact of generation upon community value, through assessing my participants' levels of cultural capital.

Complicating generation through digital capital and community value

In Chapter 2, I plotted my respondents' engagement upon a spectrum (Figure 8, see p. 85), with the following participants entering into the cascade model via the fan-like mode of engagement: Giannis, Thomas, Laura, Samantha, Joseph, Macey, Siobhan, Will, Sophie, David, Claire, Victoria, and Elise. These fan-like participants ranged in age from Siobhan and Laura (20) to Thomas (29). This relatively wide spectrum of age (within the parameters of this study) suggests that 'productive', fan-like engagement is not necessarily linked to clear generational divides between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' (Prensky, 2012, p. 69) in my data. Instead, as all these participants (with the exception of Samantha) have attended, or are attending, university, I can hypothesise that they have reasonably high levels of educational and cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 47-51), even if we are to consider class in this analysis as "inconspicuous and individualised" (Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017, p. 5; see also Savage at al, 2001). For these respondents, fan-like engagement appears to correlate with higher levels of education, as they generally possess the skills associated with productive and intellectual 'fans', and the technological savvy that is expected of 'digital natives' both in academic and popular discourse. These apparently higher levels of educational and cultural capital may indicate inconspicuous and individualised notions of class, according to Mike Savage et al: "The idea of class invites respondents to make sense of themselves in a broader social context. It is a connecting device, whereby people locate themselves, but it is not an identity that is internalised" (2001, p. 883; see also Martin, 1998). Laura outlines her knowledge of the digital media marketplace:

> Facebook arguments are so stupid anyway. There's been some heated ones in the past that have just gotten us absolutely nowhere, and people's opinions aren't going to change over what someone on Facebook says, so I've sort of taken a back step a little. I think I've grown up a little bit in the Facebook world [laughs]. I think that's the only way I can describe it.

Despite being amongst the youngest of the generational cohort recruited for this study at 20, Laura's views align closely with the older respondents, including Thomas (29): "I'm very careful about what I share on social networks, particularly with Facebook", and Joseph (28):

The thing about Facebook is, I think you actually make a mistake if you get into too much of a sort of, 'oh well I'm amongst friends' mentality, because anything you put out onto the internet really should be something that you would be happy to say, if not the same, as a private message to somebody.

While privacy-conscious guarded engagement will be considered in the following chapter, these varying participants' discourses suggests that the highly productive and savvy fan-like digital native is perhaps more indicative of higher levels of cultural capital than age within my data. As Sora Park suggests:

When people encounter the digital world, they make use of their prior knowledge, networks, tools, and skills to adapt to the new environment. In this respect, some are better equipped than others. This precondition of digital engagement is crucial to understanding why and how people differ in the way they adapt to their digital surroundings. (2017, p. 26)

I will further explore this concept in Chapter 6 through Park's version of 'digital capital', alongside my own disaggregated reading of digital cultural capital, and how this affects participants' position within the cascade model. Within this chapter so far, I have analysed the practices of fan-like engagement to understand the distinct 'community value' for participants who engage with digital media in this manner. In addition to the four practices I presented earlier, in Figure 9 one more practice is listed, with self-branding developing community value through the alignment of participants' fan-like engagement with neoliberalism through self-branding. In the final section of this chapter, I will assess this practice, positioning fan-like engagement at one end of my three-part neoliberal framework, while addressing how the apparent tension between neoliberal selfhood and community value works within my data.

Linking community value and neoliberalism through self-branding

In existing literature, audience productivity is often presented as digital 'new vanity' (Twenge and Campbell, 2009, p. 142), with identity performance through social networking sites and blogs considered self-absorbed and vain in its intention (Brabazon, 2006, p. 158). Self-focused digital activities such as blogging, vlogging, or posting selfies, according to much existing research, indicate an inherent vanity existing at the core of participatory audiencehood (see Baldwin and Stroman, 2007; Buffardi and Campbell, 2008). Carla Zdanow notes that this new vanity "is increasingly being regarded as one of the biggest socio-cultural problems of the contemporary era" (2011, p. 1). In this section, I analyse my respondents' apparently vain and individualistic media use through aligning self-branding

with neoliberalism, assessing how fan-like engagement differs from existing discourse, with this final practice developing community value through neoliberal selfhood. To achieve this aim, I will first contrast existing discourse, including Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell (2009), alongside earlier studies regarding blogging (Reed, 2005; Efimova and Grudin, 2007; and Kendall, 2007), with my participants' practice. Through a critique of existing theory, and using work on self-branding as an act of sociality (Banet-Weiser, 2011; Maguire, 2015; Gandini, 2016; Humphreys, 2018), I argue that prominent discourse is reductive, with my participants' practice an act of sociality, using neoliberal self-branding to communicate within valued digital communities, representing a distorted version of the 'common good' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 76).

Within the digital media marketplace, participatory audiences are presented as individualistic through audience productivity (e.g. Reed, 2005; Kendall, 2007), which is rooted in 'hedonism' and 'autonomy' (Castoriadis, 1986, p. 132), whereby self-promotion becomes a ubiquitous endeavour (Manovich, 2001, p. 235). Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell characterise this heightened digital individualism as an explicitly negative 'new vanity', with online identity performance positioned as self-centred and devoid of sociality: "Vanity seems harmless and often is, but (new) vanity often occurs with self-centredness, which causes so many of the negative behaviours associated with narcissism" (2009, p. 142). This critique of participation refers to the act of 'self-branding', within which the self is a "commodity for sale on the labour market" (Hearn, 2008, p. 427). According to Mark Sherry and Katie Martin: "A central element of neoliberalism is its cultural politics: it is not only market-driven, but also linked to a form of individualist consumerism" (2015, p. 1281), with digital self-branding, therefore, indicative of the wider cultural politics of neoliberalism. Alice Marwick develops this discourse: "Social media is intrinsically focused on individuals… individuals tend to adopt a neoliberal subjectivity that applies market principles to how they think about themselves, interact with others, and display their identity" (2013, p. 7).

Due to this neoliberal individualism, apparently vain, self-branded digital engagement has, according to some scholars, diminished empathy, civility and sociality within users, who are focused upon the self over any sense of communal interaction (e.g. Twenge et al, 2008; Cowan-Jenssen and Goodison, 2009; Mehdizadeh, 2010). The self-focused nature of social networking sites, according to Zdanow, has encouraged "an extreme fixation on the self, an exaggerated sense of self-importance, hyperbolic egotism, and pronounced feelings of entitlement" (2011, pp. 3-4). Much of this discourse is particularly critical of users' self-branded productive engagement. Adam Reed suggests that bloggers "put themselves forward unreservedly, as opposed for instance to novelists, who, I was told, only let bits of

themselves appear in their stories" (2005, p. 227), while Manuel Castells describes self-focused blogging as akin to "electronic autism" (2007, p. 247). Similarly, Claire Tanner et al discuss the 'fear' "that a new moment of 'me' has emerged in which empathy and community have disappeared" (2013, p. 151). This 'fear' within existing discourse is concentrated upon the negative – with 'rampant' new vanity fashioning interactions that "further distance gratification from emotion and intimacy" (Cowan-Jenssen and Goodison, 2009, p. 84; see also Pudner, 2007). This characterisation of digital engagement as negatively impacting upon online communication and relationships conflicts with my participants' discourses, whereby such self-branded media use held community value. As Lee Humphreys notes in her discussion of vlogging:

> To keep a diary and chronicle what happens in one's life does not seem to raise the same narcissistic concerns that vlogging does…Therefore, it must be in the sharing of personal details that warrants condemnation. To assume that others would be interested in the details of one's life is often where vlogging or any form of media accounting seems to raise pathological concerns… To document one's life is fine, but to make one's life public is what seems to make it "bad". (2018, pp. 43-44)

These various critiques of 'new vanity', particularly on social networking sites, are indicative of the expectations inherent within participatory culture, whereby 'self-centred' users could be accused of misusing the 'democratizing potential' (Veletsianos, 2016, p. 69) of digital media, and therefore failing to fully participate. Instead, users' supposedly vain and individualistic activities "typically regress to self-confessional posts that resemble diaries" (Papacharissi, 2009b, p. 237; see also Sundar et al, 2007). This widespread 'self-confessional' depiction of blogs emerged through a small assortment of studies (including Reed, 2005; Efimova and Grudin, 2007; and Kendall, 2007), which presented blogging as a public recording of private thoughts with no considered audience or desire for interaction. Reed demonstrates this viewpoint: "Although it is known that other people visit the site, journal bloggers insist that they are its main recipient; the popular refrain among them is 'I blog for me'" (2005, p. 231). Lori Kendall's study of LiveJournal also frames blogging platforms as a form of one-way communication: "LiveJournal posts are essentially broadcasts. The audience might react, but is not expected to participate, per se" (2007, p. 15). Humphreys, however, argues that diary-like digital media practices also situate and connect users to wider communities:

> Documenting our lived experiences and sharing them with others transforms our experiences of the everyday. As we chronicle quotidian events and activities, we engage in a social process… The ritual of media accounting is a transformative one, which relies not on the transmission of information but in the social interaction and

integration that occurs through the production and consumption of media accounting. (2018, p. 45)

I would align my respondents' productive digital media engagement with Humphreys' work, suggesting that this apparently vain and individualistic performance within online communities (either blogs or more contemporary social networking sites) is not exacerbating a culture of the self, but allowing for new forms of participation through self-branding. Within contemporary social networking sites, this "increasingly normative" (Maguire, 2015, p. 80) engagement is not just individualistic and self-motivated, as Sarah Banet-Weiser argues: "Self-branding does not merely involve self-presentation, but is a layered process of judging, assessment, and valuation taking place in a media economy of recognition" (2011, p. 293). Alessandro Gandini develops this discourse, suggesting that this 'media economy', is "constituted of various forms of online interaction that enable new practices of sociality based on publicity and affect, which intermediate branding and value via a shared notion of reputation" (2016, p. 126). As Tatyana Dumova notes, this type of audience productivity is both democratising and inherently communicative (2012, p. 250); see also Lambert, 2013, p. 85).

This inherently participatory self-branding practice, therefore, is not necessarily characteristic of diminishing social interactions, as proposed by Cowan-Jenssen and Goodison (2009) and Twenge and Campbell (2009). Tanner et al, furthermore, suggest that social networking sites allow more developed interactions which exceed "the constraints of face-to-face communication" (2013, p. 156). Communication is thus facilitated through self-branding and identity performance, which reflects users' "hoped-for possible selves" (Mehdizadeh, 2010, p. 358). My respondents' self-branded identity performance aligns with this notion, which occurred as a central practice of fan-like engagement and communication. While this practice may appear individualistic, therefore, it is not necessarily negative socially, as my respondents' self-branding allows for a greater range of interaction (Bargh et al, 2002, p. 35) as opposed to a distancing of communities in favour of self-obsession. As Gandini argues, self-branding enables "new practices of sociality that do not remain limited to the branding of the self but act as marketing work that combines networking with the management of social relationships" (2016, p.126).

For respondents who post regularly in online communities, self-branding occurred in numerous forms - both social and self-motivated - with value linked to the 'personal fulfillment' of self-branding (Marwick, 2010, p. 15; see also Page, 2012; Duffy and Hund, 2015; Gandini, 2016). Some of my participants' self-branding was similar to the above

blogging discourse (e.g. Efimova and Grudin, 2007; Kendall, 2007), including Giannis, Joseph, and Laura, whose posting aligned with Reed's earlier refrain about bloggers: "I blog for me" (2005, p. 231). Laura refers to Facebook as "just a device to share what I'm thinking", claiming that "I don't know how many people are interested, but I like to think people are". While the above research considers this use as "self-confessional" (Papacharissi, 2009b, p. 237) and without concern for "contributing to a public sphere" (Papacharissi, 2010, p. 146), Laura's assertion that she 'likes to think' her audience is interested suggests that this productivity is not entirely selfishly motivated. Giannis also expresses numerous motivations for his self-branded engagement:

> The other time I'll crack [Twitter] out is if I get worked up about anything, I'll find the time to rant about it because it's quite cathartic, or if I see something I find really funny I might put that up. Or even occasionally, when I'm doing my academic work, sometimes it's just a good place to put thoughts out. I know nobody cares! Particularly with the academic stuff, I know people go on Twitter because they want a laugh or whatever, but the academic stuff I can try and articulate some sort of fairly complex philosophical argument and I find that really useful, even though I know no one's going to reply.

While some of Giannis' posting on Twitter occurs without expecting a reply, it still holds a purpose beyond 'new vanity', with the identity-specific profiles Giannis posts within holding community value by facilitating semiotic and textual productivity. Other participants discussed their careful approach to managing self-branded output, including David, who schedules auto-posted content on Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, Siobhan, as an aspiring journalist, has developed a clear strategy for posting on Twitter: "I've kind of learned what the best times to post things are, what the best hashtags are". While this strategic approach to posting aligns with the above discourse on individualism and the vanity of self-promotion (see Manovich, 2001, p. 235), Siobhan's carefully managed self-branding occurs within relevant communities, particularly relating to her career aspirations: "Facebook is mostly friends - people I know in real life - whereas Twitter is people that I want to hire me, or that I think are influences". Siobhan's self-branded media use represents an intentional and skilful negotiation of the neoliberal digital marketplace beyond vanity, with community value occurring through this engagement. Macey, who prefers to channel her textual productivity into blogging, uses her self-branded output to engage with, and reaffirm her fandoms, particularly regarding her interest in feminism:

> Say I read something about feminism, and I found it really interesting and I had strong opinions on it, I'd feel like they were better used in a long-form piece written by myself than as a comment, because I feel that if I have something to say, I'd rather say it on my own platform where it can be referred to or read by other people, rather

than kind of lost in a stream of consciousness. I guess that's pretty pretentious and self-important [laughs]!

As with Siobhan and David, Macey's self-branding is not posting for the sake of posting or 'blogging for me', as she has a strategy and audience in mind - with this productivity, although 'self-important', indicative of a purposeful and audience-motivated neoliberal entrepreneurism (Rose, 1999, p. 230). Macey's self-branding is, as Hearn notes, "a function of an image economy, where attention is monetized and notoriety, or fame, is capital" (2008, p. 427). Furthermore, as Macey and David both work in digital marketing, and Siobhan is studying PR, these three respondents have a clear understanding of strategic self-branding beyond 'new vanity'. Helen Kennedy suggests a similar trend in her study of data mining and social media, noting that "most marketing professionals claimed their work meant they were unconcerned by [data mining]" (2016, p. 178). Through their knowledge and understanding of marketing and how to operate within the digital media marketplace, these specific respondents align themselves positively with neoliberalism. Macey also demonstrates a self-awareness (see Berkenkotter, 1981) of the self-branded nature of her practice, which was shared by other fan-like participants, including Siobhan:

> [Social networking is] something I use to show the positive aspects, so if I've done something really good or I've found something really interesting then that's what I share. I do think it's a very constructed version of yourself on the internet. I don't think I would take anyone's profile as their credible personality because you control it so much, but I think everybody knows that anyway. Everybody knows you're probably not as interesting as you make yourself out to be.

Siobhan's assertion that her online identity performance focuses on the 'constructed' positive aspects of her life shows a clear self-awareness of her self-branded performance to a "cognitively constructed audience" (boyd, 2006a, p. 15). This type of self-branded practice can also be aligned to "inconspicuous and individualised" notions of class (Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017, p. 5) through Beverley Skeggs' work on 'respectability' (1997), which is "one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class. It informs how we speak, who we speak to, how we classify others, what we study and how we know who we are" (p. 1). Siobhan's 'constructed version' of herself, which she uses to demonstrate the 'positive aspects' of her life is, as Skeggs argues, a performance of class through respectability: "To live visibly is to construct oneself publicly through relations with others rather than to spend time on oneself. Claiming respectability is a public characterization" (p. 163). Siobhan also implies that her knowledge of self-branding is widespread, which is shared by Joseph:

Joseph: I don't know if there's a more positive way of putting it than vanity or showing off or whatever, but a lot of the time, I think this is not just the case for me but the case for everybody, you post certain things on Facebook for the same reason that you might choose to buy a certain t-shirt or a certain pair of trainers. Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Joseph: It's another outlet of presenting yourself to the world, and it's another way of kind of trying to present yourself as you'd like to be seen and as you'd like to be thought of.

While Joseph is aware that his careful self-branding is a form of 'vanity' and 'showing off', this form of productive consumption also ties him into communities, through his identity performance:

Joseph: A few months ago, a girl I knew from school sent me a little message, having not spoken to me in years in person. [She] just said something like: 'I always think it's really sweet seeing pictures of you and your wife. You look really cute together'. I just said: 'Thanks, that's really kind of you', but I was kind of thinking that's really nice of her to say… but the thing is we don't post it on Facebook after we've just had a big fight! Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah!

Joseph: If we've just had an argument, or we're just having an off day and one of us is a bit moody or whatever, you don't take pictures in those scenarios and you don't post Facebook statuses in those scenarios.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's a small representation of your overall character and personality I suppose, isn't it?

Joseph: Yeah, you're presenting what you think as sort of the best of yourself, and the parts of your life and of your relationships that you want people to see and to shine a spotlight on. You don't shine a spotlight on all the aspects of your life that you know are there but are less proud of and less keen to shout about.

Joseph's online performance of his real-life relationship with his wife could be framed as 'posting for me', however, this practice holds community value as it reaffirms existing social relationships, providing Joseph with a community within which he can perform. Baym and boyd note: "As people communicate publically through social media, they become more aware of themselves relative to visible and imagined audiences and more aware of the larger publics to which they belong and which they seek to create" (2012, p. 325). Furthermore, as demonstrated by the user who (for the most part) engages without replying

to Joseph's posting, for participants who engage in a fan-like manner, community value is not just linked to posting, but also to viewing content, and thus the sociality of self-branding. Self-branded posting for my participants is not restricted to vanity or self-promotion, as it does not marginalise a sense of community over the self, but is linked to a purposeful, neoliberal sense of communication and belonging through 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997), as Alessandro Gandini notes:

> The digital knowledge economy is now constituted of various forms of online interaction that enable new practices of sociality based on publicity and affect, which intermediate branding and value via a shared notion of reputation... Self-branding in the digital knowledge economy does exactly this, by enabling new practices of sociality that do not remain limited to the branding of the self but act as marketing work that combines networking with the management of social relationships. (2016, p. 126)

My participants' self-branding aligns apparently individualistic identity performance alongside community value, with this practice of fan-like engagement both maintaining connections for participants with other users in a community (e.g. Joseph, Siobhan), and providing an appropriate platform for performance to occur (e.g. Giannis, Laura). While there is an apparent tension between the sharing inherent within community value and the individualism of neoliberal selfhood, the value of self-branding for my participants lies within the status and legitimacy of this practice as an act of participation within a digital community. Previously, I had suggested that community value is linked to the 'common good' and 'common humanity' in Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (1987/2006, pp. 74-76), which conflicts with the 'competitiveness' of neoliberalism (Sum, 2009, p. 185). Due to the communicative and 'common' value of self-branding for my participants, community value represents a distorted version of these axioms, whereby productive participation within digital communities has become conflated with neoliberal selfhood. Respondents entering the cascade model via this level recognise the community value of self-branding, and carefully operate within this neoliberal 'world' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 215) to manage and develop social relationships, with seemingly vain and individualistic practice occurring as a vital part of communicative, fan-like engagement.

Summarising the community value of fan-like engagement

At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced the interlinked practices of fan-like engagement through the analysis of my participants' discourses. These practices of platform-specific performance, community policing, affirmation of fan enthusiasm through negative media, and social activity, are all rooted in identity performance, which occurs through productive

interaction within digital communities. Productive consumption and social interaction are central to the concept of community value, which I developed by aligning the 'common good' and 'common humanity' of Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model with sign value (Baudrillard, 1970/1998; 1972/1981) and social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) in a digital context. Further analysing this version of value through generation, I argued that the high levels of cultural capital for participants who enter the cascade model via this level suggests that the factors associated with digital native discourse can be assessed beyond generation within my data. The community value of my participants' fan-like engagement, I suggested, occurs through productive social interaction within specific digital communities.

In the final section, I established how apparently vain digital media use develops community value, aligning fan-like engagement with neoliberalism through participants' communicative self-branding. While self-branded identity performance appears to be individualistic vanity - and is presented as such in existing literature - close analysis of my participants' discourses demonstrated the community value of this practice. Through maintaining and developing connections in digital communities, which offer a platform in which participants can perform, self-branding provides community value for participants, with this socially-motivated participation occurring through the lens of neoliberal selfhood. Having positioned fan-like engagement at one end of my neoliberal analysis, in the following chapter, I set up the next mode within the cascade model - guarded engagement - as a contrast to this ideological position. The personal value of guarded engagement, I suggest, occurs through unproductive consumption, and a knowledgeable resistance of neoliberal selfhood for participants entering via the second level. Despite this vastly differing conceptualisation of engagement, respondents' similar levels of cultural capital demonstrate the limitations of the digital native argument within my data. By addressing guarded engagement next, I begin to complicate value and engagement through this neoliberal framework, establishing the significance of these varying modes within my cascade model.

Chapter 4: "Ha! I Can See Everything About You!" - The Personal Value of Guarded Engagement

The cascade model presented in Chapter 2 outlined four differing modes of engagement, featuring numerous digital media practices - with each holding a distinct form of value. In the previous chapter, I presented the first mode - fan-like engagement - demonstrating the significance of productive consumption and community involvement for participants who enter the model via this level, aligning this engagement with neoliberal selfhood. While fan-like engagement aligns most closely with existing literature (e.g. Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Davis, 2013), it is only applicable to some of my respondents, suggesting that, in my data, existing discourses of engagement are reductive due to their focus on audience productivity (Bruns, 2007; 2008a; 2008b) and participation (Macnamara, 2010; Carpentier, 2011). In this chapter, I will introduce the second mode in my cascade model - guarded engagement - complicating discourse through the differing practices, value, and dispositions involved for participants, with this engagement positioned as resisting neoliberal selfhood within my analytical framework. While I aim to challenge the existing fan orientation, to effectively critique this discourse, it is essential to critically engage with appropriate work first alongside participant interviews.

While the value of fan-like engagement occurred through productive community involvement, guarded engagement is linked to participants' privacy, a preference for unproductive engagement, and the restoration of private and personal boundaries. 'Personal value', therefore, is aligned with guarded engagement in the cascade model, which I will analyse through two differing inflections. Using Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's axioms of 'self-centred pleasure' and 'principle of differentiation' (1987/2006, p. 75), alongside Karl Marx's 'surplus value' (1867/1976), firstly, I suggest that personal value lies within self-motivated engagement, while, for some participants, personal value derives from a specific ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood. For some participants, this resistance led to apathetic disengagement, or 'disconnection' (Light, 2014), specifically regarding the cultural expectation for self-branded performance within digital communities (Hearn, 2008; Duffy and Pooley, 2017). This disengagement conflicts with the characterisation of so-called 'digital natives' as enthusiastic and productive (see Prensky, 2001; 2012), with my data suggesting a performance of cultural capital whereby participants' understanding is used to resist neoliberal self-branding (Hearn, 2008; Marwick, 2010; 2013; Gehl, 2011; Gandini, 2016).

To address these various arguments, I have divided this chapter into three sections, mirroring the layout of Chapter 3. Firstly, I will present the participant practices associated with guarded engagement, which are interlinked through 'lurking' (Nonnecke and Preece, 2000; Preece et al, 2004), 'connected privacy' (Kitzmann, 2004), the blurring of public and private online (Baym and boyd, 2012), and identity management (Goffman, 1959, Elliott, 2008). Having introduced these practices, I will establish the value of guarded engagement, assessing the differing inflections of personal value through participants' self-directed desire for restored private engagement, and as a resistance to self-branding. Finally, I will consider participants disengaging with digital media, developing personal value first through Jonathan Gray's discourse on non-fans (2003), and then through participants' 'othering' of perceived negative practice. I will begin my analysis by presenting the various interlinked practices of guarded engagement, establishing the key factors involved with this type of consumption for my participants.

The interlinked practices of guarded engagement

Figure 10: Participants' digital media practices associated with guarded engagement

The practices listed in Figure 10 emerged through my interviews, and are indicative of guarded engagement, whereby respondents prioritised unproductive, privacy-conscious consumption. As occurred in Chapter 3, I will establish three of these four practices in this section, with the final practice, participants' apathetic disengagement with media, developed later in this chapter to further theorise guarded engagement and personal value as a resistance to neoliberal selfhood. The first of these practices is unproductive engagement, which considers participants who engaged without contributing in a textually or enunciatively productive manner (Fiske, 1992; see also Hills, 2013). Developing the concept of 'lurking' (Nonnecke, 2000), this practice differs from existing literature which debates lurking as either 'free-riding' (Smith and Kollock, 1999), or as 'beneficial' participation (Nonnecke and Preece, 2000, p. 127; see also Preece et al, 2003). I suggest that unproductive engagement expands upon lurking discourse by further aligning this practice with context collapse (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 4), and the blurring of public and private online (Abril et al, 2012; Baym

and boyd, 2012), demonstrating how participants conduct identity work to reinstate digital boundaries, representing a differing approach to exercising their agency within a structurationist analysis.

By contrasting this unproductive use with the productive fan-like consumption in the previous chapter, I begin to demonstrate the depth of engagement within this study. Having established unproductive engagement, I will then consider participants' desire for privacy, critically applying work from Andreas Kitzmann (2004) and Nancy Baym and danah boyd (2012) alongside the previously introduced lurking discourse, suggesting that participants manage the blurred boundary between public and private through restored private engagement. Finally, using a critical analysis of Charles McCoy and Roscoe Scarborough (2014), I consider the difference between shameful 'guilty pleasure' and 'ironic consumption'. Through applying work on identity management (Goffman, 1959; Elliott, 2008), alongside my analysis of lurking and restored private engagement, I link these three practices together as a performance of identity, which will be developed in the following section through the introduction of personal value. Before narrating this argument, however, I will first outline the various guarded practices, beginning with unproductive engagement.

Unproductive engagement

Due to participants' lack of public interaction at this level, unproductive engagement can be aligned with 'lurking' discourse, with lurkers generally defined as users who "read and never contribute" (Preece et al, 2004, p. 202; see also McKenna and Bargh, 1998; Suzuki and Calzo, 2004; Schlosser, 2005; Rau et al, 2008; Pempek et al, 2009). Within much literature, unproductive lurking is positioned as 'free-riding' (Smith and Kollock, 1999) with users who engage in this manner experiencing lower levels of intimacy in their social networks (Rau et al, 2008). Stephanie Tobin et al found that lurkers, or more accurately, productive, fan-like users who had been asked to engage unproductively for the purposes of the study, "experienced lower levels of belonging and meaningful existence than those who were allowed to share information" (2014, p. 39). Conversely, as Blair Nonnecke and Jenny Preece note:

> Lurking is not free-riding but a form of participation that is both acceptable and beneficial to most online groups. Public posting is only one way in which an online group can benefit from its members. All members of a group are part of a large social milieu, and value derived from belonging to a group may have far-reaching consequences. (2000, p. 127)

Matthew, who, as I noted in the Introduction, self-identifies as a fan of Chelsea FC, WWE, and *Dragonball-Z*, regularly engages with online communities relating to his fandoms. Despite this fan-like *interest* however, Matthew does not engage with these communities in a productive fan-like *manner*, with his unproductive engagement aligning more accurately with Nonnecke and Preece's above concept of beneficial lurking: "I go on Blogspot to read about Chelsea results and that kind of stuff, and, you know, all the fans like to talk about it. I like to read other people's opinions without necessarily giving my own". Matthew's engagement with his interests is unproductive, as he never interacts within these fan communities, which bears similarities to Rhiannon Bury's assertion that some of her respondents considered their 'fandom' to be "personal rather than participatory" (p. 100). Matthew's approach to engagement, however, also occurs outside of his fandoms, extending into social networking sites: "I'll go on Facebook to see who's doing what possibly, but I wouldn't necessarily write stuff on it". Cornel Sandvoss and Laura Kearns recognise this type of engagement in fan communities as 'ordinary fandom' (2012), suggesting that ordinary fans, through self-aware affirmation of the "cultural stigma attached to their fan practices" (p. 96), are "often reluctant to share their interest in fan-generated online texts" (p. 96), and are critical of community-centric textual productivity. Sandvoss and Kearns' ordinary fans, however, are still "keen to then share such information with their friends" (p. 97) and are, therefore, still productively engaged. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, many of my participants were far more critical of such practice, with guarded engagement often an act of resisting productive engagement in favour of privacy. As such, while Sandvoss and Kearns' work attempts to broaden the study of audiences outside of community-based (and thus restricting) fandom, their work is nevertheless still focused upon self-identifying, although less textually and enunciatively engaged, fans.

Despite a lack of interest in sharing fan information with his friends, Matthew's practice can be aligned to some extent with ordinary fandom, due to his self-identification as a fan. Other participants, however, such as Emily [12], a 22-year-old student, cannot be aligned as easily with fan discourse, having not discussed any specific fandoms during her interview. Like Matthew, Emily prefers to lurk: "I know that a lot of people use Facebook to communicate. I think that me personally, I take a backseat on social media rather than posting about my life.

---

[12] Emily is in the final year of her undergraduate journalism degree and works alongside Laura as the editor of the student paper. She also works part-time in the marketing department at the Student's Union, and at a local bar. She is interested in sports and fitness, and plays for the women's rugby team at the University of Huddersfield.

I'd rather just use it like a bit of a spy really". Similarly, Violet [13], another 22-year-old student, discusses her lurking on Reddit:

> Interviewer: Do you engage with online media a lot then?
>
> Violet: I would say I wouldn't comment as much as I read. I more read and take in than I put back out there. I think that's just me being a bit lazy and kind of a bit like, 'Ha! I can see everything about you!', you know, there's that kind of thing [laughs]! And especially on... Do you know Reddit?
>
> Interviewer: Yeah.
>
> Violet: I'm not a massive commenter on there but I'm on it every day. But I'm not a big contributor to Reddit at all, considering how much I'm on there.

Despite the regularity of her engagement with Reddit, and self-professed 'fandom' of social media (Hills, 2014), Violet is aware that she rarely engages productively, identifying herself as a 'reader' instead of a 'contributor', with her lurking a beneficial, participatory practice (Nonnecke, 2000; Nonnecke and Preece, 2001; Walther and Boyd, 2002). Violet maintains this attitude across her digital media engagement, claiming: "I don't blog but I follow lots of blogs, and I'm on Reddit and Facebook, Instagram, Twitter". Violet's lurking also extends to gazing upon others within her networks:

> I have family over in Canada and I have other family that I don't see as much, and especially now that I'm at university, I don't see all my friends that I have back at home, so I do like the fact that you can stay in contact very easily across the world. And also, my family like to give me a bit of space so they can go look at my profile and see what I'm up to, but it's not like they're commenting on every single thing. They can see what I'm up to, I can see what they're up to.

Violet's guarded engagement suggests a secure sense of self, noting an expectation of others' participatory lurking, which is not linked to a sense of 'anxious' (see Giddens, 1991, p. 42) self-branded performance, as Alex Lambert identified amongst his respondents: "The disciplined desire to produce the self contributed to the insecurity felt when people slip behind in their online updates" (2013, p. 135). Matthew and Emily also demonstrated a more secure sense of self within their digital practice compared to the participants I profiled in the

---

[13] Violet is a final-year undergraduate studying medical biology, while also working part-time at a coffee shop. Originally from Manchester, she has family in various locations, including Canada. Violet is interested in snowboarding, hair and beauty, and is also learning the ukulele. She describes herself as a 'massive fan' of social media.

previous chapter, whose anxious self-branded performance aligns with Lambert: "As well as showing the existence of a life, participants want to make sure it is the right kind of life, a life which will identify with others, which will bring esteem, increase social capital, and secure regular performances of connection" (2013, p. 136). Unproductive engagement within my data is more complicated than existing lurking or ordinary fandom discourses can articulate, with participants' guarded engagement linked not just to a secure sense of self, but also to a differing exercising of their agency through online privacy. By drawing upon the work of Nancy Baym and danah boyd (2012), I will develop this concept within the next practice, assessing how participants attempt to reinstate digital boundaries online.

Restored private engagement

For participants who engage unproductively with digital media, whether they enter the cascade model via this level or the one above, guarded engagement is inherently linked to a desire for privacy. Will, who entered through the fan-like mode of engagement, also exemplifies a guarded manner of posting, specifically on Facebook: "I'm more reserved, like if you look at my Facebook, I don't use my real name, I don't post things with links to spurious offers and stuff like this". Will is guarded with both the content and identity he chooses to share on Facebook, demonstrating a sense of privacy and even self-censorship within this specific network. Elizabeth [14], a 26-year-old, also discussed a measured approach to posting on Facebook:

> Interviewer: [Facebook] is a source where you can share your opinions, is that
> something you do a lot?
>
> Elizabeth: I try to limit it, but I know that I do. I try not to do it all the time, but
> sometimes I will do. I make sure that I don't have people like my
> bosses on Facebook, because I don't want anything I say on there to
> jeopardise anything.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you try and limit what you're saying then?
>
> Elizabeth: Just because I know, when there's people who I'm friends with on
> Facebook who I don't share the same views with, if they post things
> repeatedly that I don't agree with I'll delete them. It's not that I want to
> censor myself so much, it's that I don't want to piss other people off.
> And while it is an open platform for anyone to have their opinions

---

[14] Originally from Surrey, Elizabeth moved to Huddersfield to study textiles, having also lived in Leeds and Finland during a placement year. She works for a small company in Manchester that makes wedding stationery. Elizabeth spends most of her free time crafting, and enjoys listening to podcasts. She is a vegan and her guilty pleasure is watching *EastEnders*.

about things, and a lot of my friends on Facebook will have the same opinions, I don't want to keep shoving things in peoples' faces, because I think it's not nice.

Elizabeth is extremely cautious and privacy-conscious, even within familiar peer networks, which Andreas Kitzmann describes as 'connected privacy', "the direct opposite of pure privacy, with the latter's conditions of defined isolation and secure boundaries. Yet at the same time, it is a privacy where private moments and places are possible and, in fact, desired" (2004, p. 91). My participants' desire for connected privacy occurs within a digital media marketplace that blurs the boundary between public and private (boyd and Ellison, 2008; Abril et al, 2012, p. 64). In 'Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction' (2012), Nancy Baym and danah boyd suggest that users' relationship with 'public life' (see Sennett, 1992; Livingstone, 2005; Warner, 2005) is shifting due to the increased "layers of publicness available to those using networked media" (p. 321). For my participants, connected privacy through unproductive engagement represents agency over the 'dialectic tensions' of public and private (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996), countering concerns about 'context collapse' (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 4) and reinstating digital boundaries. As occurred amongst fan-like respondents, many participants entering the cascade model via guarded engagement also displayed an awareness of context collapse. While fan-like respondents such as Laura and Giannis managed context collapse through platform-specific identity performance, participants whose guarded engagement emerged from a desire for connected privacy, including Elizabeth, rejected this productive approach. As Baym and boyd note:

> Navigating collapsed contexts requires a wide variety of strategies. While some people seek to engage in strategic facework and minimize visibility, others seek to publicize themselves in ways that may complicate their relationship to different members of their audience. (p. 324)

The guarded engagement practices of unproductive consumption and a desire for privacy, therefore, represent a differing approach to exercising agency for participants at this level of the cascade model, who choose to 'navigate' collapsed contexts through 'minimized' production, as opposed to the carefully managed self-branding I noted during Chapter 3. In *Disengaging with Social Networking Sites* (2014), Ben Light suggests this type of unproductive engagement offers "resistance to connective functions" (p. 46) and "allows [users] to operate as they want to" (p. 104). Similarly, participants in this study utilise the agency of unproductive engagement to restore boundaries between public and private, moulding digital media structures to their specific dispositions, representing differentiated structurationist approaches to engagement for participants entering the cascade model via fan-like and guarded engagement, which I will explore further in Chapter 6. As I noted

above, this 'restored private engagement' develops lurking discourse beyond a discussion of free-riding versus participation (Nonnecke and Preece, 2000), with participants' management of context collapse through connected privacy suggesting that identity work is being carried out, which I will develop in the following section. My data also suggested a gendered difference between female participants' desire for politeness, and males' pleasure in anonymity, representing varied reasons for the restoration of private boundaries.

Elizabeth's guarded consumption is linked to politeness, or Goffman's concept of 'face' (1967; see also Cupach and Metts, 1994; Domenici and Littlejohn, 2006), by maintaining social conventions and her 'public self-image' through limiting her output (Sias et al, 2012, p. 244; see also Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 8; Hall et al, 2014, p. 135). Many studies of communication, both on- and offline, suggest politeness is gendered to females (e.g. Maccoby, 1990; Chung and Asher, 1996; Jarvinen and Nicholls, 1996; Trees and Manusov, 1998; Strough and Berg, 2000; Murphy and Eisenberg, 2002; Rose and Rudolph, 2006). A similar trend emerged in my data, with several female respondents choosing to avoid confrontation in this manner, including Violet, whose guarded engagement demonstrates this politeness: "I can't be angry at someone having an opinion, but it's something that does offend me quite a bit. But I'm not going to tell them off for it… they can carry on having their opinions, but I don't want anything to do with it". Due to the small number of respondents whose engagement aligned with this practice, I am not attempting to characterise all guarded engagement or participation of this type as gendered, but rather suggest that these findings indicate a parallel could be drawn with existing work. Violet's assertion that she would rather ignore the users she disagrees with instead of confronting them is particularly relevant, as it notably contrasts with some fan-like respondents in Chapter 3, who passionately policed their networks.

Furthermore, I don't wish to imply that all female participants within my data were non-confrontational (Laura and Samantha both assertively policed their networks), but rather that few male respondents within my data cited politeness as a reason for their guarded engagement, which seemed to instead be rooted in the pleasure of anonymity. While this differs from Whitney Phillips' observation of the "celebration of anonymity" associated with trolling (2015, p. 25), David's claim that he enjoyed gazing at the online activity of his friends because "the other person [does not] necessarily know I've seen it", while Thomas' statement that anonymity allowed him to not "worry about repercussions" both bear similarities to trolling. David's and Thomas' desire for restored private engagement is not linked to maintaining face, but to the 'curiosity' (Schneider et al, 2013) or pleasure associated with lurking. Will also discussed the pleasure in lurking outside of his networks:

Will:	How anonymous is this [laughs]?
Interviewer:	You can be completely anonymous if you want to!
Will:	It's funny just going through, like you know, 'people you might know'. When that pops up on your phone and you just scroll and you're like, 'no, don't know her, don't know her, don't know him, who's that? Not a clue', and then you're like, 'oh, she's pretty'. Then you click on the picture and stalk her for a little bit [laughs]!

While Will's admission of 'stalking' women online carries a sense of knowing irony or humour, his practice is potentially problematic, particularly when considered within the context of blurred private and public boundaries I discussed earlier. In her study of gendered self-representation through selfies, Kath Albury notes that her respondents identified a boundary difference between posting 'strategic' public selfies, and private selfies, which are not intended for public consumption and exist "for the satisfaction of having a photo" (2015, p. 1736). These differing intents amongst the above respondents may indicate a user-understanding that publicly shared selfies are produced to be viewed by others, as Albury argues: "Public selfies were suggested to be more communicative than reflective and could be understood as an expression of self that communicated to others one's location and interests at a certain point in time" (p. 1736). While noting the communicative intent of performing through selfies, Albury does not explore whether this expectation exists outside of her respondents' known networks. The use of the term 'stalker' by Will is indicative not just of accepting social media as public, but of the normalisation of digital surveillance, which I will develop in the following chapter.

This gendered contrast between politeness and anonymity demonstrates the range of motivations for participants' private engagement, which are both linked to the agency of connected privacy, and the restoration of private and personal boundaries for participants who engage in a guarded manner. This analysis, which develops lurking beyond existing discourse to understand participants' restored private engagement, can also be linked with identity management (Goffman, 1959). Through the analysis of the final guarded engagement practice, I will assess participants' differing performances of guilty pleasures and ironic consumption to understand how identity management shapes the practices outlined in this chapter.

Guilty pleasure and ironic consumption

In the previous chapter, I discussed Samantha's ironic engagement with *The Huffington Post*, and the perceived expectation that she ought to engage with digital media in an intellectual, fan-like manner. While Samantha appeared to consume *The Huffington Post* ironically [15] to gain a sense of intellectual superiority (i.e. by being derisory of content she saw as inferior), other participants also discussed a similar, guarded engagement practice, using 'inferior' digital media, despite understanding that this usage did not align with their perceived intellectual expectation. Emily's comparison of platforms is indicative of the intellectual understanding she perceives as appropriate within the interview scenario:

Emily:	I try and listen to the *Today* programme if I'm up and about at that time. I prefer *BBC* news to *ITV*, so I try and put that on if I'm around a television at the time that it's on. I do like *BuzzFeed*, erm… [laughs] and sites like that. If I'm just looking for something to read for personal interest then maybe *BuzzFeed*, *Vice*, *Champion Up North* occasionally. But like I say, if I've heard about something on the news or the radio, then I'll try and maybe look at *The Independent* or *The Guardian*, rather than going to the *Daily Mail*, which my parents do. That's what I used to do when I was younger!
Interviewer:	So your habits have changed recently?
Emily:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Is it just because you're learning more about what you like?
Emily:	Yeah, I think so. I think it's just about learning better practices and which sources are reputable. Like, I was just always brought up around the *Daily Mail*, and then when I came to uni, I was like, 'oh well this is a bit of a crap newspaper!' [laughs]
Interviewer:	Why did you think that?
Emily:	Well, just because, say it was the only paper just lying around the house, so I never really, like, went out and bought my own when I was younger. And then, well living on your own as well, you've got more choice, so I'd actively go out and maybe like seek different sources.

Emily's identification of 'good' and 'bad' media is similar to the intellectual affirmation that Samantha displayed in her interview, particularly due to Emily's status as a journalism

---

[15] See work by Sontag, 1964; Booth, 1974; Fish, 1983; Ang, 1985; Gitlin, 1989; Klein, 2000; and Thompson, 2000, for discussion of ironic consumption of texts.

student and her understanding of *BuzzFeed* as a negative, due to what Edson Tandoc Jr. and Joy Jenkins label the 'Buzzfeedification' of news journalism (2015; see also Dumenco, 2014; Kiss, 2014). Such a performance of intellectual understanding towards 'good' and 'bad' sources must be analysed within the interview setting, whereby the above participant is purposefully and carefully negotiating this context (Riessman, 2003, p. 337), with identity becoming a "performative struggle over the meanings of experience" (Langellier, 2001, p. 3). As Beverley Skeggs and Helen Wood note, the context of an interview "invites certain performances from our respondents as part of the specific research encounter" (2012, p. 14), with Emily's performance undoubtedly affected by the setting, as well as her status, knowledge and class. This example, however, differs to the performances of Samantha and the other respondents entering the cascade model via the fan-like mode of engagement, which I discussed in Chapter 3. Within this previous discussion, I noted how respondents' performed understanding of the digital media environment could be seen as a desire to 'appear cosmopolitan and sophisticated' within the interview setting (Seiter, 1990, p. 64). Emily's discussion, however, offers a slight variation of this theme, with this respondent using an assessment of 'good' and 'bad' media sources to perform her identity through taste.

Furthermore, as I discussed in the previous chapter (p. 112), such performances can also be linked to notions of class through 'respectability', as Beverley Skeggs argues in *Formations of Class and Gender* (1997), where respectability is used to 'construct distinctions' against 'deficient' lower class others (p. 48): "Respectability became a locus for a growing sense of class identity and social superiority amongst the labour aristocracy, defining themselves against the 'rough' working class" (p. 46). In this example, Emily's performances of her taste can also be read as an inconspicuous performance of her class distinction, placing her 'good' taste against the 'bad' tastes of others. This is not to suggest, however, that class is the most significant factor in such performances of identity, as Mike Savage et al note: "Class does not determine identity, but it is not irrelevant either. It is a resource, a device, with which to construct identity" (2001, p. 888). This notion of evaluating media through taste occurred with many of the respondents I assess in this chapter, with self-presentation in the interview setting not just occurring through the intellectual performance of cultural capital, but through an evaluation of 'good' and 'bad' taste as well.

In their 2014 article, 'Watching "bad" television', Charles McCoy and Roscoe Scarborough consider the postmodern consumption of bad popular culture texts: "[Audiences] want to still consume the products of postmodern culture, yet also display their superiority to the

commodified market of popular culture" (p. 45; see also Wilde, 1980; Kellner, 1999; Collins, 2000; Dettmar, 2004). This type of engagement, Todd Gitlin suggests, "either mocks the game by playing it or plays it by mocking it" (1989, p. 74). McCoy and Scarborough differentiate the reasons for consuming negative texts into three categories: ironic consumption, camp sensibility, and guilty pleasure (p. 48):

> The ironic viewer consumes 'bad' television, in large part, by feeling superior to it. By reveling in the 'ridiculousness' of the show and its characters, the ironic viewer is able to watch 'bad' television while feeling morally and/or intellectually superior to the actors, the content of the program, and non-ironic viewers of the program. (p. 50)

While ironic consumption is rooted in a sense of intellectual superiority, according to the authors, guilty pleasures are intrinsically shameful:

> Viewers that watch 'bad' television as a 'guilty pleasure' are ashamed of their television viewing habits. Though they feel guilt, they feel as if they cannot stop watching… Instead, the viewer struggles with the disconnect between their normative evaluations of the television they watch and their viewing habits; the viewer is conscious of the fact that they are watching something that they have a negative opinion about and this makes them feel uncomfortable and often upset. (p. 52)

Unlike Samantha's ironic consumption of *The Huffington Post*, Emily's engagement with *BuzzFeed* is a guilty pleasure as, while she identifies this source as negative, she enjoys using it without any sense of irony (but with some embarrassment). Emily's discussion of the *Daily Mail*, which, like Samantha, she addresses with a 'common sense' (Barker, 2008) opinion that I am assumed to agree with, is almost put forward as a justification for using *BuzzFeed*. Emily's guilty pleasure stems from her self-awareness that this platform fails to align with the perceived intellectuality she believes is expected of her as a tech-savvy digital native, and in this case, as a journalism student. Other participants admitted to various negative digital media use which could be considered as ironic performance, including Oksana [16], a 24-year-old Lithuanian postgraduate student, whose engagement with "funny videos of cats" was discussed in an ironic manner.

---

[16] Oksana is studying for her master's in politics, and also works part-time as a marketing administrator. She is very active in student politics at the University of Huddersfield, describing it as her 'hobby'. As an international student, Oksana notes that she has 'moved a lot' and maintains connections privately online with friends across Europe.

Similarly, Violet discusses her engagement with 'clickbait': "It's all like the clickbait stuff as well, it's terrible! 'One of those 29 things' and it's terrible, and I feel like such a sucker for going into it, but I can just read it, it's fine... no one has to know". While Violet suggests she is embarrassed about this practice, her 'othering' of this media as 'clickbait', defined by Jeffrey Kuiken et al as "a vague headline that induces curiosity, which is then used to *lure* readers into clicking" (2017, p. 4, emphasis in the original) is derogatory in this context. 'Clickbait' is inherently negative within both popular culture and journalism studies, used to infer "simplification, spectacularization, negativity, and provoking content" (Kuiken et al, 2017, p. 4; see also Rowe, 2011; Blom and Hansen, 2015; Tenenboim and Cohen, 2015). Violet's othering of clickbait is a knowledgeable performance of cultural capital, in which she 'revels in the badness' (McCoy and Scarborough, 2014, p. 49) of media widely perceived of as low quality. While Violet understands this content to be bad, she knowingly presents her use as intentionally ironic with the understanding that she knows better. This othering and ironic performance is prevalent within guarded engagement, which I will develop throughout this chapter.

This ironic consumption, alongside unproductive engagement with guilty pleasures, can be conceptualised as identity management [17], whereby the self, as Erving Goffman notes "is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented" (1959, pp. 244-245). Anthony Elliott suggests that identity management consists of "an awareness of the multiplicity of roles that are performed in various situated contexts" (2008, p. 37). Developing McCoy and Scarborough's earlier definition of guilty pleasure, the shameful 'disconnect' between a participant's 'normative evaluations' of media is linked to an awareness of this consumption not aligning with the 'goal' of identity management (Bransen, 2008, p. 108). Numerous social media scholars have transposed Goffman's work on identity management into a digital setting (e.g. Liu, 2008; van Dijck, 2008; Westlake, 2008; Zhao et al, 2008; Sas et al, 2009; Van House, 2009; Van Der Heide et al, 2012), and my participants' shame towards guilty pleasures is perhaps due to the lack of irony involved with consumption of a text they ought to know better about. Elizabeth's fandom of the episodic soap opera *EastEnders* (as well as related digital media content such as online articles, parody Twitter accounts, and quizzes) demonstrates this notion:

> Every time [*EastEnders*] comes up on iPlayer I will watch it, and it's one of those
> awful things where, like, if articles come up to do with it, I read it! And I know that it's

---

[17] See also Schlenker, 1980; Kowalski and Leary, 1990; Cupach and Imahori, 1993; Leary and Tangney, 2003; and Niens and Cairns, 2003, for further discussion of identity management.

really, really awful. Things to do with the actors that play all the characters, if there's anything about their personal lives I read it, which is really, really stupid.

In addition to this excerpt, Elizabeth also claimed that "I feel like I shouldn't enjoy it", with the guilt she feels towards engaging with *EastEnders* caused by both a disconnection within her identity management, and with this fandom and its community:

> Elizabeth: I'm sure that a lot of the people who watch *EastEnders*, I probably wouldn't want to get into an argument with them on the internet!
>
> Interviewer: Right! Why do you think that?
>
> Elizabeth: I don't know. Like, it's probably a bad assumption to make, but I assume a lot of people who watch it wouldn't have the same interests as me, which is probably a stupid thing to say because I've been watching it for years. But I know a lot of my friends think it's really stupid that I watch it, and… I don't know how to say it without sounding snobby!
>
> Interviewer: Don't worry, it's only going to be heard by me.
>
> Elizabeth: No, I just reckon like a lot of its demographic, if I said something like, 'it's important that they're talking about rape issues', a lot of people would probably be like, 'no there are children watching this', 'this is awful', 'why do we need to make a big deal out of this?', and 'awful feminist – shut up'.

Despite enjoying *EastEnders*, Elizabeth does not feel connected to the show's online community, with this social disconnect rendering her consumption of *EastEnders* a guilty pleasure. Additionally, Elizabeth is also unable to share this interest with peers in her own networks due to their disinterest in this text. As such, Elizabeth is disconnected from several communities through her engagement with *EastEnders*, relating to her identity management across numerous networks. Guilty pleasure and ironic consumption, therefore, represent a form of unproductive identity management, with respondents preferring to engage privately with this media due to either the shame or irony associated with an intellectual sense of superiority. These various practices of guarded engagement are woven together, with participants' preferences for unproductive consumption relating to a desire for restored private engagement, which is performed through identity management. For some participants, guarded engagement demonstrates an understanding that they know better than to engage in a productive manner. To further assess this developing notion, in the next section I construct personal value through two inflections, with some respondents' guarded engagement due to self-motivated preference, while for others, this mode occurs as a resistance to neoliberal selfhood.

Personal value as the self-directed restoration of digital boundaries

Having established participants' practices of guarded engagement, in this section I introduce the personal value of this mode of consumption. First, through Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1987/2006), alongside participants' discourses, I will explore the personal value of the above interlinked practices in contrast to the community value established in Chapter 3, suggesting that private, unproductive engagement is self-motivated for some respondents. Following this, I establish a differing inflection of personal value, through a situated ideological resistance amongst my participants to neoliberal selfhood, which I align with Karl Marx's notion of 'surplus value' (1867/1976), specifically regarding self-branding that my respondents find to be morally or culturally problematic. These differing inflections further demonstrate the multi-modality of value within my cascade model, and the requirement to complicate value beyond existing discourse (Bolin, 2011, p. 122).

Personal value lies in engaging privately without contributing, with this unproductive consumption linked to participants' desire to restore private and personal boundaries, representing a specific structurationist approach to exercising their agency. While in the previous chapter I aligned community value with literature regarding productive consumption, personal value is less comparable with existing discourse. This original concept of value, however, can be aligned with Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's, 'principle of differentiation' (1987/2006, p. 74), which is rooted in "personal particularities" (p. 75), and is therefore self-motivated. While some respondents' guarded practice is self-directed, for others, personal value is derived from a situated resistance to neoliberalism, which differs to Boltanski and Thévenot's framing of this worth as 'self-centred pleasure' which stands opposed to the 'common good' (p. 75). Personal value, I suggest, does not oppose or restrict the other forms of value within my cascade model, but exists alongside them, as representing differing neoliberal ideological positions, which can be hybridised within my participants' digital media engagement. In this sense, my approach to value represents a development of Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model, by uniting 'contrasting' notions of value within a fluid, multi-dimensional model for engagement.

Participants who enter the cascade model via the guarded level demonstrated a preference for unproductive, private engagement, including Elizabeth, Oksana, and Glynn, as well as

Barry [18], a 28-year-old salesman, who discusses his unproductive engagement on Twitter: "I never actually type anything into Twitter. I never post anything on there. I am literally just a stalker… through following people you have an interest in, you tend to get stories of interest". Barry's description of himself as a 'stalker' aligns with Will's earlier discussion of viewing profiles of women he does not know through Facebook. While I will assess the implications of this practice regarding everyday surveillance in the following chapter, Barry's lack of interest in engaging productively within Twitter communities also demonstrates the personal value of his guarded engagement. As Rhiannon Bury suggests, this unproductive engagement offers "a means to validate meanings already made and to learn about new details and perspectives" (2018, p. 98). For Barry, value is related to personal interest in a topic, rather than productive involvement with a community, and is therefore linked more closely with the principle of differentiation (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 75). Barry's guarded engagement is self-motivated, with his 'personal particularities' towards unproductive engagement rooted in a desire for connected privacy, which is defined as 'self-centred pleasure' in Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (p. 75). Online, Barry is more inclined to engage privately to fulfil a personal interest. Oksana, conversely, implies that her guarded engagement is instead due to time restraints:

> I've noticed lately that I always read my recent posts on my [Facebook] wall from other people, but I never really follow up. I'm just, 'ah! This person posted something, ah that's alright, this person went up to that… oh great. Next!' You know? So it's more like, you never go in depth, you have this set amount of time, which is always a very short amount of time, and you have to go through, so it's, you know, a speed over quality kind of situation.

As opposed to engaging productively with friends and family, Oksana prefers to lurk, keeping track of others without interacting. This 'speed over quality' approach, as Oksana describes it, is indicative of personal value, as she is still maintaining a sense of connection, but not through productive consumption. Value, therefore, is not tied to her involvement in distant communities, but to her personal interest in distant users, unaffected by "influences from other areas of social space" (Bolin, 2011, p. 28). If Oksana (who studies full-time, is active in university politics, and works a part-time job) had more free time, perhaps she may engage differently, but within her guarded engagement, value still occurs through a distant

---

[18] Barry lives with his wife - another participant, Amanda, with whom he is expecting his first child. Barry is interested in running, and is a member of a local running club, and also follows Liverpool Football Club. He describes himself as a very cynical user of media, and prefers to use social media to find news, describing tabloid newspapers as 'trash'.

involvement with her friends and family abroad. Glynn [19], a 23-year-old postgraduate student, however, differs from these examples, with his engagement practice having changed over time. While Glynn previously engaged in a productive fan-like manner, his current engagement is more guarded, which is reflected in his recent attempt to start blogging:

Glynn: I have two blogs that I started up on Wordpress - probably two articles in the last year. That's about it.

Interviewer: Does it just not interest you?

Glynn: I thought it might be good for research, I thought it'd be another platform to present my own findings and work, but everyone does it. I kind of don't like things that everyone does in that respect. It's quite easy to have a blog, and have an opinion, and sometimes I'm a bit cautious about my opinion. Sometimes I don't want to think too much about that opinion as well, especially on a blog site. I wrote something about Scottish independence about a year ago, I had good fun and I thought it was a really good article, but me sharing it? No. I'm very cautious about it.

While Glynn hoped to use blogging as a professional research tool, his self-described 'caution' has limited this blogging activity. Despite any enjoyment, Glynn's preference for restored private engagement means that he rarely blogs. This is perhaps also linked to a masculine anti-mainstream rejection of the practice of others, where "authentic culture… remains the prerogative of boys" (Thornton, 1995, p. 105), with Glynn stating, "I don't like things that everyone does". Glynn's guarded engagement contrasts with Giannis, who, as I noted in Chapter 3, tweets about his research to 'articulate' his arguments, with the value of this fan-like engagement linked to productively engaging within a community platform. For Glynn, the value of his engagement is self-motivated - he prefers to keep his research private, and values engagement on his own terms, as opposed to being defined within a community. Glynn's situated resistance to others' practice also leads to his preference for privacy, with this complication of personal value not just indicative of a self-directed 'personal particularity' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006 p. 75), but suggests a specific participant resistance to neoliberal selfhood. This differing inflection of personal value is demonstrated by respondents' othering of self-branding that they consider as morally or culturally problematic.

---

[19] Glynn moved to Huddersfield to study for a master's degree in politics, and also works part-time in a hotel. Glynn has a particular interest in the Scottish referendum, which was in the news at the time of interview, and claims to 'love football' but does not follow a specific team.

Personal value as an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood

In the previous chapter, I suggested the community value of self-branding occurred through participants' apparently individualistic production, which was communicative in its intent, and linked to status and notions of 'personal fulfillment' (Marwick, 2010, p. 15). Through fan-like engagement, my participants aligned themselves with neoliberal selfhood. As Brooke Erin Duffy and Jefferson Pooley suggest: "Against the backdrop of advanced capitalist economies, as marketplace logics infiltrate nearly all realms of social life, individuals are encouraged to think of the self as a branded commodity" (2017, p. 2; see also Hearn, 2008; Gehl, 2011; Marwick, 2013; Gandini, 2016). For participants who enter the cascade model via guarded engagement, however, there was a situated ideological resistance to this cultural politics, through the practices outlined in this chapter. Glynn discusses his rejection of self-branding:

Glynn: I don't like promoting myself a lot as well. I find that quite difficult.

Interviewer: I understand that.

Glynn: It seems odd, because everyone is posting about their days, and posting all this stuff that they've done, and I'm like, 'erm, I don't want to do that' [laughs]!

The personal value of Glynn's guarded engagement, as I noted above, is linked to a desire for restored private engagement via rejecting self-branding, with Glynn valuing platforms as a personal space rather than a community space (Light, 2014, p. 104). Other respondents also offered a similar critique of neoliberal self-branding, including Emily: "I don't like the way some people use [Twitter] in a personal way. I try not to use it like that, like constantly updating about their life, what they're doing like you actually think people care about it... I just end up unfollowing people who use it like that". Emily's desire for restored private engagement is not only a case of 'personal particularities', as occurs in Boltanski and Thévenot's model (1987/2006, p. 75), but a situated resistance to the neoliberal self. This is reflected in Emily's othering of self-branding, which she sees as culturally problematic, with personal value thus extending beyond a personal sense of 'self-centred pleasure' (p. 75). For other respondents, this resistance to neoliberal selfhood demonstrates the value of restored private engagement; Oksana discusses how the prevailing expectation of self-branding impacts upon her desire for privacy:

You know I feel like our own lives are not very personal anymore... when it comes to your personal life you're sort of under pressure, so you have to show that 'I did this

amazing thing yesterday', because everybody else - all the 300 or 500 friends I have on Facebook that I probably have never talked to in real life, you know - have to see that I did this amazing thing.

Oksana's awareness of the neoliberal expectation for self-branding negatively impacts upon her own engagement, with the 'pressure' to perform resulting in a resistance towards this practice. As an international student, Oksana perhaps feels a greater sense of expectation to perform to friends in her home country, which also conflicts with her personal preference for guarded engagement through private interaction. For some participants, this resistance to neoliberal selfhood is also linked to an awareness of the exploitative nature of the digital media environment (Andrejevic, 2002; 2009), and "the commodification and exploitation of the users' activities and the data they generate" (Fuchs, 2014, p. 61). Despite entering the cascade model at the fan-like mode of engagement, Thomas acknowledges that certain social networking platforms (in this case, Facebook) need to be used with caution:

> I'm very careful about what I share on social networks, particularly with Facebook. I'm very kind of privacy conscious. I know that, you know, considering the fact that Facebook is such a widespread product, it's free to use obviously, I'm not too keen on having my personal information shared.

The personal value of 'privacy conscious' guarded engagement for Thomas, and other respondents engaging at this level, is linked to a situated resistance to neoliberalism, which occurs through an understanding of the exploitative nature of certain digital media platforms. Although this analysis is based on a relatively small number of respondents, relating the above discourses to surplus value, which, according to Karl Marx, is "the differentia specifica of capitalist production" (1867/1976, p. 769), my participants' various critiques of self-branding could perhaps be read as a further resistance to surplus value being drawn from their productive engagement. As Marx suggests, the extraction of surplus value is the "driving force and the final result of the capitalist process of production" (Marx, 1867/1976. p. 976; see also Xia, 2015, p. 89), with this inflection of personal value perhaps indicative of a possible desire to avoid this exploitative capitalist process online through resisting neoliberal selfhood.

In the above participant examples, guarded engagement occurs as a critique of self-branding, with this inflection of personal value indicative of respondents' agency to resist exploitative neoliberal selfhood and attempt to claim a sense of restored privacy online, within the structures of these inherently neoliberal platforms. By assessing this shared ideological resistance within my data to the dominant cultural politics of neoliberalism, therefore, personal value extends beyond the 'personal particularities' of these individual

participants, with guarded engagement thus holding a more diverse sense of worth than 'self-centred pleasure'. Furthermore, as I will explore in Chapter 6, guarded engagement is not exclusive to participants entering via this level of the cascade model, with respondents who engage in a fan-like manner able to negotiate both modes. Therefore, while Boltanski and Thévenot frame 'self-centred pleasure' as obstructive to 'the common good' (p. 75), personal value, I suggest, does not obstruct community value, but exists alongside this contrasting form of worth within my cascade model. For these various respondents, both inflections of personal value are indicative of a desire for private guarded engagement through either self-directed use, or an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood, which led, for many participants, to a sense of apathetic disengagement. In the final section of this chapter, I will assess how participants' othering of culturally problematic practice develops personal value, further interrogating the notion of generation in this study, with my data suggesting varying dispositions towards engagement within a so-called 'digital native' cohort.

'I know better' - apathetic disengagement and othering of negative practice

As well as guarded engagement offering a resistance to neoliberal selfhood, numerous participants also discussed a sense of apathy towards content, platforms, and communities, which resulted in disengagement. In this section, through Jonathan Gray's work on non-fans (2003), I will explore my participants' disengagement, apathy, and othering of negative practice, challenging the characterisation of 'digital natives' as enthusiastic and tech-savvy (see Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Prensky, 2001; 2012). Conversely, my data suggests that many respondents who have been "raised in an environment in which they were surrounded by technology" (Akcayır et al, 2016, p. 435) have become disengaged, rejecting this cultural 'digital native' expectation, with their engagement impacted by prolonged digital media consumption and the generational practices of others. For respondents who entered the cascade model via guarded engagement, there was a prevailing sense of knowledgeable performance within their resistance to generational expectations and neoliberal selfhood, which I have framed as 'I know better'.

In 'New audiences, new textualities' (2003), Jonathan Gray assesses the differing fan, non-fan, and anti-fan consumption of *The Simpsons*, noting the 'considerable meaning' of this text for viewers who would not classify themselves as fans:

> What struck me, however, was how many of the anti-fans and non-fans could provide a lengthy and impressive in-depth analysis of *The Simpsons*. This commentary differed from their fan counterpart, and thus clearly was not 'borrowed' from the fan,

merely parroted for their or my benefit. Rather, they were responding to the show in meaningful ways, for the show had considerable meaning for them. I also heard from people who had been *Simpsons* fans, but who had long since reduced their viewing to once every month or two, and yet still spoke of it as meaning and doing very particular things for them. (p. 65)

While Gray does not directly address disengagement, his assertion that former fans of *The Simpsons* maintain a sense of meaning from continued, but reduced, engagement is developed in my data. Many participants, including Glynn, Oksana, and Elizabeth, noted that their engagement practices had changed due to a sense of apathy, with these respondents no longer engaging with certain media relating to their interests in a fan-like manner. Despite this 'disengagement' (or less productive consumption) these participants continued to engage with the same interests, instead shifting their consumption down the cascade model from fan-like to guarded engagement. Additionally, for other participants who continue to engage in a fan-like manner, such as Will and Macey, a sense of apathy was also notable in their discussion of frequently used platforms and communities, demonstrating the multi-modal notion of engagement for these participants, who engage both productively and unproductively.

As Gray notes: "Even many 'fans' are lax fans, watching when they can rather than when they must, loving a text but watching it only occasionally, perhaps even at times out of a sense of duty, and hence blurring the boundary between non-fan and fan" (p. 74). My data develops Gray's notion further, suggesting that all respondents who engage in a fan-like manner hybridise their engagement with differing, non-fan modes of engagement. The participants who have disengaged can be considered as akin to fans, former-fans, and non-fans - suggesting that disengagement extends beyond concepts of fandom, and is linked instead to differing forms of value. As Light suggests: "Disconnective practice is not necessarily about resistance or navigating problems… it is something that adds value to people's experiences" (2014, p. 104). As I mentioned previously, Glynn offers a prominent example of apathetic disengagement, with his practices having changed over time:

Glynn: I don't really link articles, I use Facebook a lot for Messenger, but I don't really post a lot so there is that problem. Say I read an article; I wouldn't be inclined to share it immediately. I don't share a lot of things like that.

Interviewer: So you don't really post much?

Glynn: No - I post probably twice a month, three times a month or something. Yeah, I will like lots of stuff, I will read lots of stuff, and I message a lot but it's just not something I… [pause].

Interviewer: Any reason for this?

Glynn: Yeah, in a way. Four or five years ago I used to comment a lot and I used to get onto all these really long political discussions, and sometimes quite heated arguments. Well, I wouldn't say heated, but people take things out of context quite easily on social media, so I try not to. I'm kind of scared of communicating online somewhat. For example, I could post a link to [an] article - I might just have found it interesting - I may not even post anything about what I found interesting about it, but it's quite scary what assumptions one might draw from me posting that article, where I might stand on it. I don't know, especially with politics. I'm proud of my political beliefs, but I really wouldn't force them, or engage anyone else with them.

Glynn's previous negative experiences have impacted upon his engagement practice, and he has become disengaged with the communities and users he previously interacted with in a fan-like manner. Even at the relatively young age of 23 within my study's generational cohort, Glynn's guarded engagement indicates a heightened sense of cynicism, which hardly aligns with the typical 'digital native' characterisation. Oksana also discusses her growing sense of apathy towards content on Facebook:

I got to the point where there are so many people on my Facebook wall posting petitions to sign that I just [think]: 'Ah, seals! Okay. Tigers, alright. Next!' You know? So it just gets, it's a bit too much. At the end of the day if I feel something very passionate, like you know stripping NHS, I'll go online and I'll sign my petition, you know? But I need to feel some kind of emotion about it. Tigers - although I like tigers, don't get me wrong, probably my signature's not going to change anything at the end of the day, and doing it through Facebook seems kind of redundant.

For Oksana, apathetic disengagement occurs due to content-overload, with her interest in social causes, as well as digital content, lessening due to overexposure on Facebook. Oksana specifically notes that her use of Facebook is "because it has been around for so long, I got used to it" suggesting that, like Glynn, a prolonged sense of engagement with this platform has led to apathy. Subsequently, both respondents have rejected fan-like practice, favouring guarded engagement and demonstrating, without explicitly stating, a dislike of more productive practice. Elizabeth, however, who at 26 is nearer the top of my generational cohort, expresses an even greater sense of apathy towards a digital platform that was previously a source of community value, with her disengagement linked more clearly to a rejection of generational practice:

Elizabeth: At the moment, there's just too many teenagers on [Tumblr] annoying me, so I just can't be bothered… It's just all gone onto Instagram now. There's just too many teenagers! They make me feel old!

Interviewer: [Laughs] Right! So do you create your own online content much?

Elizabeth: I used to a lot, but again, that was on Tumblr, and I found that I was creating a lot of content that was original, and it wouldn't get as many notes as a pretty picture of something, so it just got me a bit disheartened. I think a lot of content on the internet has gone like that now, where if it's a pretty picture it'll do a lot better than either well documented or well-written content, because people can't be bothered to read through things. I guess it's the whole kind of *BuzzFeed* effect.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's put you off content creation a bit?

Elizabeth: Yeah, definitely. I used to write for a couple of other blogs, and I've just got really, really bored of it, just because I can't be bothered.

Elizabeth's apathy developed towards the community on the blogging platform Tumblr, because she no longer felt a sense of belonging, noting a generational divide between herself and the 'teenagers' within this community. The divide Elizabeth discusses is apparently linked to a belief that she is either too old for this community, or that other users are too young to value the community in the same way that she does. As such, Elizabeth's apathy towards Tumblr has resulted in disengagement, and a subsequent loss of interest in blogging entirely - as she no longer engages in a textually productive manner with any of the blogs she previously wrote for. This is illustrated by her othering of *BuzzFeed*, with Elizabeth using the term '*BuzzFeed* effect' as shorthand for devalued content resultant of generational differences. Subsequently, Elizabeth's larger engagement practices (outside of blogging) have changed over time, and as she no longer engages productively, the community value that once occurred through blogging (particularly on Tumblr) has been lost. This devaluation is linked directly to Elizabeth 'knowing better' than the teenage users whose practice she considers objectionable. Elizabeth's generational othering of younger users (who, within much digital native discourse, fall within the same generational cohort as her) is a rejection of culturally expected 'digital native' productivity, and her disengagement is resultant from this rejection.

As occurred with Glynn's practice, Elizabeth has become more guarded in her engagement over time due to negative experiences: "I try and avoid commenting on anything on the internet like that, because comments are awful! You always just end up in an endless argument with people". Contrary to digital native discourse which positions this generational cohort as enthusiastic due to being raised with this technology (e.g. Prensky, 2001; 2012),

both Glynn and Elizabeth resist this characterisation, due to their knowledge, 'access', and 'skills' (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008, p. 1). This generational tension was not solely focused upon younger users, as Harriet [20], a 26-year-old accounts executive, discussed:

> Harriet: I don't really ever write statuses. I used to when [Facebook] was more popular and I didn't use Instagram as my main source of social media, so I used [Facebook] more to write status updates then, but I don't as much anymore. I'd probably say I'd write a status probably once every three or four months, if that. Not often I don't think.
>
> Interviewer: Right okay. What turned you off status writing?
>
> Harriet: Good question. I guess I just haven't really got anything to say [laughs]… I think it's changed a lot, Facebook, from a few years ago when everyone started. Now a lot of people use it as an attention-seeking forum, that's just my opinion. A lot of people write statuses for other people to see - if I was to write a status it would be a stupid silly one rather than an attention seeking one if that makes any sense at all?

Unlike Elizabeth's discussion of the community on Tumblr, Harriet's othering of status writing she positions as vain occurs within her own generational cohort, with her critique of 'attention-seeking' productivity a resistance to neoliberal self-branding. Harriet's practice has subsequently changed over time due to a rejection of the 'digital native' expectation, and a tension between perceived 'right' and 'wrong' digital media engagement. As I noted earlier in this chapter, respondents identifying their 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997) through 'good' and 'bad' taste represents a form of performance within the interview setting. Similarly, the discourse from Harriet (as well as the other respondents analysed in this section) is also highly performative, with self-presentation occurring through the othering of negative practice (and thus indicating their class distinctions, albeit in a highly individualised and neoliberal way). While previous examples of interviewee performance focussed upon respondents showcasing their own practices in a positive way, in these specific examples, participants also perform their identity through a critique of the undesirable practices of others – a notion I will further develop in the following chapter.

Additionally, there were also some participants who, while still engaging in a fan-like manner, also discussed a growing sense of apathy in their engagement. Will expressed an increasing disinterest in the content created by his friends and shared through Facebook: "I feel really

---

[20] Harriet works for a marketing company and studied events management at university. Originally from Wakefield, Harriet is interested in fashion and fitness, and enjoys unproductive engagement with fashion bloggers through *Instagram*.

bad because some of my friends write some fantastic things, and I just don't care". Despite this developing sense of community-related apathy, Will continues to post on Facebook, but is increasingly questioning the community value of this practice:

> Will: I used to use Facebook to communicate with people, but now people just use it to post dire videos - things that I cannot stand. So I just scroll. I scroll and I scroll and I scroll. And I find it very dull. I do, I find Facebook dull these days. But I'm still a user, and I do the same thing as other people, like I posted a video of Ronaldinho [footballer] the other day, showing his sublime skill, and I bet most people just went, '(sigh), I don't care about that!' and scrolled past it [laughs]!

> Interviewer: [laughs]

> Will: So I'm as guilty as everybody else in that respect, but otherwise I use it for the sake of using it with Facebook. Because I've used it for so long, it's hard to not use it.

While Will's apathy towards both the platform and community on Facebook has not led to him disengaging productively, his decreased sense of community value is linked to a growing dislike of the 'dire' social media usage of others. In the previous examples, Glynn, Oksana, Elizabeth, and Harriet noted a resistance to self-branding, due to a preference for restored private engagement, with this generational tension aligned with clear dispositions towards 'right' and 'wrong' digital engagement. Unlike these participants, Will engages in the same practice he criticises, but his self-deprecating critique of his own practice demonstrates a sense of ironic consumption. Will is aware that this type of performance is negative, but he justifies it through irony, as such there is a prevailing sense of 'I know better' - it is acceptable for Will to post in a way he is critical of, because of his knowledge and dispositions. This performance of cultural capital is prevalent throughout guarded engagement practice, with the ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood inherently linked to a performance of knowledge and intellectual superiority - 'I know better'.

Summarising the personal value of guarded engagement

I began this chapter by presenting the interlinked practices of guarded engagement - unproductive engagement, restored private engagement, and guilty pleasure and ironic consumption - assessing the significance of participants' specific exercising of agency through connected privacy, and the restoration of private boundaries online performed through identity management. By developing Boltanski and Thévenot's axiom of 'self-centred pleasure' (1987/2006, p. 75), alongside Marx's 'surplus value' (1867/1976), I then

established the value of these guarded engagement practices, through two inflections of personal value. Firstly, I assessed the value of self-directed guarded engagement, which was linked to participants' personal particularities, before presenting this mode as an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood, expanding the concept of personal value beyond 'self-centred pleasure'. While the community value of fan-like engagement is rooted in communicative self-branding, personal value occurs through privacy-conscious self-motivated engagement, or as an ideological resistance to self-branding within neoliberal digital communities.

Having established the practices and value associated with guarded engagement, I then developed these concepts through exploring my participants' apathetic disengagement with certain media, questioning the generational expectation of so-called 'digital natives' as enthusiastic and productive within my data. Many of my participants, conversely, displayed an understanding of this expectation, which they resisted through a knowledgeable disengagement with digital media they had previously engaged with productively. This devaluation of productive engagement challenges preconceptions of a united digital habitus within existing literature, with participants entering the cascade model via guarded engagement displaying specific dispositions towards 'right' and 'wrong' digital media practice, which aligns with their position regarding neoliberal selfhood. Having placed fan-like and guarded engagement at opposite ends of my neoliberal analytical framework, in Chapter 5, I will introduce the remaining modes of engagement together, which represent differing negotiated positions regarding this cultural ideology. Through my analysis of routinised and restricted engagement (as well as their respective values), I will demonstrate the depth of engagement within my data, which extends beyond fan-led definitions. Furthermore, the lower levels of cultural capital amongst respondents who enter the cascade model via routinised engagement further suggests the limitations of the 'digital natives' discourse within my analysis.

Chapter 5: 'My Thumbs are Gonna Turn into Big Giant Thumbs Because I'm Always Scrolling' - The Value of Routinised and Restricted Engagement

The modes of engagement I presented in Chapters 3 and 4 represented a thesis and antithesis - with the value of productive fan-like engagement linked to self-branding, while the value of guarded engagement occurred instead through resisting this neoliberal cultural politics. Although I do not present a traditional synthesis, through a Hegelian 'thesis, antithesis, synthesis' tripartite framework (see Stace, 1924/1955, p. 97; Mueller, 1958), respondents' discourses in this chapter, however, represent differing negotiated positions, with both routinised and restricted engagement existing between these two polarities of neoliberal selfhood. As I established in Chapter 1, while this study aims to challenge the existing fan orientation, analysis of the previous modes of engagement, even unproductive, non-fan-like use, still occurred through fan studies discourse, including Sandvoss and Kearns' ordinary fandom (2012). As my participants demonstrated a wide array of engagement practices across four distinct modes, in this chapter, I suggest that the concept of 'engagement' requires complicating beyond existing fan studies discourse that overemphasises and excessively focuses on textual productivity, either explicitly (e.g. Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2007; 2008a; 2008b) or implicitly (e.g. Shefrin, 2004; Zubernis and Larsen, 2012; Booth and Kelly, 2013; Busse, 2015). In this chapter, therefore, I present the final two modes of engagement together, to demonstrate both the varying forms of value within two similarly non-fan oriented forms of digital media consumption, and the differing, negotiated relationship of each regarding my neoliberal analytical framework.

To achieve this aim, I will present the habitual value of routinised engagement first, before approaching restricted engagement - and the differing reflective value associated with this final mode of consumption. As with previous analysis, I begin by introducing the practices of routinised engagement, demonstrating the significance of this casual, often impulsive use, which is rooted within the 'everyday' (Highmore, 2011) for my participants. In contrast to the explicit positions of respondents in the previous modes of engagement, this discourse is tacitly neoliberal, with the everyday practices of routinised engagement embedded implicitly within neoliberalism. Having established this, I then develop this tacit neoliberal position through examining the habitual value of routinised engagement, using Paul Booth (2010), Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas (2015), and Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot

(1987/2006), to demonstrate how differing forms of value are fluidly interwoven within a complex, structurationist digital media marketplace. Following this introduction to habitual value, I will expand my analysis through assessing the final practice associated with routinised engagement - digital surveillance. Within this section, through David Lyon's work on surveillance in everyday life (2018), alongside Daniel Trottier (2012) and Anders Albrechtslund and Peter Lauritsen (2013), I will establish how the normalisation of sinister offline practice within digital communities, such as stalking and spying, is tied to a cultural acceptance of surveillance (Andrejevic, 2014; Cohen, 2015), and social media data as 'fair game' (Kennedy, 2016), highlighting the value of this practice for my participants.

After presenting the habitual value of routinised engagement, I will then introduce the final mode within my cascade model, restricted engagement, whereby participants identify their own 'negative' practices, discursively splitting the self into lived and idealised versions through digital media engagement. I position this unusual othering of self-practice through Nikolas Rose's work on neoliberalism and the self (1996; 1999), assessing participants' hypercritical perception that they are overreliant upon 'wrong' routinised digital media engagement. The value of restricted engagement, I suggest, lies within self-reflection, with participants seeking 'self-improvement' (Sender, 2006; Phillips, 2012), through identifying 'right' and othered 'wrong' engagement, to realign themselves with their position regarding neoliberalism, representing the aspirational 'higher state of worth' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 76). Such an approach, I suggest, can be aligned with surplus value (Marx, 1867/1976), with my participants' engagement embedded in a capitalist notion of correct digital media use (Fuchs, 2014). This original multi-modal approach to engagement complicates existing fan-led discourse, which, as Rhiannon Bury notes, "has conflated participation with participatory culture, and overrepresented the fan positioned at the 'most involved' end of the continuum" (2018, p. 107). Through interviewing participants outside of specific fandoms, I am able to further develop this notion into four distinct modes of engagement, building upon the work of Sora Park (2017) and Bury (2018), which I will assess in Chapter 6. Before I consider this argument, I will first introduce routinised engagement, by considering the various practices associated with this mode.

The habitual value of routinised engagement practices

At this point of analysis, all my respondents have now entered the cascade model - meaning participants from the various levels are involved in this mode of engagement. As such, in this section I consider discourses from respondents who have entered the cascade model at various levels, with the way participants hybridise these differing modes the focus of Chapter

6. In contrast to the clear neoliberal position of respondents explored in Chapter 3, and the resistant opposition of those profiled in the previous chapter, the position of participants regarding neoliberal selfhood is far less clear in routinised engagement. For respondents, this mode of engagement represents a complex negotiated neoliberal position, although not deliberately so. Routinised engagement is not about conforming to or challenging neoliberal selfhood, but is instead linked to everyday routine and habit (Visser, 1986; Highmore, 2011). The various practices associated with this mode of engagement are listed in Figure 11:

Figure 11: Participants' digital media practices associated with routinised engagement

These various practices, which emerged through respondents' interviews, are interlinked through participants' casual, and often impulsive, engagement with digital media that was not necessarily related to their interests. Instead, routinised engagement is linked to routine and habit, by filling empty time and addressing boredom for my participants. As occurred within the previous modes of engagement, I will address the final practice, digital surveillance, separately, to further analyse the habitual value of routinised engagement. For participants entering across the cascade model, much everyday digital media engagement is rooted in habit and routine. As Joe Moran notes: "Our daily habits are mechanical actions that we do unthinkingly; but they can also tell us about our collective attitudes, ideas and mythologies - our ways of making sense of the world and our lives" (2007, p. 5). Literature regarding 'the everyday' considers the significance of habit and routine, which is "so fixed by repetition as almost to be classed as reflex actions" (James 1899/1983, p. 48). According to Margaret Visser: "The extent to which we take everyday objects for granted is the precise extent to which they govern and inform our lives" (1986, p. 11).

Relating this discourse to my study, much everyday use for participants is devoid of particular meaning or purpose, as James Webster suggests: "Most media use is ingrained in the rhythms of day-to-day life and so has a predictable recursive quality" (2011, p. 46; see also Philo, 1999; p. 286; Gorton, 2009, p. 24). Oksana - who was profiled in the previous chapter - describes her routinised engagement as "a part of my daily life - it's like having

breakfast". This seemingly unimportant engagement aligns with Visser's above description of the significance of the everyday, which is elaborated further by Moran: "We need the everyday, the familiar and the predictable… habits allow us to take certain things for granted, put our brains on automatic pilot and get on with our lives" (2007, p. 217; see also Burton, 2010, p. 107). The practice of respondents who entered the cascade model via routinised engagement is particularly indicative of this sense of the everyday, with this mode inherently linked to offline habit and routines. Lena [21], a 30-year-old space planner, discusses her practice:

Interviewer:	With regards to online media then, where and when are you most likely to use it?
Lena:	Well, in the evenings probably when I come back home from work.
Interviewer:	Are you doing it to wind down?
Lena:	I think it's just something that you do! Yeah. It just feels like this is the most typical thing to spend your time with at the moment. I don't really tend to go out much… so I fill up my time generally with reading online.

Similarly, Richard [22], 27, a forensic accountant, demonstrated a particularly regimented approach to his routinised engagement, which exemplifies this approach:

Interviewer:	Would you say you use many social networks?
Richard:	I think I would yeah. I think I use, again [during] different times of the week, I use different ones, but yeah.
Interviewer:	What are the ones you use?
Richard:	Well, everyday of the week I do the usual stuff, like check on Facebook, on lunch I'm on *BBC News*. On other nights, like Tuesday and Wednesday, I'll use Sky Bet to have a bet on the football and the same for Saturday and Sunday. The ones I use everyday are *BBC News*, *BBC Sport*, that kind of stuff, Facebook.

---

[21] Lena works for an office furniture company in Bradford. Originally from Poland, Lena moved to the UK several years ago to attend university before settling with her husband in the Yorkshire area. Lena did not identify any specific fandoms during her interview, and much of her digital media engagement is casual and based around routine and everyday interests, such as cooking and home improvement.

[22] Richard lives with his fiancé Sarah (another respondent). Originally from North Yorkshire, Richard has lived in various Yorkshire locations, including Leeds, where he attended university. Richard enjoys betting on football matches, and has developed a weekend routine using various mobile apps around this hobby.

As he enters the cascade model at this level, the entirety of Richard's engagement is divided across his weekly routine, with times and days allocated for his specific interests and more casual browsing during downtime, with Richard using digital media as an important part of these routines:

> 3 o'clock or 5 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon when the football is on, I'm glued to Sky Sports Soccer Score Centre finding out what's going on there and equally, in tandem with that, just my bad habits of Sky Bet. I've got the Sky Bet apps where I'm wondering, 'right what's the odds of things turning around?'. That is a heavily intense period of my working or social week, or week in general, where I've got three or four different apps open with sport for Saturday afternoon.

Richard's app-based media usage facilitates his routines and habits, with any productive engagement not linked necessarily to fan-like productivity, but entrenched in the everyday. For respondents entering the cascade model at this level, the routinised nature of their digital media engagement was linked to lower levels of cultural capital and tech-savvy than was evident amongst other respondents in the cascade model. In her interview, Amanda [23], a 28-year-old training manager, noted: "I suppose I don't really understand a lot about media", with her lack of knowledge regarding many digital platforms leading to her limited engagement. Regarding Twitter, Amanda stated: "I don't fully understand it either, nobody has ever really told me the benefits and actually how to use it, so I've never bothered". Furthermore, Amanda explicitly attributed her lack of 'computer savvy' to her generational cohort, implying that her lower levels of cultural capital were resultant of her education, conflicting with the generational digital native discourse:

> When I was growing up you didn't have to use a computer, I think it was a few years after me they started using computers. Our I.T. lessons consisted of waiting 15 minutes, turning on the computer and taking it in turn and doing basic Word. I want my children to be a lot more computer savvy than I am.

Amanda's assertion regarding her education aligns with Prensky's notion of the 'digital immigrant' (2012, p. 69) despite being in the same so-called 'digital native' cohort as the other respondents in my study. While Amanda offers a particularly prominent example, several respondents entering the cascade model via routinised engagement also demonstrated apparently lower levels of cultural capital and tech-savvy, which within this small group of respondents, indicates a potential conflict with the monolithic digital native

---

[23] Amanda is native to Yorkshire, and lives with her husband, Barry - another respondent in this study, with whom she is expecting her first child. Amanda's media use is limited around a few key platforms, including Facebook. Amanda owns three ponies and used to compete in local horse shows.

discourse. As Sora Park argues: "When people encounter the digital world, they make use of their prior knowledge, networks, tools, and skills to adapt to the new environment. In this respect, some are better equipped than others" (2017, p. 26). This type of casual, habitual practice, however, was not unique to respondents with apparently lower levels of cultural capital, and also occurred across the cascade model, with almost every participant indicating that a large amount of their digital media engagement was routinised. Furthermore, this type of habitual media practice was often impulsive - occurring without much forethought or purpose, as Sophie suggests: "When I get up in the morning one of the first things I do is play on my phone for a bit to wake me up". Elise [24], a 25-year-old small-business owner, also discusses similar impulsive practice: "If I've got a spare five minutes I'll refresh the page and see if anything exciting has happened". This habitual manner of engaging with what could be considered a 'complex' media environment (Lobato and Thomas, 2015, p. 173) is, according to Jonathan Bignell, "a practice of everyday life" (2004, p. 284) whereby habitual use of digital media becomes intertwined with routine and everyday practice. As Ben Highmore notes:

> An absentminded disposition towards complex media environments means that our senses have adjusted to intricate and heterogeneous genres, platforms and formats of media... Absentmindedness delegates the work of culture to our sensorium, to our already-known stock of experience. (2011, p. 128)

Numerous respondents across the cascade model specifically identified boredom as a reason for their impulsive or 'absentminded' (as Highmore suggests) routinised engagement, particularly during working hours [25] or general downtime. Stephanie [26], a 29-year-old teacher, discusses how much of her daily engagement with Pinterest was due to boredom, while also noting "If I'm working, I might just nip on to Facebook". Harriet, who was introduced in the previous chapter, also expresses similar habitual practice as a way of tackling boredom whilst at work: "I'll read articles and things online like *BuzzFeed* if I'm bored at work. I definitely go on it daily. I'd say the majority [of it] is down to a bit of boredom at work so I'll have 10 minutes out". Harriet's identification of *BuzzFeed* in this scenario

---

[24] Originally from Staffordshire, Elise moved to Huddersfield to attend university and lives with her partner, Thomas, another respondent. Elise runs an arts and crafts shop, designs jewellery, and has an interest in cooking. Elise enters the cascade model at the fan-like level using digital media productively as a networking tool for her business. Much of her personal use, however, occurs at the routinised level.

[25] See Laurie Langbauer (1993, p. 81) and Susan Stewart (1993, p. 13) for a more detailed account of boredom at work, and the notion of 'the assembly line'.

[26] Stephanie engages primarily with her interests through print media, particularly magazines, and much of her digital media engagement is limited to Facebook and browsing Pinterest when she is 'bored'.

differs to respondents in the previous chapter, whose engagement with this sort of 'clickbait' media was knowingly ironic. Harriet, however, is not positioning *BuzzFeed* in this manner, demonstrating the lack of irony associated with routinised engagement, which does not occur as a resistance to neoliberal selfhood, but facilitates routine and addresses boredom within the everyday. Marcus Gilroy-Ware labels this as 'compensatory internet use', with digital media utilised "to make up for things that are otherwise absent in everyday life" (2017, p. 70). The reflective nature of boredom is considered in much sociological work, including Henri Lefebvre (1947/1991; 1962/1995; 1987), and Michael Gardiner:

> The vague dissatisfactions we usually associate with boredom can elide into other, more transformational instances, so that we can better understand our human propensities for passionate engagement, play and the ludic (such as in the festival), the pleasurable and the aesthetic. (2012, p. 53)

The value of everyday boredom is to provide a break from the "existential burden to always be interesting" (Gardiner, 2012, p. 48; see also Svendsen, 1999/2005, p. 61). Therefore, as Highmore notes, experiencing boredom is positive - it is "the training ground for more mobile forms of habit and apperception, more flexible, fluid and improvised forms of perception" (2011, p. 128). My respondents, however, demonstrated a difficulty in accepting boredom - with numerous participants' practice suggesting a cultural anxiety towards empty time, with many choosing to fill even the smallest micro-moments of time spent alone with absentminded, impulsive digital media use. Oksana exemplifies this practice: "When you're in a queue, you check your phone, when you are, I don't know, having a coffee with someone… I check my Facebook. So those tiny little moments of daily life when you have a spare couple of seconds you go on Facebook". Laura also discusses her frequent filling of empty time with casual social media browsing to avoid experiencing boredom:

Interviewer: So when and where are you likely to use Facebook?

Laura: Everywhere. Everywhere I can. So, if I'm on my own for a few minutes, I will check Facebook. I wake up in the morning I check Facebook, I check Facebook before I go to bed. I'll even be watching TV, like I'll be doing something else, and I'm on Facebook on my phone, and I'm not consciously looking at it, like I'm not taking anything in, it's just like a habit I think.

Interviewer: Right.

Laura: And I get frustrated when I can't look at Facebook. So, like the new lecture halls that have just been built don't have Wi-Fi, and I can't scroll. When you're waiting for a lecture to start, that's all I want to do - I just want to scroll through it because it's a habit!

Despite paying little attention to the content she is using during this habitual practice (which could therefore be conceived as holding little-to-no value) Laura notes her frustration when she is unable to impulsively fill empty time, particularly when alone. In both of the above examples, Laura and Oksana are so uncomfortable with experiencing boredom during short periods of aloneness (such as queuing or waiting for a lecture) that they express a need to fill this time with digital media. Joseph also displayed a similar discomfort with even the briefest moments of aloneness and empty time:

Joseph: As soon as I'm not doing anything else I'm usually kind of on Facebook or Twitter or reading *The Guardian* app, or something like that. I suppose in a way I'm consuming media whenever I'm idle.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Joseph: Literally if I'm with my wife and she goes to the toilet or something, my first instinct is to get my phone out.

As opposed to perceiving boredom as a 'training ground' for 'better understanding our human propensities' as suggested by Highmore and Gardiner, the above respondents instead demonstrate a sense of cultural anxiety towards experiencing boredom, impulsively filling empty time with idle digital media engagement instead. Matthew directly addresses this point: "I get bored quite easily, so having something you can constantly read or whatever helps". Gardiner attributes this contemporary 'manic, enervated boredom' to modernity, noting that "the attenuation of experience in the contemporary age has meant a precipitous decline in the 'art of waiting', and the result is often impotent frustration, anger and impatience" (2012, p. 52; see also Schweitzer, 2008). As Gardiner goes on to suggest:

We are bored in a 'good' way when we are waiting, but we don't know precisely what for, a mode of interruption that changes the very nature of temporal experience itself. Rather than strive to 'kill' time, we should 'invite it in', convert it into charged expectation of a sort that can reveal genuinely new horizons and challenges. (2012, pp. 52-53)

The frustration and impatience Gardiner notes within contemporary boredom is applicable for many of my respondents, for whom the cultural anxiety and dislike of empty time manifested itself in frustration, including Emily, who stated: "I can't sit down, I feel like I have to have some kind of, I don't know… article - or something that I can read. In the morning, I can't just sit and eat my breakfast, I have to be reading something, or doing something". Thomas also discursively likened his habitual consumption of Reddit to drug addiction: "I

wish I didn't, but it's like crack, I just can't stop". While these respondents' use is not an addiction, as Thomas jokingly indicates, it is indicative of a broader cultural anxiety towards aloneness and empty time, which I suggest is embedded tacitly within neoliberal cultural politics. Lefebvre, as a Marxist philosopher, positions postwar capitalism as "thoroughly penetrating the details of daily life" (1988, p. 75), noting: "The commodity, the market, money, with their implacable logic, seize everyday life. The extension of capitalism goes all the way to the slightest detail of everyday life" (1988, p. 79; see also Highmore, 2002, p. 113). All social habits, as Moran concludes, "are so bound up with collective attitudes and feelings that we simply accept [them] unthinkingly" (2007, p. 217; see also Halsey, 1986, p. 8).

As Michael Peters notes, neoliberal ideology positions people as "self-interested individuals" (2001, p. 116), with the broad cultural sense of discomfort towards experiencing boredom, empty time or aloneness in my data embedded, unknowingly, within the "new culture of consumption and affluence [which] promised to relieve the drudgery of mundane life" (Moran, 2007, p. 216). As neoliberalism promotes a commodity-led lifestyle, my participants struggle to experience boredom or aloneness because of the culturally directed notion that they can buy into a different, more interesting lifestyle. While routinised engagement is rooted in the everyday - of habit and boredom, absentmindedness and routine - it cannot be separated from the larger cultural politics of neoliberalism. Through exploring the value of this type of engagement, I will further develop this complex, intertwined relationship in the following section, using differing economic models to understand how the value of everyday routinised engagement coexists with a contrasting neoliberal ideology.

The interlinked 'economies' of habitual value and neoliberalism

In the previous chapters, I positioned value around the concept of self-branding, with both community and personal value linked to a respective acceptance and resistance of this dominant neoliberal practice. Within routinised engagement, however, participants' discourses suggested a negotiated, implicit position within this ideology. While the value of this engagement mode is not explicitly linked to participants' position regarding neoliberal selfhood, habitual value does exist alongside (or within) this ideology, and my other forms of value, in a complex and interlinked manner. In this section I will theorise this notion through a structurationist reading of existing work that considers value as a duality, including Booth's Digi-Gratis (2010), and Lobato and Thomas' informal economy (2015), before aligning this discourse with Boltanski and Thévenot's axiom of 'common humanity' (2006, p. 74).

In Booth's and Lobato and Thomas' differing models, contrasting market and gift economies have become intertwined within the digital media marketplace, offering an approach to understanding how conflicting notions of value can coexist within a complex model. As I established in Chapter 1 (see p. 30) the 'gift economy' is utilised in digital media research to represent the significance of sharing information and content within online networks (Skågeby, 2012, p. 197; Jenkins et al, 2013, p. 65), to resolve conflict and expand social networks. The market economy, conversely, restricts such sharing by establishing 'boundaries' "so that the idea cannot move from person to person without a toll or fee" (Hyde, 1983, p. 105). Within the digital media marketplace, these conflicting economies can be further aligned with structuration theory, with the gift economy indicating users' agency, while the market economy represents structures. In *The Informal Media Economy* (2015), Lobato and Thomas align these two contrasting economies within the 'complex' digital media marketplace (p. 173), whereby the sharing of content through 'informal' peer networks coexists with 'formal' market principles:

> Today's media landscape is characterized by a deep interdependency between formal and informal economies. Formal economies are industrially regulated. Informal economies operate without, or in partial articulation with, regulatory oversight. Neither zone can be fully understood without considering the other. (pp. 19-20)

These differing digital economies represent distinct forms of value, which "can be separated only for the purposes of analysis; in practice, they are engaged in constant cross-fertilization" (p. 20). While not theorised as such by Lobato and Thomas, this duality of formal and informal economies is representative of the duality of structure and agency online, where each facilitates and simultaneously restricts the other (Webster, 2014, p. 14). Booth's Digi-Gratis economy (2010) offers a similar approach to understanding this duality, which he theorises as a "mash-up of the market economy and the gift economy" (p. 24). Critically, according to Booth, the Digi-Gratis "retains key elements of both economies, but exists as unique unto itself. Importantly, it is *not* a convergence or a hybrid of the two. It is the simultaneous existence of both economies as both separated and conjoined" (p. 24, emphasis in the original).

While these two models for understanding the digital media marketplace do not address neoliberalism, these approaches demonstrate how contrasting ideological concepts can be interwoven. Similarly, within my data, while routinised engagement does not offer a clear synthesis to the dominant neoliberal thesis and antithesis of the previous two modes of engagement, the value of routinised engagement cannot be separated from this ideology -

rather, it is both facilitated by, and facilitates the other modes, and their distinct forms of value. In Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (1987/2006) this is represented by the second axiom, 'the principle of differentiation', which assumes "at least two possible states for the members of the polity. Supposing that behaviors can be adapted to these states... their differentiation already allows for forms of *justification* of actions" (pp. 74-75, emphasis in the original). If guarded engagement is considered as occurring through the differentiated states of the everyday and neoliberalism, my participants' practice within this mode has been 'adapted' to these states, with this type of habitual, impulsive engagement both representative of *everyday* time-filling, and a *neoliberal* cultural anxiety. Participants thus have the agency to fill time with routinised digital media engagement, which is bound within the structures of neoliberalism - both in terms of the specific digital media platforms being used, and the wider cultural ideology within which these media exist. Habitual value is linked unknowingly to neoliberal selfhood for my participants, therefore, for whom this form of worth is more obviously connected to routinised practices, which does not explicitly position this mode of engagement within the neoliberal framework. The habitual value of routinised engagement, therefore, lies within the everyday - it is the value of time-filling for participants, of distraction during moments of boredom. While this engagement is not knowingly an acceptance or resistance of neoliberal selfhood, it still occurs tacitly through this dominant ideology. The cultural anxiety surrounding moments of boredom and aloneness experienced by my participants is unknowingly embedded within a neoliberal ideology that promotes an always interesting, commoditised version of the self (Rose, 1999). As Gilroy-Ware suggests:

> The desire to be publicly credited for your work in glamorous areas such as fashion, music, advertising, or design is therefore not solely a desire to avoid the emotional distress and boredom of other forms of labour. In an age where most young people want to be famous, it often represents a highly individualised form of upward social mobility as well. (2017, p. 90)

As such, my respondents are implicitly reacting to neoliberal contexts, even when they are not aware of doing so, with the habitual value of routinised engagement associated with the relief of this neoliberal cultural anxiety. This form of value differs to community and personal value, which are directly linked to neoliberal selfhood. Habitual value is not; it is positioned between these values as representative of the everyday, which is, nevertheless, tacitly embedded within the structures of neoliberalism. As occurs with Lobato and Thomas, and Booth's analytical models, value relating to the cultural neoliberal 'economy' contrasts with the value of the everyday 'economy', but these two modes are so interlinked that they cannot be separated, with 'the principle of differentiation' (Boltanski and Thévenot 1987/2006, pp. 74-75) suggesting that my participants have adapted to this duality through a combined

habitual and anxious routinised practice, representative of structuration theory. The final practice of routinised engagement further develops this notion, and in the following section I will assess how participants' digital surveillance has become a vital part of the social media experience, which offers value through casual surveillance of other users.

Filling empty time through socially-motivated digital surveillance

Digital surveillance was a common practice amongst most of my participants, which involves gazing at friends' and strangers' online profiles, following other users' online practices, and ascertaining the offline lives of others by viewing their productive output, without any sort of reciprocal engagement. Despite respondents' awareness of digital surveillance as widespread across their networks, few displayed any remorse or negativity towards this practice, despite labelling it in sinister terms, as I noted in Chapter 4, such as 'spying' or 'stalking' (see p. 124). This normalisation of actions that would be considered reprehensible offline demonstrates a wider cultural acceptance amongst my respondent that social media data is 'fair game', as Helen Kennedy notes in *Post, Mine Repeat* (2016). Using a critical application of Kennedy's work, alongside additional literature (Andrejevic, 2014; Cohen, 2015; Child and Starcher, 2015), I consider the role of 'everyday' surveillance (Lyon, 2018) within my participants' routinised engagement, demonstrating the normalised acceptance of this type of 'sinister' practice across my data. Through assessing participants' discourses, I suggest that my respondents perceive digital surveillance as an act of sociality, and not as a sinister practice, developing the work of Daniel Trottier (2012) and David Lyon (2018) by exploring this practice through the complex relationship between neoliberal and everyday 'economies' of value.

Within increasingly widespread digital networks, advances in information processing have enabled increased data mining and surveillance online, whereby users' personal data is used within the free market by third parties (Andrejevic, 2014). As Julie Cohen notes: "participation and commodification are inextricably entwined", with this growing economic worth of data mining, leading to a "political economy of surveillance" (2015, p. 8). Despite the "nearly complete lack of transparency regarding algorithms, outputs, and uses of personal information" (Cohen, 2015, p. 7) from third party data mining, Kennedy (2016) suggests users have accepted that surveillance exists within the terms of social media engagement:

> Social media users do care about controlling their personal information, but their concerns relate to social privacy, not institutional privacy… an absence of institutional

privacy and a related presence of data mining practices have become social norms. (p. 167; see also Raynes-Goldie, 2010; Young and Quan-Haase, 2013)

This 'culture of surveillance', according to David Lyon, "has appeared as people engage more and more with the means of monitoring" (2018, p. 6), with this normalisation of digital surveillance and data mining accepted by many users of social media, according to Kennedy: "As social media data are public, they are 'fair game' to be mined, analysed and monitored by interested third parties" (p. 159). The normalisation of third party data mining has perhaps also led to a wider acceptance of other users conducting surveillance within this 'pervasive' culture (Trottier, 2012, p. 3), as Lyon discusses: "Many check on others' lives using social media… At the same time, the 'others' make this possible by allowing themselves to be exposed to public view in texts and tweets, posts and pics" (2018, p. 6; see also Trottier and Lyon, 2012). Various literature within this field considers the prominence and acceptance of third party and user surveillance as inherently problematic, thanks to the "fuzzy privacy boundary" (Child and Starcher, 2015, p. 484; see also Petronio, 2002) inherent within social networking sites, with Kennedy suggesting, "the normalisation of this view is cause for some concern" (p. 159). Jeffrey Child and Shawn Starcher also discuss this notion:

> One reason why individuals use Facebook is because the platform allows for individual surveillance and mediated lurking in a variety of forms, including creeping on others' sites (which involves scrutinizing a person's Facebook profile, photos, posts, and friends); stalking individual pages (through repeatedly accessing and viewing them in a short period of time); and watching what others post and interact online about with interactive Facebook friends from a distance… Mediated lurking is expected by Facebook users, who view it as a necessary trade-off that comes with overall engagement and use of Facebook. (2015, p. 484; see also Trottier, 2012; Lee and Cook, 2015)

Child and Starcher (and to a lesser extent, Kennedy, Andrejevic, and Cohen) present user surveillance as inherently negative, implying that users reluctantly accept the lurking of others to engage with social platforms like Facebook. As Anders Albrechtslund and Peter Lauritsen suggest, however, some types of surveillance can also be considered as 'participatory' (2013), with David Lyon developing this argument: "While some surveillance is intrusive, undemocratic, disempowering, other forms seem participatory, playful, possibly empowering" (2018, p. 49). Social networking, Lyon suggests, "seems to introduce a participatory approach to surveillance, which can empower – and not necessarily violate – the user" (2018, p. 50). This notion of everyday surveillance as inherently participatory is shared within my data, which suggests that respondents actually value this practice in a

multi-modal manner, with digital surveillance representing a distant form of socialising, and thus an essential part of the social media experience. As Lyon notes:

> Checking up on information that others share is vital to the social life that makes social media hum. In other words, online surveillance as understood through the imaginaries and practices of its users is not necessarily as sinister or coercive as its critics might think. (2018, p. 117)

Furthermore, many respondents (including those who engage in a fan-like manner) noted their preference for surveillance over producing content within social networks. Emily demonstrates this viewpoint: "I take a backseat on social media, rather than posting about my life I'd rather just use it like a bit of a spy really! Just nosey at what other people are doing". While Emily's preference for 'spying' is perhaps linked to the position via which she enters the cascade model (guarded engagement), participants at various levels discussed their digital surveillance, suggesting that this practice is not limited to a desire for privacy. In addition to Emily, other female respondents, including Laura, Violet, Sarah, and Ella[27], used the term 'nosey' to describe their surveillance. Male participants, conversely, tended to use more sinister terms, such as 'stalking', or 'spying' (although not exclusively), suggesting that while this is not a gendered practice necessarily, the justification for digital surveillance may, in part, be socially gendered.

This is not to suggest these terms are wholly gender-specific, as demonstrated by Emily's use of the word 'spy', which indicates her understanding of the normalisation of user surveillance. Unlike Child and Starcher's previous assertion, my respondents did not consider digital surveillance as negative, but as an essential part of social media engagement. Will enjoyed browsing Facebook profiles of women, as I discussed in the previous chapter, while Laura also admitted to 'invasive' engagement through social media: "I'm conscious that I am very invasive, I will go through people's pictures that I don't really know that much, and I'll look at what they're up to, I'll look at where they've been, 'oh, been to the Harvester, eh?'". Other examples of this practice discussed without any sense of negativity include Lena: "I mainly spy on people", and Richard: "I don't use [social networking sites] to keep in touch with people, I use them to spy on what people are doing". Not only did these participants fail to demonstrate any sense of negativity, or even a reluctant acceptance of user surveillance, but many also discussed digital surveillance as a form of social

---

[27] Ella is a 29-year-old Sales Administrator at a car dealership, and lives with her husband. Ella's digital media usage is casual, and predominantly social media and app-based, taking place through her phone during downtime throughout the day.

engagement, indicative of maintaining an interest in the lives of others [28]. Lee [29], a 26-year-old painter and decorator, claims that his everyday surveillance is "not being nosey but just seeing how people are doing, it's all good fun really", while Violet also perpetuates this idea, with her digital surveillance validated as a form of social engagement, despite it occurring without reciprocation:

> I'm a bit nosey as well. I'm a nosey person! I like to know what people are doing, I like to know if they're going to have a baby, or I like to know if they've lost weight or, you know, if they've changed their hair colour... I'm just that kind of person. I'm a people person, not nosey - socially inquisitive.

Although Violet jokingly describes herself as 'socially inquisitive', the inference is clear that her surveillance is an act of sociality, as opposed to negative stalking or 'creeping', as it is labelled by Child and Starcher (2015, p. 484). As Lyon notes, within social networking sites, "people are watching others and are aware of being watched" (2018, p. 131), with my respondents knowledgeable of these conditions, using them for both personal and social benefits. For many participants, particularly those entering higher up the cascade model, observing others' online activities is not just inquisitive spying, but also a manner of maintaining 'weak-tie' (Baym and Ledbetter 2009, p. 419) and distant relationships with offline friends and associates, as Emily describes:

> I don't see my group of friends from home that often anymore, but even though we don't speak, I feel like I'm still involved in what they're up to and what's going on because they're posting on Facebook. It's a good way of still feeling connected with people. My brother as well, we don't speak very much, but I still know what's going on if I click on his profile and have a scroll down to see what he's been up to.

Without her surveillance, Emily believes she would lose contact with friends and family members, with this unproductive and seemingly unsocial practice therefore taking on the role of non-dialectical communication, offering Emily a sense of involvement with distant and weak-tie relationships. As Baym et al note: "Weak-tie relationships that are not close and do not entail frequent favors and advice can be of high quality and important to quality of life" (2007, p. 737). Laura's explanation of her digital surveillance further legitimises this practice: "It's nice to scroll through [old acquaintances'] timelines, see what they've been up to, see what's been going on in their lives. It's quite interesting, and then I guess you still feel that

---

[28] See Baym and Ledbetter (2009) for discussion of media use in interpersonal relationships.

[29] Lee is native to the Yorkshire area. His digital media use is fairly sporadic, and is mainly for practical reasons (such as checking emails or internet shopping), and browsing of social networks and sports forums. Lee is a supporter of the rugby league club Castleford Tigers, as well as Liverpool Football Club.

you are part of their lives". Despite being a one-way form of engagement, Laura aligns this practice discursively with dialogic communication (i.e. 'catching up with old friends'), with these respondents substituting social media consumption for actual dialogue.

While much existing literature presents the cultural normalisation of user surveillance as problematic, my participants consider this practice as an essential part of the social media experience. The practice of digital surveillance offers participants habitual value, with social networks providing considerable content upon which to gaze, filling time within the micro-moments that occur throughout daily routines. Additionally, many respondents also discussed their socially-motivated surveillance, with my participants not only failing to see user surveillance as inherently negative, but conversely framing this practice as a form of digital socialising - occasionally substituting this engagement for dialogue. As Lyon suggests:

> Within surveillance culture, people both negotiate surveillance strategies – for instance, often seeing the giving of personal data as a trade-off for personal benefit – and also adopt them as their own, modifying them for their circumstances and initiating forms of surveillance on themselves and others. (2018, p. 44)

The habitual value of routinised engagement, therefore, is diverse and complex, with respondents entering the cascade model at various levels engaging within this mode, which I will address in the following chapter. In this chapter so far, I have demonstrated the depth of my participants' routinised engagement, allowing me to challenge popular discourses that overemphasises textual productivity in assessing audience engagement. In the next section I will further develop this position, by introducing restricted engagement, with this final mode representing a differing negotiated position of neoliberal selfhood.

The reflective value of restricted engagement practices

Having assessed the habitual value of routinised engagement, this chapter differs from the previous chapters, as I also consider the final mode of engagement, restricted engagement, alongside this analysis. I have adopted this approach for two reasons. Firstly, and critically, as no participants entered the cascade model at this bottom tier, restricted engagement does not require as much establishing. Secondly, addressing both routinised and restricted engagement together - two differing forms of mostly so-called 'unproductive' consumption, strengthens my challenge to existing discourse, with both modes demonstrating the depth of non-fan-like engagement in my data. In this final section, therefore, I will introduce restricted engagement, along with the reflective value of this practice.

Restricted engagement refers to participants' othering of perceived 'negative' practices, with numerous respondents noting the self-disciplining measures they have taken to reduce their own undesirable engagement. The notion of 'restricted' engagement, therefore, does not refer to simplistic or limited digital media consumption, but rather to respondents critiquing their own perceived negative practices, with participants thus 'restricting' their own engagement. This othering of participants' own practice leads to an unusual doubling of the self, whereby respondents clearly delineate between 'right' and 'wrong' engagement, restricting the latter to achieve an idealised best possible version of the self. I will develop this concept through Nikolas Rose (1996; 1999), Katherine Sender (2006) and Adam Phillips (2012), suggesting that this desire for self-improvement through a splitting of the self into actual and imagined best practice, represents a differing negotiated neoliberal position for my participants. Developing Boltanski and Thévenot's 'common good' (1987/2006, p. 76), alongside Karl Marx's 'surplus value' (1867/1976) the value of this mode of engagement lies within self-reflection and respondents' subsequent self-improvement, based on restricting perceived negative practices to achieve an imagined best possible version of the self, realigning the respondent with their position regarding neoliberal selfhood. Before considering the reflective value of restricted engagement, I will outline the participant practices that emerged within this mode of engagement, which are listed in Figure 12:

Figure 12: Participants' digital media practices associated with restricted engagement

Although no respondents entered the cascade model via this level, participants who engage in a restricted manner clearly identified 'right' and 'wrong' digital media use with the practices listed in Figure 12 linked to this binary. Practices recognised as 'wrong' included a perceived overreliance upon digital media - with numerous respondents critical of how ingrained routinised engagement had become within their general digital media consumption. Respondents were also hypercritical of practices they perceived as 'negative' - namely digital media use they thought of as anti-intellectual, or a waste of otherwise valuable time. While habitual value is linked to filling empty time to offset the cultural anxiety relating to

boredom, some respondents perceived this routinised engagement negatively when it occurred during otherwise allocated time (e.g. working hours). Practices that were valued when they occurred within the context of routinised engagement, therefore, were identified as negative within this mode, perhaps as they are not explicitly neoliberal, and thus fail to align with neoliberal notions of the best possible self.

As Nikolas Rose notes in *Governing the Soul* (1999), within neoliberalism, "individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives though the choices they make among the forms of life available to them" (p. 230). Within this context, the self is formed "through the free exercise of personal choice among a variety of marketed options" (p. 230). Within neoliberal culture, the self is manifested through desired and hoped-for lifestyles, and is ultimately aspirational, promoting constant self-improvement to achieve a person's (hoped for) potential. As Rose notes:

> The modern self is institutionally required to construct a life through the exercise of choice from among alternatives. Every aspect of life, like every commodity, is imbued with a self-referential meaning; every choice we make is an emblem of our identity, a mark of our individuality, each is a message to ourselves and others as to the sort of person we are. (p. 231)

Across the interviews, numerous participants demonstrated an understanding that their routinised engagement did not align with aspirational neoliberal notions of the self - particularly with regards to their perceived overreliance upon (mostly mobile) digital media. Sarah [30], a 27-year-old nanny, who spent much of her interview discussing the positive ways she engages with Pinterest, still noted an overuse of this platform: "Sometimes I think, 'oh I'm going to go to bed and I'm going to look on Pinterest', rather than reading a book which is really, really bad". While Sarah is perhaps attempting to align with my perceived intellectual expectations in an interview setting (see Oskamp and Schultz, 2005, p. 128), she also demonstrates an awareness of failing to perform in the productive, tech-savvy manner expected of 'digital natives' (De Bruyckere et al, 2015). In Chapter 4, I noted that several respondents critiqued the negative practice of generalised 'others' in order to perform their experienced understanding of the digital media environment, which I framed as 'I know better'. Within this mode of engagement, however, Sarah – as well as other respondents engaging in this manner – are othering their own practice, with this type of performance less

---

[30] Sarah is native to the Yorkshire area and lives with her fiancé, Richard. The majority of Sarah's digital media engagement is casual, and revolves around social media usage, particularly Pinterest, which she often uses in her work as a nanny.

indicative of a knowledgeable resistance to societal norms. Unlike the previous examples across the other modes of engagement, this version of interviewee performance is perhaps more self-deprecating, with respondents adapting to the interview environment in a different way. As Erving Goffman suggests:

> A performance is, in a sense, 'socialised,' moulded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented. We consider here another important aspect of this socialization process - the tendency for performers to offer their observers an impression that is idealized in several different ways. (1959, pp. 22-23)

In the context of restricted engagement, some participants are reacting to the interview setting in a way that differs to the previously assessed modes, by 'moulding' practice they perceive as negative (and thus perhaps assume I also perceive in the same way) into self-critique. As Beverley Skeggs notes: "Certain knowledges are normalized, authorized and legitimated; only certain groups are seen to be respectable, to be worthy objects or subjects of knowledge (1997, p. 18). Such practice amongst my respondents, therefore, is also perhaps indicative of a highly individualised notion of class, whereby respondents' performances of class identity through respectability becomes neoliberal self-critique. This negativity occurs despite Sarah identifying Pinterest as a source of "inspiration" for her work and personal life, particularly in finding activities to enjoy with the children she supervises at work. Despite her enjoyment of the platform, Sarah positions Pinterest as anti-intellectual, and thus excess engagement is a waste of time, as it does not lead to betterment of the self. Rose suggests that neoliberalism encourages people to pursue a desired lifestyle through personal labour:

> [Within neoliberalism] a range of possible standards of conduct, forms of life, types of 'lifestyle' are on offer… Forms of conduct are governed through personal labour to assemble a way of life within the sphere of consumption and to incorporate a set of values from among the alternative moral codes. (pp. 230-231)

Sarah's anti-intellectual, time-filling use of Pinterest is identified as wasted time in this context, as it distracts from the personal labour required to achieve a desired lifestyle. This negativity within an aspirational neoliberal context was not limited to Sarah, as numerous other respondents displayed a similar attitude towards digital media they considered as intellectually or morally inferior. Claire [31], a 20-year-old student, is critical of her instinctual

---

[31] Originally from Manchester, Claire is a final-year undergraduate studying music at the University of Huddersfield. Despite self-branding, most of Claire's digital media engagement involves browsing social media to stay connected with her friends. When asked about the platforms she uses to engage with her interest in fashion, Claire discussed online retailers, as opposed to magazines, blogs, or other more typical fan sources.

overuse of app-based media: "I use my phone a lot. Like, probably way too much".

Stephanie also offered a similar description of her instinctual practice:

Interviewer: Do you just use [Pinterest] when you've got a bit of down time?

Stephanie: Yeah, I'm really bad for picking up my phone and looking at it when I'm bored.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Stephanie: So I'll flick through Pinterest just to see what's popular because I'm bored… It's just because it's there. If my phone's in my pocket, I'll get it out.

These discourses demonstrate the contrast in perception towards time-filling engagement while bored, within the differing contexts of routinised and restricted engagement. In the above example, Stephanie is critical of a perceived overuse, noting that this practice is culturally 'wrong', while previous respondents (including Stephanie) discussed the value of having media to occupy them while bored. Within this context, such defensive self-justification ('it's really bad, but…') demonstrates that the respondent has identified a negative practice, and is aware of their shortcomings and thus shouldn't be judged too harshly from a neoliberal standpoint. Laura's justification of her overuse is particularly evident of this: "This is when it gets really sad… even when I'm busy I just scroll through and look what everyone else is up to, which is not a really healthy habit to be honest! If I'm bored, I'll scroll through Facebook, until I get to where I was the last time I scrolled". Sophie similarly discursively describes such practice as 'sad':

It's something that's such a part of your daily life, and I just kind of think that it's really sad that it is, but if I was without my phone I would feel quite anxious. Not just because of that, but just staying in touch with people, I just like to be in the know. It's like a fear of missing out!

These various self-justifications represent an understanding that this sort of practice is 'wrong' from a neoliberal perspective, as it does not represent the personal labour required to achieve a hoped-for lifestyle. Sophie further critiques her negative practice within this context:

Interviewer: What types of media would you say you use mostly?

Sophie: Mainly I'm on my [phone]. I try not to be because it annoys me sometimes, but if I ever have a moment where I'm sat down, I'm

> usually checking Facebook or Instagram or talking on WhatsApp to
> friends and things like that.

Interviewer: You said it annoys you, why?

Sophie: Just because I think, 'what did I do before I had this phone with the
                 internet?' I constantly feel like my thumbs are just gonna turn into big
                 giant thumbs because I'm always scrolling!

Sophie identifies both practices of restricted engagement within this discourse, noting a perceived overreliance on digital media, and being hypercritical of negative practice, thus othering her own engagement, into actual 'wrong', and aspirational 'hoped for' practice. Furthermore, through this neoliberal positioning of 'right' and 'wrong', participants who engaged in this manner demonstrated a doubling of the self, into lived and aspirational versions. Harriet discusses this doubling of the self through identifying her aspirational practice:

> The funny thing about Facebook, I know so many people, me included, that have said, 'I really want to delete Facebook' but I just can't. I've spoken to friends and they've asked why I can't delete it, it's just one of those things. I can get in touch with anyone on there; I'd say 80% of people are on it. You'll find out about events that are happening and stuff like that, and if I wasn't on Facebook I'd feel like I was out of the loop, but I do want to delete Facebook because there is no need to have it as much. Other than that side of it, it's kind of 'rock and a hard place', because part of me does want to delete it and the other half of me finds out about events, and friends contact me on it and things like that. I'm sure one day I'll delete it.

Harriet was not the only respondent to identify how, through restricting her engagement, she could exercise self-improvement in order to achieve (or at least move closer to achieving) her best possible self. Other examples include Sophie, who states: "It would be strange what I might achieve if I wasn't on my phone on Facebook", and Oksana, who claims: "If I didn't have these things [mobile devices] I would just have an occasional look through Facebook - maybe I would have finished my master's by now". The value of this form of engagement, therefore, is linked to reflecting upon 'negative practice', with some respondents exercising self-improvement through restricting their engagement in order to achieve this projected aspirational self.

Reflective value as neoliberal self-improvement

The above discourses from my various respondents are directly embedded within a neoliberal culture, whereby the progressive aspiration for self-improvement, according to

Rose (1999), institutes "a constant self-doubt, a constant scrutiny and evaluation of how one performs, the construction of one's personal part in social existence as something to be calibrated and judged in its minute particulars" (p. 243). Rose attributes these "contemporary concerns for the self" (p. 219) to neoliberalism and believes that the modern self is "resultant of the social expectations targeted upon it, the social duties accorded to it, the norms according to which it is judged, the pleasures and pains that entice and coerce it, the forms of self-inspection inculcated in it" (p. 222). Within my data, this culturally manifested introspection leads to participants reflecting upon the practice they have identified as 'wrong', with the value of restricting so-called negative engagement lying within this self-reflection, suggesting my participants are embedded in capitalist notions of aspirational digital media engagement (Marx, 1867/1976; Fuchs, 2014). Before pursuing this thread, reflective value can also be aligned with Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (1987/2006), developing their final axiom - the 'common good' within a negotiated neoliberal framework. In their polity model, the 'common good', serves to tie together the various principles which must be met to achieve value, which is conceptualised as a "higher state of worth" (p.76). As the authors note:

> [This axiom] posits that happiness, which increases as one moves toward the *higher states*, is beneficial to the polity as a whole, that it is a *common good*… the common good is opposed to the self-centred pleasure that has to be sacrificed to reach a higher state of worth. (p. 76, emphasis in the original)

Within my neoliberal analytical framework, participants seek 'a higher state of worth' (i.e. the idealised self) through restricted engagement, with reflective value thus representing self-improvement through 'the common good' of achieved aspirational practice. While Boltanski and Thévenot's model is not itself neoliberal, applying this axiom within my concept of reflective value demonstrates the value inherent within the identification of 'right' and wrong' practice, as occurred for numerous participants in this study. Elizabeth, who was extremely critical of her browsing patterns, offers an example of seeking a 'higher state of worth' through reflecting upon her practice: "I do a lot of the awful kind of clicking through to other things, and then just going on a big click cycle", as does Victoria [32], a 25-year-old PhD student: "I'm terrible for sort of having a hundred tabs open for different articles on different websites". Both Elizabeth and Victoria are hypercritical of the specific practice they consider as negative, which, like the respondents assessed previously, is linked to excessive digital

---

[32] Victoria is studying art, and she also works as a gallery invigilator at Salts Mill in Saltaire, Bradford. She lives with her partner, Matthew. Victoria enjoys watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in her spare time. Victoria enters higher up the cascade model, but was not profiled during previous chapters.

media use they perceive as anti-intellectual or not befitting their perceived tech-savvy and cultural capital. Through self-reflection on their digital media engagement, some participants attempted to counteract engagement practices they saw as intellectually or morally problematic. Elizabeth discussed the self-controlling methods she has inserted into her day-to-day digital media engagement: "I've given myself a no Facebook, well - no internet - on the way to work rule at the moment, just because I find if I do even turn the internet on I'll just do nothing else". To counteract the 'click cycle' pattern that Elizabeth identifies as 'awful' within her daily engagement, she has chosen to impose a rule upon herself to restrict this activity to times she deems appropriate, i.e. outside of working (or commuting) hours (Sender, 2006, pp. 135-136; see also Illouz, 2003; Ouellette, 2004; Hay, 2005; McCarthy, 2005). Siobhan also restricts her engagement through 'challenging' herself:

> I have to set myself challenges like, 'right, that's it, I'm not going on Twitter until Friday', and it shouldn't be like that I don't think. I think it's very, I wouldn't say it's addictive, but something that's integrated so well into your life that you probably don't realise until you've not had an actual conversation with somebody for three days because you've been tweeting.

These various attempts at self-improvement through restricted engagement demonstrate respondents seeking to renegotiate their neoliberal position. As Rose notes, within neoliberalism, "the self is to be reshaped, remodelled so that it can succeed in emitting the signs of a skilled performance. And of this continuous performance of our lives, we each are, ourselves, to be the sternest and most constant critic" (1999, p. 243; see also Davies and Bansel, 2007, p. 252). Other participants also imposed restrictions upon their digital media engagement, to improve their position regarding neoliberal selfhood, and achieve a higher state of worth, including Thomas, who works from home: "I found myself kind of having to disconnect my internet connection if I have serious work to get done, just because I find myself messing about and looking on Reddit far too much". The self-controlling measures of Thomas and Elizabeth in particular occurs to restrict engagement to specific times of the day, having identified these practices as negative when occurring during undesirable times. This routinised practice does not carry habitual value when it occurs in this context, and as such, value lies not in facilitating this mode of engagement, but in controlling it through self-reflection and, ultimately, self-improvement. As Rose notes:

> The self becomes the target of a reflexive objectifying gaze, committed not only to its own technical perfection but also to the belief that 'success' and 'failure' should be construed in the vocabulary of happiness, wealth, style, and fulfilment and interpreted as consequent upon the self-managing capacities of the self. (p. 243)

While Thomas and Elizabeth both seek self-improvement to focus on work-related time - an inherently neoliberal ideology (McGee, 2005, p. 13; see also Miller and McHoul, 1998; Rimke, 2000) - Joseph identified his negative practices as occurring socially:

> I guess in a way, I don't like the fact that sometimes I feel [digital media] makes me less productive. I try to, at the very least, kind of not get my phone out literally when I'm with people and [having] conversations with people and stuff, like a lot of people do. That's just kind of normal now, but at the very least I'll wait for an appropriate break or when the person I'm with has gone to the toilet or things like that. I don't want to go down the road of sort of, that complete disconnection where you're half in the room with the person and you're half on your phone on Facebook.

This self-reflection and subsequent restricted engagement goes beyond notions of digital etiquette and social norms (Hall et al, 2014, p. 135). The various negative practices, as identified by all three respondents (Elizabeth, Thomas, and Joseph), occur during time that all three value personally. When routinised engagement takes place during otherwise valuable time, such as work, or for Joseph, private socialising, it is perceived negatively - as this practice does not offer habitual value in this context. Furthermore, as this mode of engagement is not explicitly neoliberal (being only tacitly linked to the everyday) it does not contribute to achieving the best possible self, and is thus perceived as negative by respondents seeking to negotiate a 'better' neoliberal position. Self-improvement as occurring to fulfil a person's potential is referred to by Adam Phillips as the 'unlived life', in which "we are always more satisfied, far less frustrated versions of ourselves" (2012, p. xviii). For my participants, the unlived life occurs through projecting an idealised best possible version of the self, while negative practices are othered, as Phillips notes: "We may need to think of ourselves as always living a double life, the one that we wish for and the one that we practice; the one that never happens and the one that keeps happening" (2012, p. xvii).

Developing Ben Light's work on disconnection (2014), Joseph's othering of his 'disconnected' browsing demonstrates this doubling of the self, aligning his aspirational *best possible self* with neoliberal values, away from his current, *everyday self* which is steeped in 'negative' practice. This negotiated neoliberal position differs to the fan-like mode of engagement, as it occurs through internalised self-policing - and thus via an acceptance that much everyday practice does not explicitly align with participants' neoliberal ideals. Restricted engagement is an attempt by participants to realign themselves within the framework - and it is noteworthy that the majority of those who seek self-improvement enter the cascade model at the topmost level, and thus perceive self-branding and productive engagement as both the 'correct' and aspirational mode of consumption. Furthermore, this

realignment opens up my concept of reflective value to Marxist readings, as participants' self-governance through identifying 'right' and 'wrong' neoliberal practice could be seen as exploitation, as Karl Marx suggests: "Only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes towards the self-valorization of capital" (1867/1976, p. 644). By restricting their own engagement through neoliberal reflection, my participants are thus embedded within a capitalist notion of aspirational digital media consumption, and are therefore perhaps exploited by an inherently neoliberal digital media marketplace. As Christian Fuchs argues: "There is no doubt that users are motivated by social and communicative needs and desires to use social media. But the fact that they love these activities does not make them less exploited" (2014, p. 64).

My participants seek self-improvement through a splitting of the self into lived versus idealised other, positioning 'the higher state of worth' as achievable through neoliberal self-reflection, with Boltanski and Thévenot suggesting "that happiness, which increases as one moves toward the *higher states*, is beneficial to the polity as a whole, that it is a *common good*" (1987/2006, p. 76, emphasis in the original). My analytical approach reconceptualises Boltanski and Thévenot's 'common good' axiom by positioning neoliberal selfhood as the aspirational 'higher states', with participants restricting their engagement to achieve this state of worth. As I suggested in Chapter 3, my application of Boltanski and Thévenot is distorted by neoliberalism, with the 'common good' linked to individualistic participation. Through this distortion, the 'common good' also becomes aspirational for my participants, who seek to realign themselves with their position regarding neoliberal selfhood, embedded within a capitalist notion of correct digital media use. This doubling of the self to achieve a 'higher state of worth' is specific to restricted engagement, differing to fan-like and guarded engagement, which exist as polarities within my neoliberal framework, as well as routinised engagement, which I positioned as tacitly embedded between these two modes. Restricted engagement represents an additional negotiated position within this framework. Through reflective value, participants identify negative practice, and seek to modify their engagement to realign themselves within this framework of neoliberal selfhood.

Summarising routinised and restricted engagement

The two modes of engagement I have addressed in this chapter offer varied examples of digital media consumption within my participants' discourses, with the associated practices and forms of value differing both to each other, and the other modes of engagement in my cascade model. At the beginning of this chapter, I noted the limitations in fan studies' work, which is excessively focussed on textual productivity, both explicitly (e.g. Fiske, 1992;

Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2008a; Carpentier, 2011; Davis, 2013), and implicitly through audience production being studied as a type of text (e.g. Shefrin, 2004; Zubernis and Larsen, 2012; Booth and Kelly, 2013; Busse, 2015). Within my concept of restricted engagement, this overemphasis upon textual productivity is also played out by my participants, whose identification of 'right' and 'wrong' engagement aligns with neoliberal concepts of self-branding and productivity. This parallel focus on productivity across scholarly and participant discourses demonstrates the ideological dominance of neoliberalism within the digital media marketplace, and the subsequent reduction of value within this context as occurring through productive engagement.

The two modes of engagement I assessed in this chapter, however, demonstrate that the value of everyday digital media practice differs depending upon context and time - as well as each participant's position within both the neoliberal framework, and, as will be explored in the next chapter, cascade model. While filling empty time with impulsive engagement offers habitual value for respondents by addressing a cultural anxiety towards experiencing boredom and aloneness - the exact same type of engagement can also be perceived as negative within more valued personal or work contexts. This complex relationship between respondents and the digital media with which they engage is indicative of the tacit relationship between neoliberalism and the everyday, whereby time-filling can be both valuable, and a hindrance to participants' aspirational hoped-for selves, depending upon the context of engagement. Across the previous chapters, I have artificially separated the four modes of engagement and their associated forms of value from my cascade model to critically assess these concepts, and align them within my neoliberal analytical framework. In the final chapter, I will place these modes back into the cascade model, to examine the various connections in my data, demonstrating that value and engagement are not different taxonomic positions, but integrated together within a complicated, multi-modal digital media marketplace for participants in my study.

Chapter 6: 'It Depends On My Mood' - Participants' Hybridisation of Engagement within the Cascade Model

Across the previous chapters, I have artificially separated the four modes of engagement - and their associated forms of value - from the cascade model presented in Chapter 2. By adopting this approach, I was able to distinguish the specific digital media practices within each mode of engagement, demonstrating the critical differences that emerged from participants' discourses. Furthermore, I also established the wide range of value at play within my participants' digital media engagement, aligning with, and developing existing discourses of value (e.g. Marx, 1867/1976; Baudrillard, 1968/1996; 1970/1998; 1972/1981; Bourdieu, 1989/1996; 1993; Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006; Booth, 2010; Lobato and Thomas, 2015) within the complex digital media marketplace. Finally, by separating the modes of engagement from the cascade model, I was also able to relate participants' engagement to a neoliberal framework, demonstrating the broader cultural implications of each mode of engagement, and further establishing the practice-based and larger cultural differences between the various types of consumption that occur within my data.

However, by separating these forms of value and engagement from the cascade model, it has not been possible to consider how participants negotiate digital media on a day-to-day basis and the significance of this hybridisation. In this final chapter, therefore, I will reintegrate the four modes of engagement and value into my cascade model, to understand how and why participants fluidly negotiate engagement and value across their regular digital media consumption, further unpacking the factors associated with generation, and the overarching framework of neoliberal selfhood as a tool to understand these narrative threads. Firstly, by applying the work of Joke Hermes (1995), Nikolas Rose (1999), and Mark Duffett (2013) alongside my participants' discourses, I will address how engagement is hybridised across the cascade model, demonstrating the significance of respondents' fluid practices, suggesting that engagement is conceptualised through the position via which they enter the model. Within this analysis, alongside Ben Highmore (2011), I will also assess a small group of respondents who engaged at the routinised level only, without hybridising their engagement, offering a unique exception to the cascade model, which serves to further demonstrate the tacit nature of neoliberalism within the everyday.

Having established the fluidity of my participants' engagement, I then consider how value is negotiated alongside digital media consumption. While participants identified the differing

reasons for their engagement (such as socialising or tackling boredom) they often struggled to articulate the value of this practice, due to the fluidity of engagement across the cascade model. By considering the various forms of value I have presented in this thesis, I suggest that the fluidity of contrasting value forms means that participants cannot always perceive the 'worth' of their practice. While the cascade model has clearly delineated forms of value aligned with the four distinct modes of engagement, my participants do not. Through a final critical application of Boltanski and Thévenot (1987/2006), I suggest that the fluidity of engagement within my model results in conflicts of value amongst the differing 'worlds' of digital media engagement for my participants.

By revisiting my challenge to generation within this study, I also bring together my critical interrogation of the popular 'digital native' discourse, suggesting that the differing levels of technological proclivity, savvy, and understanding amongst my respondents can be analysed through a disaggregated cultural capital argument within my data. Drawing on existing concepts (Bourdieu, 1986; Rojas et al, 2000; Selwyn, 2004; Tony Bennett et al, 2008; Park, 2017) I establish my reading of digital cultural capital to understand why participants enter the cascade model at one of three levels, and how engagement is negotiated from this entrance point. Finally, by culminating my interrogation of generation across the cascade model, I will suggest that that this narrative has become entrenched within neoliberalism due to the dominance of this ideology in capturing engagement within my data. Before considering this argument, however, I will reintroduce the cascade model, analysing how participants hybridise multi-modal digital media engagement.

Participants' fluid negotiation of engagement within the cascade model

In my cascade model, the modes of engagement are positioned in levels, with respondents entering via any of the top three levels: fan-like, guarded, and routinised engagement. As participants enter the cascade model, they can hybridise their engagement downwards with any/all of the modes below. Participants enter at a specific level, and do not engage upwards, due to their levels of digital cultural capital, alongside their specific dispositions towards 'right' and 'wrong' engagement, which is further aligned with a respondent's position regarding neoliberal selfhood. As an example, a participant entering at the second level, guarded engagement, would not move upwards and engage in a fan-like manner, as this would conflict with their disposition towards self-branding. My theorisation of how participants enter and negotiate the model, however, does not imply any set order in which respondents move through the modes of digital media engagement. Within their engagement, participants do not work their way down the cascade model, but move fluidly

between modes in an unordered manner. The movement between modes represents the duality of structure and agency, as respondents are not always purposeful in their consumption choices, particularly those that negotiate numerous forms of engagement, with agency thus occurring through the structures of both my model and the digital media marketplace. The cascade model is pictured below:
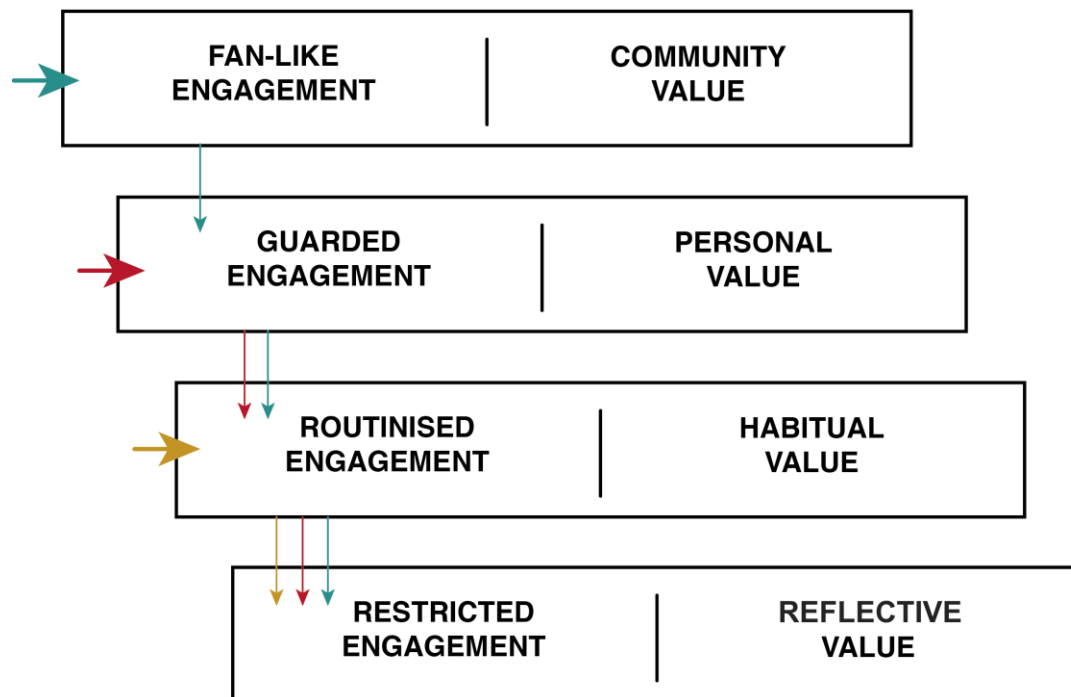
Figure 13: The cascade model of digital media engagement and value

In this section, I will analyse how digital media engagement is hybridised by comparing respondents' differing approaches at each level of the cascade model. Through an application of the neoliberal framework utilised throughout my study, I demonstrate how participants entering the cascade model at various levels conceptualise the modes of engagement differently, depending upon their neoliberal dispositions. My participants' differing understandings of the four modes demonstrates the depth of digital media engagement within my data, and the various multi-modal approaches at play within my participants' consumption. To demonstrate this depth, I will begin at the top of the cascade model, by considering fan-like participants' 'impression management' of perceived right and wrong practice (Ellison et al, 2007; Mazer et al, 2007; Tong et al, 2008; Walther et al, 2008; Zhao et al, 2008; Zywica and Danowski, 2008), and how this affects their hybridisation across additional modes of engagement.

'Right' and 'wrong' – how participants' hybridisation differs through fan-like and guarded conceptualisations of engagement

While I suggest that hybridisation of digital media engagement is fluid and unordered, the position via which my respondents enter the cascade model is hugely significant in capturing how engagement is hybridised and conceptualised. For participants entering at the topmost level, their perception of 'right' engagement aligns with productive self-branded practice, which is inherently neoliberal through its focus upon "individual choice and personal responsibility'' (Ouellette, 2004, p. 232). Within this neoliberal context, self-branding through social networking sites encourages the user to 'remodel' and 'reshape' the self, according to Rose, "so that it can succeed in emitting the signs of a skilled performance" (1999, p. 243; see also Davies and Bansel, 2007, p. 252). For participants who enter at the topmost level, this productive, skilled engagement is a form of 'impression management', according to Jenny Rosenberg and Nichole Egbert, whereby users' identity performance is based upon the "impressions an individual wants to portray" (2011, p. 3; see also Leary, 2004). As this is a 'goal-directed' practice (Rosenberg and Egbert, 2011, p. 4; Berger, 2006) skilled self-branding for fan-like participants is seen as not only correct, but ultimately aspirational (Illouz, 2003; Hay, 2005; McCarthy, 2005). As Rose notes, the aspirational self-governance of neoliberalism results in "a constant scrutiny and evaluation of how one performs", whereby "the construction of one's personal part in social existence [is] something to be calibrated and judged in its minute particulars" (1999, p. 243). For participants who engage in a fan-like manner, self-branding represents a productive construction of self-identity within a digital community (usually social networking sites), and therefore 'right' digital engagement is linked inherently to the successful and skilled performance of an identity-based lifestyle. This is further reflected by participants' exercising of agency, which, within the fan-like mode of engagement, is linked to this type of productive consumption.

This is not to suggest that fan-like participants *only* engage in a productive, self-branded manner. Conversely, those that entered the cascade model via the top level demonstrated the most varied engagement practices of all my respondents. As illustrated by the regular use of interview extracts from Laura, Giannis, and Sophie throughout discussion of the various modes of engagement, all respondents who engaged in a fan-like manner hybridised this mode with guarded and routinised engagement, while the majority also engaged in a restricted manner too. While these respondents' goal-directed impression of neoliberal self-branding did not stop them from engaging in varied, less productive ways, many were critical of practice they considered to not align with this understanding of 'correct' engagement. The aspirational restricted engagement discussed in the previous chapter demonstrates this, as

fan-like respondents sought to alter their practice through self-controlling measures, re-aligning themselves with neoliberal selfhood. The position at which these respondents enter the cascade model, therefore, directly influences how other, less-productive modes of engagement are negotiated and conceptualised. While unproductive engagement occurs regularly (and indeed, more often than productive self-branding for my participants), it is held in lower esteem by respondents who believe 'right' engagement to be productive, which I will develop later in this chapter.

This understanding of 'right' and 'wrong' engagement as aligning with neoliberalism, however, contrasts with respondents entering via the second level in the cascade model (guarded engagement), whose preference for reconstructed 'connected' privacy, I framed as an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood. For these participants, 'right' and 'wrong' engagement is oppositional to the respondents who enter at the fan-like level, with guarded participants' differentiated exercising of agency occurring through the restoration of private boundaries. As opposed to positioning skilled, self-branded identity performance as aspirational, this practice is considered by participants who enter via the second level to be over-sharing or over-personal. This situated resistance to neoliberal selfhood occurs as an attempt to reclaim privacy, as Glynn, who claims to be "very limited and selected" in his engagement demonstrates: "I don't really post links to articles - I use Facebook a lot for Messenger, but I don't really post a lot. If I read an article, I wouldn't be inclined to share it immediately. I don't share a lot of things like that". Glynn's distinction between Facebook and its messaging platform is particularly indicative of connected privacy, demonstrating a guarded preference for interpersonal communication over public productive engagement. Emily and Oksana, who both entered the model via guarded engagement, also demonstrated a similar disinterest in public communication. Oksana, when asked if she engages productively with *The Times* website, replied: "Personally I never do it - I never write comments, I never share stuff from *The Times*. I use it for informative reasons only". During her interview, Oksana offered a clear critique of the cultural dominance of self-branding, positioning her own practice as reactionary to neoliberal selfhood:

> It's hard to separate [private and public boundaries online]. Where do you stop? Where is the limit to what you have to show to other people? Is it the picture of yourself without makeup for a charity, or is it an update of every single argument you had with your boyfriend? Where do you stop? Where is the limit?

This essential difference between the modes of engagement demonstrates a neoliberal thesis and antithesis, whereby respondents who engage in a fan-like manner align with neoliberal selfhood and guarded participants resist this ideological position. While this

assessment reflects the contrasting approaches to participants who enter the model via these two respective levels, it does not address fan-like participants who hybridise their favoured productive, neoliberal practice with the apparently oppositional unproductive guarded engagement. It would not make sense to suggest that participants who aspire to goal-directed productive self-branding would also resist neoliberal selfhood within the span of their digital media engagement. This, of course, is not the case, and while the above respondent examples demonstrate an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood, for those that also engage in a fan-like manner, guarded engagement instead represents a form of respite or 'leisure' (Drotner, 2008) from the 'labour' of neoliberal self-branding (Duffy, 2017), which I will address in the following subsection. Therefore, while participants who enter at the top of the cascade model engage productively, they do not engage haphazardly, specifically performing their identity through carefully managed and skilled production. While a respondent may be productive within a certain platform, they will also operate more unproductively within others. Thomas, who as noted in the previous chapter, compared his regular engagement with Reddit to drug addiction, did not often engage in a productive, fan-like manner with this platform:

Interviewer:	Obviously Reddit is a place where you can share your opinions, is that something you do much?
Thomas:	Not really, I tend to lurk and just read what other people are saying. Every now and then I'll chime in. That's one of the things I like about posting online, it's got kind of anonymity and just being able to say what you want without worrying about repercussions. Not that I have a habit of saying things that I'm worried about having repercussions over!
Interviewer:	You've outed yourself as a troll!
Thomas:	[laughs] Damn it! But no, every now and then I get involved but it has to be something I feel particularly strongly about, or something I'm knowledgeable about to get involved on that level, whereas I'm happy to just read and take it in really.

Much of Thomas' productive output is reserved for other identity-driven platforms, namely Facebook and Twitter, as occurs within much existing literature (e.g. Harper et al, 2012; Page, 2012; 2014; Zappavigna, 2012; 2014a; 2014b; Lambert, 2013; Dayter, 2014; 2016). As Thomas notes: "I tend to post quite a lot on Facebook and Twitter. I've got my personal Facebook page, which is for people I actually know, and I've got my music page which is for promoting myself as a musician. I tend to post quite a bit on both of those." As he performs two specific identities on Facebook, Thomas' less productive use of Reddit is linked to a

desire for privacy, as he playfully notes with his discussion of anonymity. If he does occasionally comment within this platform, such engagement is not driven by his carefully managed identities elsewhere, and is thus not a form of self-branding - which is reflective of the personal value of guarded engagement for Thomas. There were similar examples from participants who enter the cascade model via the topmost level, including Laura, who was particularly critical of over-sharing:

> I don't appreciate what a lot of people say [laughs]! I don't care what you had for lunch! Some people share the most ridiculous things. I don't really think Facebook is the space for private things. A lot of people share quite private things like, 'oh my god, my boyfriend cheated on me', and I'm like, 'keep that to yourself' [laughs].

While Laura's statement could be considered as a critique of self-branding, during her interview, Laura also discussed her own productive engagement on other platforms, discursively labelling this practice as the sharing of 'private things' in both the above othering of overuse, and in a more positive personal context:

> I do blog about loads of private things on Tumblr. It's not really, really personal, but I do diary entries and say about how my week has been, how my life is going in general, but then I'll also post my opinion on certain things that have happened in the world. I'm a lot more controversial on Tumblr because I follow people and they follow me who have personal interests, so it's a safe space because no one's going to argue with me or tell me I'm wrong.

In *Disconnecting with Social Networking Sites* (2014), Ben Light discusses a respondent whose engagement with Tumblr is almost identical to Laura's:

> The desire for anonymity of identity was also talked about in terms of why people might not choose to connect accounts. Nina spoke of how she was able to share much more personal information via her Tumblr account than with Facebook or Twitter because she used a pseudonym. Moreover, she explained that because of this she would not connect her Tumblr accounts with Twitter or Facebook where she shared different kinds of information with others about herself. In effect she wanted to reveal different aspects of herself in different places and engaged in disconnective practice to allow for this. (p. 104)

Laura's differing levels of engagement across specific platforms aligns with Light's analysis, with Laura identifying the appropriate networks in which she can engage in a productive fan-like, and 'disconnective' guarded manner. It is apparent, therefore, that unlike the respondents whose guarded engagement represents a resistance to neoliberal selfhood, Laura does not find productive, personal engagement problematic. She is, however, critical of incorrect, haphazard sharing that does not align with the careful self-branding that

respondents who enter at the top of the cascade model aspire towards. Laura's othering of 'wrong' productive engagement, therefore, differs conceptually to respondents such as Oksana, and illustrates the contrast between participants entering via the first and second levels in the cascade model. For Thomas and Laura, guarded engagement does not represent an ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood, as both respondents still engage in self-branding on other platforms. Conversely, this privacy-conscious engagement exists outside of both participants' performed identities, representing leisure time from the labour associated with regular productive engagement.

Self-branding as work and the leisure of guarded engagement

Framing digital engagement as labour, or 'work', occurs within numerous studies of productive identity performance and digital media, as Brooke Erin Duffy discusses in *(Not) Getting Paid To Do What You Love* (2017):

> With the rapid ascent of interactive technologies, social theorists have drawn attention to the economic and social productivity - that is, the *labor* - of online consumer-audiences. Portmanteaus such as pro-sumption, produsage, pro-am, and playbour capture the nuanced ways in which production and consumption, work and play, and amateurism and professionalism bleed into one another in digital contexts. (p. 46, emphasis in the original)

There are numerous theories of digital labour, including Gina Neff's 'venture labor' (2012), Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas F. Corrigan's 'hope labor' (2013), Nancy Baym's concept of 'relational labor' (2015), and Duffy's 'aspirational labor' (2017), the latter of which refers to the "narratives of creative expression [and] relationship-building in online and offline contexts, and modes of individualized self-expression" (p. 48). While these various digital labour discourses have key theoretical differences, they focus generally on users whose online work represents career-oriented networking with a specific imagined future goal in mind. As Duffy notes within her own respondents, this type of engagement represents 'labour-intensive' work (p. 74):

> As my interviewees detailed the launches of their social media projects and chronicled the ambitions driving their robust brand-building efforts, it became patently clear that these activities were not 'just fun'. Above all else, aspirants articulated their social media projects as *work* - albeit a highly pleasurable form. (pp. 51-52, emphasis in the original)

For Duffy's respondents, despite this type of work being labour-intensive, it is ultimately "enjoyable and eminently expressive" (p. 46), as it represents the "energy and human

capital" involved in users' building of "affective networks" (p. 79). While these approaches to framing digital labour as a professional networking tool recognise the tension between work and leisure, they do not consider personal self-branding within broader digital media engagement. For my respondents who entered the cascade model via the topmost level, self-branded production transpired outside of a professional context, and the work associated with self-branding occurred personally, as well as professionally. Amongst the 13 respondents who engaged in a fan-like manner, personal self-branding is as much a form of digital labour as the career-led forms noted above, and while many of the above theories (particularly Duffy's) consider digital labour to be in some way pleasurable, many of my respondents often noted the unenjoyable aspects of this type of digital *personal work* (particularly Laura, Giannis and Samantha). In Chapter 4, I suggested that participants engaging at the guarded level of the cascade model were aware of the 'exploitation' inherent within certain digital platforms (Andrejevic, 2002; 2009; Fuchs, 2014), and that personal value was linked to unproductive engagement as a resistance to the extraction of surplus value (Marx, 1867/1976) through self-branding. This is perhaps reflected by the lack of pleasure occasionally involved in personal work, which, while offering community value to my participants, is nevertheless a form of labour, with "the product of the labourer… incessantly converted, not only into commodities, but into capital" (Marx, 1867/1976, p. 716).

For many fan-like respondents, therefore, guarded engagement offers respite from this labour-intensive (and sometimes unenjoyable) personal work, as it does not require productive self-branding, and therefore provides a form of 'leisure'. Existing theories of leisure within digital media literature, however, fail to capture this nuance, focusing instead on the 'fundamentally social' nature of 'leisure-time engagements' (Drotner, 2008, p. 175), as Karl Spracklen demonstrates: "Leisure is a communicative act - that is, an act that is undertaken freely, often in free interaction, agreement and discussion with others" (2015, pp. 75-76). Joan Abbott-Chapman and Margaret Robertson also note: "Leisure spaces for digital natives are connected 24/7 and (largely) independent of context and place" (2009, p. 244). These varying definitions of leisure, as communicative and permanently connected, however, do not align with my respondents who seek leisure time away from the productive personal work associated with fan-like engagement. Guarded engagement is intentionally non-communicative, through the reclamation of public and personal boundaries. The significance of this *private leisure*, therefore, for participants entering via the top level of the cascade model who choose to engage productively, and thus subject themselves knowingly to this capitalist digital environment, differs to existing concepts, as it represents temporary respite from labour-intensive personal work, without rejecting productive self-branded engagement.

My theories of *personal work* and *private leisure* further indicates the differing conceptual positions regarding guarded engagement for respondents entering the cascade model at the top two levels. While the practices of guarded engagement remain the same for all participants, the different neoliberal perceptions of 'right' and 'wrong' practice demonstrates the diversity within a singular mode, with engagement varying greatly due to a respondent's positioning within the cascade model. As these respondents' engagement hybridises further down the cascade model towards routinised engagement, however, these conceptual differences become less obvious, due to the tacit alignment of the everyday with neoliberalism. For participants entering via either of the top two levels in my cascade model, routinised engagement occurs as neither an acceptance nor resistance to neoliberal selfhood. There are, however, still key differences in how participants at these top two levels subsequently hybridise the other modes of engagement from their routinised practice, which is related to the conceptual positions I have outlined in this section.

Hybridising routinised engagement conceptually for participants entering via the top two levels of the cascade model

A key similarity for participants who hybridise routinised engagement alongside the modes higher up the model is the facilitation of routine without knowingly conforming to or challenging neoliberal selfhood. While this commonality occurred throughout respondents, regardless of their position within the cascade model, there were subtle differences within participants' specific routinised experiences, which are indicative of their conceptualisation of engagement. To illustrate this, I will contrast two specific participants' discussion of blogging, with Macey and Glynn demonstrating the nuances within similar routinised practice. While other respondents' practices also aligned with this observation, as my analysis in this section focusses on two participants only, I understand that I cannot draw a larger conclusion across my data from these examples, and as such, I use this case study to indicate a likely finding. Macey, who enters the model via the fan-like mode of engagement, regularly noted her preference for engaging with many platforms unproductively, which she attributed to her job as a digital content writer, believing that her career has made her 'cynical' regarding digital media consumption. Unproductive engagement, therefore, served as a 'leisure tool' for Macey: "Because I work in [the media industry], I think I'm fairly cynical about how I go about consuming [media], and I'm quite aware that a lot of the stuff I read is probably not very good, or not very believable, but I see it as a leisure tool really". While this engagement aligns, to an extent, with the above concept of private leisure (albeit within a differing mode),

as I initially discussed in Chapter 3, Macey's routinised practice can often lead to more productive, fan-like engagement:

Macey: I guess my engagement with [digital media], apart from actually writing blogs myself, is quite passive in terms of I'll read things; I'll very rarely comment on threads and interact with people about things… I've never been one to sort of actively engage with content online, but if I see something that I do find interesting, I tend to use that to write a blog about, rather than directly interacting with that.

Interviewer: Right, I see - is there a reason do you think?

Macey: I guess quite a lot of the time it's either the laziness of not wanting to log in to something's comment features. Or if, again, say I read something about feminism, and I found it really interesting and I had strong opinions on it, I'd feel like they were better used in a long-form piece written by myself, than as a comment. I feel that if I have something to say, I'd rather say it on my own platform where it can be referred to or read by other people, rather than kind of lost in a stream of consciousness. I guess that's pretty pretentious and self-important [laughs]!

While Macey notes a preference for unproductive engagement across most platforms, this practice often leads to productive output through blogging, meaning she is still productive in her outlook. Macey's hybridisation of routinised with fan-like engagement through blogging contrasts with Glynn, who enters the cascade model a level below Macey, at the guarded mode of engagement, and rarely engages productively: "A lot of what people are interested in, a lot of what I like, I deem them as personal. It's not that I don't wish to share it, but your network's built up of so many other people, sometimes professional, it's too easy if you post something to confuse it all". While Glynn and Macey share a similar preference for unproductive engagement, Glynn's discussion of his attempts to blog (which I previously discussed in Chapter 4) offer a clear contrast to Macey's:

Glynn: I have two blogs that I started up on Wordpress - probably two articles in the last year. That's about it.

Interviewer: Does it just not interest you?

Glynn: I thought it might be good for research, I thought it'd be another platform to present my own findings and work, but everyone does it. I kind of don't like things that everyone does in that respect. It's quite easy to have a blog, and have an opinion, and sometimes I'm a bit cautious about my opinion. Sometimes I don't want to think too much about that opinion as well, especially on a blog site. I wrote something about Scottish independence about a year ago, I had good fun and I

thought it was a really good article, but me sharing it? No. I'm very cautious about it.

Despite his *disinterest* in productive engagement, Glynn does not *disapprove* of this type of media, discussing various blogs he enjoys during his interview, and noting that blogging, in general, is "a positive thing" and that there are "some really good blogs out there". While Glynn also shares Macey's reluctance to engage productively with most platforms, his failed attempts at blogging, despite enjoying this media form, demonstrates a clear conceptual difference in routinised engagement due his position within the cascade model. Both Macey and Glynn discussed a preference for unproductive engagement, but the differing outlook of each participant impacts upon how this mode of engagement is subsequently hybridised across the model. In this section, I have considered how digital media engagement is negotiated from the top two levels of the cascade model, demonstrating the range of engagement in my data, which is conceptualised depending on the position via which participants enter the model. In the following section I will consider the respondents who enter at the third level (routinised engagement) to understand the significance of unproductive 'non-fan' engagement, and how this digital media engagement is hybridised differently.

Hybridising routinised and restricted engagement and participants' tacit neoliberal conceptualisation of 'correct' practice

Respondents who entered the cascade model at the third level (the lowest entrance point within my model) displayed the smallest engagement range of all my participants, including a small group who only engaged in a routinised manner - a unique exception to my model, which I will explore in this section. Firstly, however, I will establish the differences between participants' range of engagement at this lower level of the cascade model, in comparison to those who entered via the fan-like and guarded modes of engagement. Critically, engagement for respondents entering at this routinised level differs to others, due to their status as (in essence) 'non-fans' - with engagement not linked to specific fandoms, or productive community involvement, but instead embedded within the everyday. Joke Hermes suggests that non-fans' status as media outsiders offers a greater sense of fluidity in terms of engagement: "Being a fan requires discipline, whereas being a non-fan is considerably more open and nebulous a category and practice, involving considerable flow in and out of different viewing positions" (1995, p. 74; see also Lembo, 2000). My data, however, does not align with this notion - suggesting that the engagement of 'non-fans' (or, more accurately, respondents whose engagement was led by the everyday, as opposed to

the productive Fiskean definition of fandom) is more limited. The differences between my data and existing concepts, such as Hermes (1995) or Jonathan Gray (2003), is perhaps because this work, which attempts to expand engagement beyond productive fans, is still rooted within fandom. In existing literature, non-fans exist in relation to fans, as Mark Duffett exemplifies:

> To different degrees, everyone participates in the practices that are used to define fandom, including the use of media to define identity… we should really be thinking about a kind of continuum that stretches between the least committed fans and the most dedicated ones. (2013, p. 44; see also Harrington and Bielby, 1995)

For Duffett, there is no obvious notion of non-fans, but rather a scale of fandom, whereby everyone is defined in some way by their level of fan-like dedication. Similarly, while Rhiannon Bury meaningfully complicates analyses of engagement beyond the focus upon textual productivity I have previously critiqued within existing work, her participatory continuum is still defined by levels of fandom, with even those at the 'least involved' end of the spectrum still maintaining an 'ambient affiliation' with 'fan communities' (2018, p. 101). In my data, however, many respondents' engagement does not relate to fandom in any sense. Instead, for participants who enter the cascade model via the routinised level, digital media engagement is not indicative of fandom, it is instead rooted in the everyday, demonstrating that even within more nuanced discourse, engagement is still defined by fandom. Due to the analytical limitations of this approach, my data suggests that researchers need to assess digital media users in a different context, away from definitions of fandom. I have addressed this requirement through neoliberalism, positioning respondents within this dominant ideology as a method of understanding the reasons for their engagement. By considering the so-called 'non-fan' respondents who enter the cascade model via routinised engagement within this neoliberal framework, it was possible to understand the reasons for their engagement away from notions of fandom. With the exception of a small group of respondents who engaged only in a routinised manner, most participants entering via this level hybridised routinised with restricted engagement in a uniquely differentiated way to other respondents in the cascade model. At this level, participants' conceptualisation of 'correct' engagement differed as it did not align with their own practice. Richard offers an example through a negative othering of overuse, particularly with regards to content he considers frivolous:

Interviewer: Is there anything you dislike about Facebook?

Richard: Oh god yeah, loads of stuff! It's the beauty of knowing exactly what the people you like are doing, and you get the horrors of knowing what

> the people you don't want anything to do with are doing [laughs]! The things that are posted around to multi-millions of people: 'pass this on if you want to save Jesus from a second death' or whatever, I don't want to know any of that!

Richard's critique is extremely similar to Laura's earlier criticism of users over-sharing 'ridiculous' content, othering the type of uninhibited productive engagement that does not conform to the careful self-branding that fan-like respondents aspire to. Despite his criticism, however, Richard continues to conduct social surveillance on people who he considers as friends, and those he does not want 'anything to do with'. While Richard is critical of such practice, viewing this content is still an important part of his routinised engagement, even if he does so critically. Lena also discusses her similar cultural surveillance of people she does not consider as close friends in her network:

Interviewer: What would you say you like most about using Facebook?

Lena: I guess it's because you get to find out what people are up to. Yeah, it's the curiosity of how people are getting on with their lives.

Interviewer: Yeah - curiosity.

Lena: Yeah. I think yesterday I looked up profiles of people I haven't seen in months, but I thought, 'oh let's see what they're doing', and, 'that's a very stupid photo', or, 'oh they've changed their hairstyle 15 times in one year, I wonder what's happened!' [laughs]. Things like that - so it's not being in touch with people at all then is it? It's just stalking them really.

Interviewer: Yeah, but you feel like you are keeping in touch, if you know what they're doing?

Lena: Yeah, well they're making it available for everyone to look at, and I think if you post 1500 photos in a year then you want it to be seen by other people.

While Richard was negative towards frivolous overuse, Lena is critical of personal over-sharing, which could be read as both a criticism of self-branding in general, or of careless, poorly managed output. Other respondents were also critical of personal over-sharing that occurred too frequently, or within the 'wrong' platforms (which was almost always

Facebook), including Kayleigh [33], a 28-year-old sales administrator, who labelled such practice as 'attention-seeking':

> Kayleigh: Sometimes some of the people who you're friends with post stupid stuff, and you're just like, 'shut up'!
>
> Interviewer: [laughs] Like what?
>
> Kayleigh: I don't know, just people who write, like on Facebook, 'oh I've had such a terrible day', then they don't put why. So somebody will ask why, and they'll be like, 'oh I'll send you a personal message'. Well, then why bother putting it on? It's right attention-seeking behaviour, and I know I can just delete them but it's annoying, and you're like, 'get a grip'!

Kayleigh demonstrates a clear othering of digital media practice that does not align with carefully managed self-branding. The main difference, however, between respondents such as Laura, Thomas, and Joseph, who enter higher up the cascade model, and those in the above examples, is that the former, fan-like respondents were critical of their own negative practice and used restricted engagement as self-reflection to reaffirm their neoliberal position. For respondents like Kayleigh, Lena, and Richard, none of this othering of 'negative' practice occurred to improve the self, as none of these respondents engaged in a more productive, self-branded manner. Unlike productively engaged participants within the fan-like mode of engagement, respondents entering via routinised engagement (the third level in the cascade model) do not strive to achieve the type of practice they are idealising as 'correct'. Even for participants whose engagement does not intentionally align with neoliberal selfhood, these critiques of negative practice suggest that concepts of 'right' and 'wrong' are inherently embedded within neoliberalism, regardless of whether a participant strives to achieve this version of the self.

As I noted at the outset of this section, however, there was also a small group of three respondents - Lee, Ella, and Alison - entering the cascade model at this level who did not hybridise routinised engagement with any other mode. The difference between respondents entering via routinised engagement who hybridise, and this small group who do not, is their perception of neoliberal-aligned practice as aspirational. For participants who engage in a

---

[33] Kayleigh works at a car dealership alongside Ella (another respondent). Kayleigh's interests include going to the gym, and socialising with her friends. Like Ella her digital media engagement was almost exclusively app-based and occurred casually during the day.

restricted manner (regardless of the position via which they enter the cascade model), critiquing 'negative' practice occurs to renegotiate their neoliberal position in some way. Within this small group of respondents, who do not cascade down the model, there is no such intention. This is not to suggest that these respondents are apolitical, or rejecting neoliberalism, but that engagement is so embedded in the everyday there is no need for aspirational self-critique. Ben Highmore describes such everyday digital media engagement as 'distraction':

> Media reception in a world saturated with diverse formats doesn't encourage a lack of concentration; rather it makes available a scattering of attention and a mobile and absentminded concentration. It might be better, then, to see distraction as a form of promiscuous absorption, of attention flitting from one thing to another, and multiplying its objects. (2011, p. 134)

This absentminded, scattered approach to engagement does not mean these three respondents are in some way culturally lacking, instead their routinised engagement is deeply entrenched within the habits formed to traverse a vast media marketplace. For these participants, this was often framed discursively as 'ease' or 'convenience', with routinised engagement led by time constraints, and the convenience associated with habit, as A.H. Halsey suggests: "Continuity is no accident… social customs, like personal habit, economize human effort. They store knowledge, pre-arrange decisions, save us the trouble of weighing every choice afresh" (1986, p. 8). While routinised engagement is embedded in the everyday for all my participants, this small group of respondents value the continuity of routine and the convenience of habit over aspirational self-improvement, and thus do not critique their own practice through restricted engagement. Due to this specific conceptualisation of routinised engagement, alongside lower levels of 'digital' cultural capital (as I will argue later in this chapter), these three respondents do not hybridise their engagement, offering a unique exception within the cascade model.

In this chapter so far, I have assessed the variety of fluid digital media engagement amongst my participants, demonstrating how consumption is conceptualised differently depending upon the position via which respondents enter the cascade model. In addition to proposing four modes of engagement within my model, I have also introduced four distinct forms of value. As participants move fluidly between the differing modes of engagement, these aligned values are also negotiated alongside. In the following section, I will assess how participants negotiate the contrasting values of their engagement, suggesting that participants do not always perceive the various 'worths' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 215) of their fluidly hybridised value.

Conflicts of value through hybridising contrasting neoliberal dispositions

As I introduced the modes of engagement across the previous chapters, the aligned concepts of value brought with them differing, often conflicting forms of worth to the other modes within the cascade model. While these differences were unimportant when value was artificially separated, once reintroduced into the cascade model, these contrasting concepts mean that many participants struggled to delineate the value of their practice. This was particularly apparent further down the cascade model, when all participants had entered, and many were negotiating numerous forms of value. In this section, therefore, I will explore participants' negotiation of value within their digital media engagement, bringing together my application of Boltanski and Thévenot (1987/2006) to understand the conflicts involved with fluidly negotiating differing values.

As participants move between the modes of engagement, various practices are valued for facilitating or fulfilling different purposes and requirements. Joseph offered a particularly explicit example, as he clearly distinguished the various modes of engagement he negotiates on a day-to-day basis, identifying "meaningful communication", "idle" browsing, and "instinctual" use, while David and Rae [34] also noted a similar fluidity of engagement. The productive communication Joseph refers to offers a clear form of community value, while 'idle' browsing and 'instinctual' use are more obviously linked to habitual value. Joseph negotiates these values throughout his general digital media consumption, depending upon the purpose he requires, although, as noted in the previous chapter, routinised engagement can occur during otherwise valuable time, meaning Joseph attempts to restrict this engagement. This is not to imply, however, that hybridising engagement is ordered and controlled, with much of this fluidity not linked to participants' agency, but occurring instead due to inherently uncontrollable 'mediations of mood' (Highmore, 2013, p. 427).

Moods are 'pervasive' and 'internal', according to Ben Highmore (2013, p. 434) and represent the nuances in subjectivity and feeling that "determine how things can count for us in our everyday concerns" (Guignon, 1984, p. 237). The significance of mood in my participants' digital media engagement is apparent, particularly when considering how engagement is negotiated within everyday routines through a structurationist approach, with

---

[34] Rae, 23, is an international student in the placement year of a sandwich course, studying textiles. Originally from Florida, Rae moved to Huddersfield to study, and has family in the USA and Canada. Rae is a self-identified furry, a fan of anime, and former pro gamer, but enters the cascade model via the guarded level, engaging with her fandoms mostly unproductively.

agency bound not just by digital media structures, but other pervasive factors as well. It is, however, difficult to assess such a subjective concept, as Charles Guignon notes: "Moods are modes of feeling where the sense of subjectivity becomes diffuse and sensation merges into something close to atmosphere, something that seems to pervade an entire scene or situation" (1984, p. 236). The unordered manner in which Giannis moves between modes of engagement demonstrates, in part, the impact of mood upon his digital media use:

> I think it depends on my mood and time of day as to how I'm using Twitter. I find it does seem to happen in days rather than necessarily particular events. Most days I find I'm using it to look at content, and maybe I'll reply to a couple of things. Then other days I'll use it as kind of a social tool, and other days I'll go on tweeting sprees and tweet 20-30 times, reply to loads of stuff, tweet loads of things, while other days it's just catharsis.

Due to the pervasive, subjective concepts beyond a participants' agency, such as mood or feeling, engagement can vary dramatically across short and long periods of time. As Rita Felski and Susan Fraiman note: "Mood circumvents the clunky categories often imposed on experience: subjective versus objective, feeling versus thinking, latent versus manifest" (2012, p. vi), and as such, the value of this engagement varies considerably as well. While Giannis was able to identify the reasons for his hybridisation in the above example, several respondents struggled to articulate why they engaged in such a varied way, with the value of engagement becoming blurred. While the cascade model, therefore, outlines four delineated, theorised forms of value, the fluid movement of respondents through the differing modes of engagement means that the value of engagement is not always as clear to participants as it appears to be within the model.

The difficulty participants had in fully articulating such fluid engagement can also be assessed within the context of the interview setting, as Catherine Kohler Riessman notes: "Informants do not reveal an essential self as much as they perform a preferred one, selected from the multiplicity of selves or personas that individuals switch among as they go about their lives" (2003, p. 337). As I have discussed throughout this study, my respondents reacted to the cultural and social structures of the interview setting by performing an 'idealized' (Goffman, 1959, p. 23) impression of their 'preferred' identity in several different ways. Additionally, as participants struggled to articulate the fluidity of their engagement, contradictions inevitably occurred within discussion of their differing practices when hybridised across the model. Attributing these contradictions to mood is an effective way for participants to narrate and justify incoherent differences in everyday engagement practices, with respondents thus able to self-present their unconnected practices as coherent. According to Erving Goffman:

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. (1959, p. 10)

During the interviews, I specifically asked participants to discuss their favourite or most frequently used digital media platforms. Despite this, however, many respondents struggled to articulate the reason for, or value of, the platforms they identified as 'favourites'. When Emily was asked why she preferred Twitter over other social networking sites, she replied: "I don't know! Now you've asked me to think about it, I'm not sure why I like it so much". Similarly, Glynn, despite discussing his fluid engagement with the political magazine *New Statesman* (which occurred both in a guarded and routinised manner), struggled to articulate the value of this engagement beyond utility: "I don't know really. [*New Statesman*'s] kind of convenient for my reading. It does what it does; there are a lot worse things. I don't really have much of an opinion, other than the positives - the utility of it". For some respondents, there was no conceivable value associated with the platforms they engaged with in a routinised manner, with their consistent, habitual use instead discursively linked with longevity. Will provides an example of this discourse: "I use it for the sake of using it with Facebook. Because I've used it for so long, it's hard to not use it". Matthew also suggested his long-term engagement with his favourite wrestling website (which he did not name) was mainly linked to ingrained habit over any other specific reason:

Interviewer:	Why do you use [this platform] over other similar sources? Is there any particular reason?
Matthew:	Just luck, well not luck, just… erm… I looked up a wrestling site and that was it, and I think you get into habit. I've used it ever since then. It's not the best one and it's not the worst one. It's just an average one [laughs]!
Interviewer:	Yeah, it's just--
Matthew:	It's just something I've always used, and I think you get into a routine of, like, reading the same column writers and you kind of think you can trust… I think most wrestling websites are the same. If you get column writers, you like a couple, but I think it's mainly out of habit. I found it in like 2006, and I've just used it ever since.

These respondents' engagement with specific platforms varied across the differing modes in the cascade model, depending upon when and why they were engaging, alongside other

factors including mood. Despite this, much of the interview discussion focussed on one type of value - that associated with habit and routine - even when numerous forms of value were at play. This difficulty in understanding fluidly negotiated value created a sense of conflict for participants, whose hybridised engagement occurs often beyond their agency, blurring the differing contexts of value and engagement in the cascade model. Throughout this study, I have used Boltanski and Thévenot's (1987/2006) axioms of worth to theorise the specific forms of value that are aligned with each mode of consumption. To understand the clashes of value within my participants' fluid digital media engagement, therefore, it is essential to consider how worth is negotiated among differing contexts by Boltanski and Thévenot. In their polity model, the differing contexts are referred to as 'worlds', within which a common worth is shared, with the plurality of value represented by the existence of numerous worlds:

> The problems raised by relations among worlds cannot be dismissed by associating the various worlds and the worths they manifest with different persons, cultures or milieus, the way classical sociology treats relations among values and groups. To attach persons to worlds would mean pinning them down in a single form of worth… human beings, unlike objects, can manifest themselves in different worlds. (p. 215)

Boltanski and Thévenot illustrate these differing contexts through various examples, including the 'domestic world' (a person's home life) and the 'industrial world' (a person's work life) (p. 227). Across these contrasting worlds, the order of worth differs substantially, and as such, when disagreements occur in a singular world, agreements can be reached based on the 'higher common principle' (p. 66), or the shared form of value associated with that world:

> Despite disagreement about associations, people may be able to come to terms, that is, to reach an understanding - a momentary, local understanding - in such a way that the disagreement is smoothed over even though it is not resolved by reference to a common association. (p. 33)

When disagreements occur across worlds however, the differing order of worth between contexts results in a more complex conflict of value, as there is no shared higher common principle available to form an agreement:

> In a differentiated society, each person regularly has to confront situations stemming from distinct worlds, has to recognize such situations and prove capable of adjusting to them. Every differentiated society may be qualified as 'complex', in the sense that its members have to possess the competence needed to identify the nature of a situation and to navigate situations arising from different worlds. Since the principles of justice invoked are not immediately compatible, their presence in a single space

leads to tensions that have to be resolved if the action is to take its normal course. (p. 216)

Conflict arises due to the differing forms of value between contexts, which, Boltanski and Thévenot suggest, requires careful and complex negotiation to resolve, and remains precarious, due to the compromises between the orders of worth. Within my study, similar conflicts emerged due to participants' fluid movement between differing forms of value, with respondents struggling to decipher the specific context of their value, and thus failing to resolve the tensions between these incompatible worlds. This conflict of value led to participants being unable to articulate the depth of value at play across their fluidly negotiated 'worlds' of engagement. While the cascade model includes differentiated forms of value, the fluid negotiation of the model means that value is not necessarily conceptualised in such a clear manner by my respondents. Throughout the interviews, regardless of the position via which participants entered the cascade model, much of the discussion focused upon everyday, routinised practices. Despite the extent of this engagement, there existed considerable self-critique of routinised practices, with participants devaluing this type of digital media consumption, in part, due to its dominance within their routines. This was often framed discursively as 'sad' by respondents, including Sophie: "I get annoyed with myself for using social media too much… it's such a part of your daily life, and I just kind of think that it's really sad that it is".

Laura also devalued her routinised engagement in similar terms: "This is when it gets really sad; I look at Facebook first thing in the morning, check all my notifications, respond to anything if I need to, and last thing at night as well [laughs]". In these examples both Laura and Sophie critique the regularity and apparent essentiality of their routinised engagement. For Laura in particular, much of this consumption is linked to the cultural anxiety towards experiencing boredom (see p. 147), with her perception of routinised practice as 'sad' due to this engagement failing to explicitly align her with neoliberal selfhood. Previously, I suggested that routinised engagement is only tacitly embedded within neoliberalism and, as such, it is unclear to respondents how this practice aligns with their conceptual neoliberal standpoint. The other three modes of engagement, conversely, offer clearer positions in this framework, with the associated forms of value (community, personal, and reflective) able to be conceptualised clearly by respondents based on their neoliberal disposition of 'right' and 'wrong' engagement. Participants' various critiques of routinised engagement are indicative of the unclear way in which this mode appears to position respondents within neoliberalism.

Habitual value, therefore, differs to the other forms of value within the cascade model, as many participants struggled to perceive the worth of routinised practice. The regularity at which this mode of engagement occurs, alongside its unclear alignment with neoliberal selfhood, results in tension between the perceived lack of worth inherent within habitual value, and the other more explicit forms in the model. The above critiques of routinised engagement, therefore, occur due to respondents failing to resolve the tensions that arise between fluid negotiation of seemingly incompatible worlds. Routinised engagement, however, does carry habitual value, which some participants (such as Matthew and Will) were able to articulate. The devaluation of routinised engagement, and the subsequent conflict of worth within participants' fluid digital media engagement, is not because of a lack of value in routinised practice, but rather due to the unclear neoliberal position of this consumption. Participants resultantly privileged the modes of engagement that aligned more clearly with their standpoint regarding neoliberal selfhood (either as an acceptance of, or resistance to this ideology), which mirrors existing discourse within participatory culture and fan studies, as well as the 'digital natives' concept that overemphasises textual productivity. In the following section, through disaggregating cultural capital, I will challenge this assumption in my data, suggesting that the characteristics associated with 'digital natives' can be linked less to generation, and instead within my specific reading of digital cultural capital (Rojas et al, 2000; Park, 2017).

Repositioning the factors associated with 'digital natives' discourse alongside disaggregated digital cultural capital

As I have demonstrated, the level via which respondents enter the cascade model has a considerable impact upon how engagement and value are subsequently negotiated and conceptualised. So far I have analysed this using neoliberal selfhood to indicate the differences that exist across the model. Through unpacking digital native discourse, however, this concept can be further developed, suggesting that participants' technological savvy and understanding does affect their position within the cascade model, and thus their conceptualisation of digital media. Through my methodological approach, which considers 20-30-year-olds who fit into the so-called 'digital native' age range (see Prensky 2001; Akcayır et al, 2016), I suggest there is no singular generation of united 'digital natives' in my data. Instead, the differing levels of technological proclivity, savvy, and understanding (as well as other assets, such as exposure and opportunity) can be extrapolated to arguments surrounding cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bringing notions of individualised class into my argument, in this section, I establish my own reading of digital cultural capital, using Neil Selwyn (2004), Tony Bennett et al (2008), and Sora Park (2017), alongside Viviana Rojas et

al (2000), to disaggregate the overly broad and comprehensive notion of cultural capital, and further assess participants' position in the cascade model.

The concept of cultural capital was developed by Pierre Bourdieu, as one of several forms of capital that contribute to a person's position in society. While used widely in sociological research to refer to various cultural assets, in *The Forms of Capital* (1986), Bourdieu positions cultural capital as unequivocally linked to accrued knowledge and skill: "To possess the machines, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose he must have access to embodied cultural capital; either in person or in proxy" (p. 50). Cultural capital, as noted by Bree McEwan and Miriam Sobre-Denton, can be accrued through the exchange of other forms of capital:

> Cultural capital might be gained via social capital: Resources can be accrued by accessing enduring social network connections. Putnam (2002) developed the concepts of "bonding social capital" associated with one's established social network and "bridging social capital," derived from engaging with diverse others. (2011, p. 254; see also Ellison et al, 2007)

While cultural capital provides a useful framework to analyse the impact of cultural factors upon a person's position in society, it has numerous limitations. As such there are various criticisms of cultural capital, not least as it "implies a single unified cultural hierarchy where everyone recognizes and evaluates culture in the same way" (Aschaffenburg, 1995, p. 28), which, "conflates matters that are best kept distinct" (Bennett et al, 2005, p. 29; see also Goldthorpe, 2007). The use of this theory in existing work, therefore, particularly regarding digital cultures and communities, is potentially problematic as it packs together numerous political, cultural and social assets. In *Culture, Class, Distinction* (2008), Tony Bennett et al argue for a 'disaggregated' approach to cultural capital, to address this issue:

> We are cautious regarding the explanatory reach of the concept of cultural capital, suggesting that the types of assets that Bourdieu folds into one another in relations of necessary connection in his account of the bourgeois habitus are ones that are best disaggregated in order to better assess the extent of their relative scope and effectivity. (p. 29)

Through this disaggregation of cultural capital into smaller sub-forms, the concept becomes more effective as an analytical tool, according to Bennett et al:

> By distinguishing these different types of cultural capital and the different orientations that may accompany them, it will be possible to present a more complex and empirically adequate account of the operation of cultural capital in the contemporary world. Of course, we do not suggest that all these forms of cultural capital are

equivalent in the degree of advantage or 'profit' they afford those who hold them. They are clearly capitals of different powers and orientations of different degrees of persuasiveness: assets that can be cashed or traded in different markets, some of which have very local and specific effects, while others play more central roles in the operation of labour markets and their relations to the schooling system. (p. 31)

As Bennett et al suggest, the numerous factors that are folded together within cultural capital hold varying 'powers' and 'orientations'. Unpacking cultural capital beyond its existing limitations allows for a more contemporary understanding of the differing forms of capital at play, particularly within the digital media marketplace. As such, there are numerous examples of disaggregated 'digital capital' within existing literature, including Sora Park (2017), and Jane Seale et al: "Digital capital focuses less on issues of access and more on the social and cultural resources that people draw on to enable them to be a valued and functional member of society" (2015, pp. 121-122). Neil Selwyn also uses a similar version, which he refers to as 'technological' cultural capital to consider the digital divide:

There are specific technological forms of cultural capital that are useful to the information age, such as technological skills, 'know-how' and socialization into the technoculture via family and the household… Such forms of cultural capital can be seen, for example, as the difference between having access or ownership of a technology, and engaging with and making meaningful use of that technology. (2004, p. 353; see also Jung et al, 2001, p. 513; Rojas et al, 2004)

While not approaching this concept from a generational standpoint, Selwyn's use of cultural capital to understand the technological skill divide bears clear similarities to the digital native argument by using notions such as 'know-how', access, and ownership of technology. Compare this discourse to John Palfrey and Urs Gasser's description of 'digital natives', who "all have access to networked technologies. And they all have the skills to use those technologies" (2008, p. 1), and the usefulness of digital capital in this context becomes clear. As numerous scholars have suggested, including Sue Bennett et al (2008), Michael Thomas (2011) and danah boyd (2014) the digital native argument "overstates the differences between generations, and understates the diversity within them" (Buckingham, 2011, p. x). According to Laura Robinson et al:

As the media would have it, digital inequality does not exist for children and adolescents, all of whom stay glued to their smartphones 24/7 and navigate the digital world with ease. Such a picture does not jibe with reality. In fact, there are significant variations among children and adolescents in terms of access, usage, and skills. (2015, p. 571; see also Cotten et al, 2014)

My data also supports this notion, as I was unable to identify a singular generation of 'digital natives', due to the differing levels of technological capabilities amongst my 34 participants, all of whom are within the same age cohort. Although my data is gathered from a relatively small number of respondents, there are enough inherent differences of technological capability, savvy and understanding across the model to indicate a reading of digital cultural capital that is more complex than a skills divide between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' (Prensky, 2012, p. 69). My reading of digital cultural capital aligns with a critical application of both Sora Park (2017), and Viviana Rojas et al's notion of 'techno-capital' (2000), where levels of capital are aligned with 'techno-dispositions' "which interact… in a reciprocal, complex relationship with techno-capital" (p. 9). While Rojas et al's discourse disaggregates cultural capital, it is not separated from other versions of capital:

> Accumulation of cultural capital about computers creates techno-capital, which then affects one's disposition to use the technology. However, if alternative social and cultural capital tells someone that computer use is not relevant or desirable for him or her, then his or her techno-disposition will be away from computer use. (p. 9)

Techno-capital is linked, therefore, both to notions of competency, skill and understanding, as well as dispositions and interest, as Park also suggests: "Digital capital is a predetermined set of dispositions that influences how people engage with digital technology" (2017, p. 27). Rojas et al note that while respondents within a specific age group share similar levels of techno-capital, their individual 'techno-dispositions' differentiate engagement 'at the everyday level' (p. 18). Within my data there is a wider range of digital capital, with respondents' levels of cultural capital differing at various points in the cascade model. However, as with Rojas et al's and Park's approaches, the specific dispositions of my various respondents are highly significant regarding how digital capital is mobilised, and therefore the position at which respondents enter the cascade model. While participants entering at different modes can have similar levels of digital capital (e.g. fan-like and guarded engagement), they may have contrasting dispositions towards digital media, which are, in turn, connected to other forms of capital, as well as their neoliberal standpoint. Class also remains relevant to these specific dispositions "in sustaining and articulating the kinds of individualised identities that do matter to people" (Savage et al, 2001, p. 888), with "inconspicuous and individualised" notions of class (Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017, p. 5) a form of neoliberal, highly individualised distinction within my analysis. Due to my focus on critiquing generation, more work is needed to examine this notion of individualised class within a neoliberal digital media marketplace, which I will discuss further in the Conclusion to this thesis.

These dispositions are also linked to respondents' awareness of the expectation that so-called 'digital natives' should be tech-savvy and skilled, which impacts upon their engagement. The apparent lower levels of digital capital I identified amongst the several respondents entering at the third level of the cascade model (routinised engagement) means that they cannot hybridise this type of engagement upwards, as they do not have the same levels of understanding and savvy as the respondents entering above them. As Park notes:

> Those who are equipped with digital capital can quickly adapt to new digital devices, even if they are yet to acquire the necessary digital literacy. The mere presence of digital capital enables them to obtain digital literacy efficiently, whereas those who do not have sufficient digital capital might be overwhelmed by the obstacles they have to overcome in order to reach the desired skill levels. (p. 27)

Due to higher levels of digital capital, respondents who enter the cascade model at the topmost level (fan-like engagement) can be aligned most closely with the imagined typical 'digital native', whereby carefully managed self-branding demonstrates participants' understanding of the digital media marketplace. Furthermore, participants such as Samantha and Laura also noted an awareness of this discourse, and the expectation that they ought to consume media in an intellectualised, tech-savvy, and semiotically productive manner. The specific dispositions of respondents who engage in a fan-like manner with digital media, alongside high levels of digital capital, therefore, aligns with neoliberal self-branding.

Conversely, while respondents who enter the cascade model via the second level (guarded engagement) have similar levels of cultural capital to those above them, their differing approach to engagement is linked to contrasting dispositions regarding neoliberal selfhood, and lower levels of social capital, conflicting with the monolithic digital native argument that reduces these differences to a shared generational habitus. My data suggested that these respondents demonstrated a similar understanding of the digital native expectation (that they ought to be tech-savvy and intelligent in their use of digital media), but this was conceptualised through a knowledgeable resistance to self-branding. Through disengaging with the neoliberal emphasis upon productive engagement, participants entering via the guarded mode of engagement demonstrated a differing performance of capital, which was nevertheless reflective of their technological knowledge, 'access', and 'skills' (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008, p. 1). This specific disposition also impacts upon the level via which respondents enter the cascade model, and why they do not hybridise this consumption with fan-like engagement, despite similar levels of digital capital.

As I noted at the beginning of this section, the respondents who entered the cascade model via routinised engagement generally displayed lower levels of digital capital, through a relative lack of technological proclivity, savvy (and more importantly, interest) with many of these respondents atypical to the so-called 'digital native'. These lower levels of digital capital are manifested in participants' conceptualisation of digital media as everyday routine, with many respondents entering at this level not displaying any awareness of the digital native narrative, engaging with media in a less complex manner. While based on a relatively small dataset, this reading of digital cultural capital is more complex than discourse that positions capital as a skills divide between high and low levels, or as 'digital natives' versus 'digital immigrants'. Instead, both the levels of digital capital and specific dispositions of participants, which occurred across my data, alongside their neoliberal alignment, are significant in capturing the position via which respondents enter the cascade model, and how engagement is subsequently negotiated. My reading of digital capital, and its alignment with neoliberalism, further indicates how various forms of distinction - such as class, capital, and generation - have become linked to this dominant ideology within my analysis.

Summarising the hybridisation of value and engagement within the cascade model

The purpose of this chapter was to reintegrate the previously separated modes of value and engagement within the cascade model, using my critique of generation alongside the neoliberal framework employed throughout, to understand how respondents fluidly hybridise their digital media engagement, and the value of this consumption. Participants enter the cascade model at one of three levels, hybridising their engagement downwards, which is captured by their levels of digital capital, specific dispositions, and position regarding neoliberal selfhood. During their digital media engagement, participants move fluidly between modes in an unordered manner, often without purpose, reflecting the duality of structure and agency. The different levels via which participants enter the model directly impacts how engagement is negotiated, with respondents' conceptualisation of 'right' and 'wrong' practice linked to this position, which is in turn embedded within neoliberalism. While fan-like respondents' aspirational 'correct' practice aligns with neoliberal self-branding, participants entering at the second level resist this notion, with 'correct' engagement instead linked to reconstructed privacy. Entering at the third level, conversely, is neither an acceptance nor resistance of neoliberal selfhood, however, most of these respondents' understanding of careful self-branding as 'correct' practice, which does not align with their own engagement, demonstrates how the everyday is tacitly embedded within neoliberalism.

This diversity of neoliberal positions, and the conceptual differences relating to the position via which respondents enter the cascade model, illustrates the depth and range of digital media engagement in my data, with participants hybridising their engagement in many different and specific ways (including some who do not hybridise at all). Value is similarly negotiated in a fluid and unordered manner, with the various forms of value difficult to articulate for many respondents, causing conflicts between the differing contexts of worth for participants who negotiate incompatible 'worlds' of value. Finally, by unpacking generation in relation to the cascade model, I further established the significance of neoliberalism in my analysis. Bringing together my critique of the 'digital natives' paradigm, I presented my reading of digital cultural capital, which expands beyond generation in my data, and is linked within my neoliberal framework, further cementing neoliberal selfhood as an analytical category within my study. Having fully developed my various analytical threads, in the Conclusion to this study, I will bring together these concepts to assess the value of digital media engagement for my participants through generation and neoliberalism.

Conclusion

In this study, I have explored the multi-modal concepts of digital media engagement and value using an original cascade model, grounded within participants' interview discourse. Through this analysis, four key analytical threads have emerged: digital media engagement, the value of this practice, generation, and neoliberal selfhood. In Chapter 1, I established these threads separately, outlining the limitations of singular concepts of value, and the focus upon productivity in existing discourses of engagement through structuration theory. Value and engagement were brought together for the first time in Chapter 2, through the introduction of my cascade model, demonstrating an empirical approach to complicating engagement, alongside the previously established value framework. This was further developed in Chapter 3, by positioning community value and fan-like engagement as aligning with neoliberal selfhood. Through examining my participants' levels of cultural capital, I also established the limitations of 'digital native' discourse.

In Chapter 4, I introduced guarded engagement, alongside personal value, as an antithesis to the modes presented in Chapter 3, suggesting that guarded engagement also represents a resistance to neoliberal selfhood. The apparent apathy some of my respondents discussed towards some digital media further established the limitations of the digital native characterisation, despite similar levels of cultural capital for respondents entering the cascade model via the top two levels. The remaining modes of engagement and value were introduced together in Chapter 5, as they represented differing, negotiated positions between the two neoliberal polarities of fan-like and guarded engagement. In this chapter, I further developed my argument regarding the multi-modality of engagement, challenging the overemphasis upon textual productivity within existing discourse and demonstrating the range of engagement in my data. Respondents who entered the cascade model at this level demonstrated lower levels of cultural capital and tech-savvy, failing to align with the digital native characterisation.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the modes of engagement and value were reintegrated into the cascade model, where I explored the fluid hybridisation of participants' digital media engagement, including the clashes of value that were at play. I linked neoliberal selfhood to my critique of generation, as well as engagement and value, by suggesting that this cultural politics had become intertwined with other forms of distinction in my analysis, such as class and cultural capital, due to the significance of neoliberalism in understanding participants' conceptualisations of engagement. In this Conclusion to the study, I will bring these

developed analytical threads together to summarise the value of digital media engagement through generation and neoliberalism for participants in this study. Having concluded my analysis, I will then reflect upon the limitations of this study, before considering directions for future research and, finally, the implications of this work upon the field. Before this, however, it is essential to review the study's key findings across each analytical thread, beginning with digital media engagement.

The significance of the cascade model in understanding participants' multi-modal digital media engagement

From the outset of this study, I have critiqued existing discourse, which is embedded in Fiskean definitions of audience productivity (1992), by proposing four original modes of engagement. In this section, I will briefly summarise these modes, before concluding how participants hybridise their practice within the cascade model, and the significance of this fluid digital media engagement. In Chapter 3, fan-like engagement was introduced, which, while aligning most clearly with existing literature, carried its own specific nuances through the five interlinked practices that emerged from participant discourse. The first, *platform-specific practice of identities*, showed respondents splitting their identities across specifically selected platforms, performing to differing 'imagined audiences' (Brake, 2012, p. 1069). Some participants also *policed their communities*, noting a sense of responsibility within their online networks, leading them to regulate debate as they felt necessary. Additionally, the third practice, *affirming fan enthusiasm through media that enrages*, further suggested that not all fan-like engagement was linked to pleasure (e.g. Miron, 2003; Raney, 2003; Tamborini, 2003; Vorderer et al, 2004; Gorton, 2009), as participants often *engaged online with friends and strangers*, both positively and negatively. Finally, *self-branding*, which I argued was inherently communicative and participatory (Gandini, 2016) as opposed to 'new vanity' (Twenge and Campbell, 2009), connected these practices, with fan-like engagement representing participants' agency through carefully managed socially-motivated identity performance.

Conversely, guarded engagement, which I introduced in Chapter 4, was rooted instead within participants' self-motivated desire for connected privacy, and a differentiated exercising of agency through 'connected privacy' (Kitzmann, 2004). Some respondents who entered the model at this level, however, could still be aligned with 'ordinary fandom', while others displayed no fan-like interests at all. There were four practices associated with guarded engagement. The first, *unproductive engagement*, linked lurking discourse (e.g. Nonnecke and Preece, 2000) with participants' resistance to self-branding through a secure

sense of self. Additionally, through *restored private engagement*, participants sought to reinstate boundaries online for various reasons, including: a desire for privacy, politeness, a rejection of self-branding, and a pleasure in anonymity. Participants at this level also clearly identified 'good' and 'bad' media content, the latter of which was enjoyed ironically as a *guilty pleasure*, or, in some cases, led to *apathetic disengagement*, with both concepts demonstrating a knowledgeable performance of cultural capital. Guarded engagement, I suggested, developed lurking discourse, as respondents carried out identity work through their unproductive engagement, which was framed discursively as 'I know better'.

The remaining modes of engagement moved analysis beyond fan studies literature, particularly routinised engagement, which is instead rooted in the everyday, with *casual and impulsive use* intertwined with habit. The second practice of routinised engagement, *boredom and filling time*, was linked to respondents' difficulty in experiencing empty time, with even the smallest moments filled by idle browsing. Finally, *digital surveillance*, which I aligned with the normalisation of 'everyday' online surveillance (Trottier, 2012; Kennedy, 2016; Lyon, 2018), was framed by my respondents as a social activity, where 'catching up' through 'stalking' or 'spying' has become an essential part of the social media experience. Finally, within restricted engagement, participants reflected on their digital media consumption, attempting to limit 'negative' practice, discursively splitting their engagement into lived and aspirational versions of the self.

By integrating these concepts into the cascade model, I then assessed how my participants moved between the four modes throughout their regular digital media engagement. Firstly, I established that engagement does not follow the model in a structured manner, instead it is fluid and unordered. Crucially, however, the position via which respondents enter the model is highly significant in understanding how digital media engagement is subsequently hybridised and conceptualised by them. Resultantly, clear ideological differences could be identified between participants' entering the model via the fan-like, guarded, and routinised levels. Respondents demonstrated differing perceptions of 'right' and 'wrong' digital media practices, which aligned with their position in the cascade model, influencing how other modes of engagement were hybridised from a respondent's starting point within the model. As an example of this, for participants entering via guarded engagement, this level represents a resistance to productive identity performance, while fan-like respondents' guarded engagement is instead *private leisure* from the *personal work* associated with self-branding. This was also apparent for participants who entered at the third and final entrance point (routinised engagement) for whom engagement was less varied, including a small

group of three respondents whose strong sense of value in routine and convenience led to them not hybridising this mode of engagement with any others.

The cascade model proved highly significant in capturing participants' approach to engagement. Respondents' understanding of 'right' and 'wrong' digital media practice was inherently linked to the position via which they entered the model, with subsequent engagement tied to this notion. Engagement, I suggest, is not linked to fandom, but to the way in which participants are positioned within the cascade model, and ultimately, as I will argue later, with regards to neoliberal selfhood. This is illustrated by a number of respondents (e.g. Elise, Victoria, and Claire) whose engagement was productive, despite not identifying as 'fans', or discussing any fannish engagement with communities, texts or topics. Conversely, respondents such as Rae (a self-identified furry, former professional gamer, and anime fan) and Matthew (a fan of WWE, *Dragonball-Z,* and Chelsea FC) were entirely unproductive, demonstrating the limitations of conventional fan-centric definitions of engagement, and the nuances that occurred even within the top two levels of my data. Digital media engagement within this study is not only multi-modal, but differs between each participant, depending upon the position via which they enter the cascade model. Having summarised the significance of digital media engagement in my data, I will now address the next analytical thread, in order to understand the value of this engagement for my participants.

Participants' blurring of multi-modal value through fluid digital media engagement

I began my approach to value in Chapter 1 through a theoretical framework, which established how the concept would be employed in this study. Through close analysis of Karl Marx and Marxist media discourse, the gift economy and contemporary digital applications of this theory, as well as Jean Baudrillard and Pierre Bourdieu, I established the limitations inherent within adopting a singular discourse of value. As such, I turned to Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1987/2006) for a plural value system in which people can move between differing contexts. Building upon this framework, in this section I will briefly summarise the four original forms of value I align with engagement, before concluding how my respondents value their digital media engagement. In Chapter 3, I analysed the *community value* of fan-like engagement, which draws on social capital, through the significance of engaging with others, and sign value, due to the status implicit with self-branding. While there is an apparent tension between self-branding and community value, I suggested that this identity performance is not a practice of 'new vanity' (Twenge and Campbell, 2009, p. 142) for my participants, but a form of communication

within valued digital networks. As such, community value represents a distorted version of the 'common good' and 'common humanity' in Boltanski and Thévenot's polity model (pp. 74-76), where respondents' individualism through their alignment with neoliberal selfhood is performed in order to maintain social connections with others. For participants who enter the cascade model via the fan-like level, value is rooted in engaging with other users through productive self-branding.

In Chapter 4, I analysed two inflections of *personal value*, firstly as self-directed personal preference, and secondly as a resistance to neoliberal selfhood. Personal value lies in unproductive private engagement, which is linked to a desire for the restoration of private and personal boundaries online. While some participants aligned with Boltanski and Thévenot's notion of 'self-centred pleasure' (p. 75) through their preference for privacy, for others, personal value was less about pleasure, but indicative of a specific ideological resistance to neoliberal selfhood. I further aligned this position with the work of Karl Marx (1867/1976), noting that this specific inflection of personal value was linked to my participants' knowledge of digital media platforms, whose intentional unproductive engagement offered a further resistance to the exploitation of surplus value from their digital media consumption. This approach to understanding the value of guarded engagement develops Boltanski and Thévenot's model, within which 'self-centred pleasure' stands opposed to the 'common good', as my concept of personal value does not compete with or restrict community value. While community and personal value were analysed through neoliberal selfhood, the value of routinised engagement was instead rooted in the everyday, with *habitual value* offering distraction to participants during moments of boredom, filling otherwise empty time and facilitating routine. Theorising this approach, I used Paul Booth's Digi-Gratis economy (2010) to demonstrate how two conflicting economies can become intertwined, despite representing vastly differing contexts, applying this concept to the relationship between the everyday and neoliberalism. Finally, *reflective value*, which is aligned with restricted engagement, represents what Boltanski and Thévenot term a 'higher state of worth' (p. 76) with participants valuing the opportunity to assess their practice, and realign themselves in the neoliberal framework.

Applying these distinct forms of value in the cascade model offered further insight into participants' hybridisation of digital media engagement, highlighting the significance of 'mood' as a variable. Despite participants fluently negotiating the different modes of engagement, some respondents struggled to articulate the complicated ways in which value was hybridised in parallel, due to the fluidity of their digital media engagement blurring the contrasting value contexts. Concluding my application of Boltanski and Thévenot, I

suggested that value was reduced by various participants to one order of worth - habitual value. During the interviews, participants often focused on digital media facilitating routine, with routinised engagement being regularly critiqued and thus devalued by some respondents, who failed to resolve the tensions that arose through fluid negotiation of incompatible 'worlds' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1987/2006, p. 215). While the value of each mode of engagement is clearly delineated within my cascade model, value is not always clear within participants' lived digital media engagement, which I will develop during the later discussion of neoliberal selfhood. Before continuing with this analysis, it is essential to first summarise how generation impacts upon the value of digital media engagement.

Complicating notions of generation through digital capital in the cascade model

In Chapter 1, I suggested that approaching the value of digital engagement through critically interrogating generation enabled a challenge to the popular, and I would argue unhelpful, 'digital natives' discourse. This was developed in Chapter 2 through the detailed profiling of my respondents, both in terms of their peer networks, and their age at the time of interview. I began my critique of generation in Chapter 3, noting that while fan-like respondents could be aligned with a more typical 'digital native' characterisation, their technological capabilities were more indicative of higher levels of cultural capital than an age-related digital habitus in my data. Within the guarded mode of engagement, the heightened sense of participant apathy conflicted with the depiction of 'digital natives' as enthusiastic and productive (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008), demonstrating the limitations of the 'digital natives' thesis. Instead, despite high levels of cultural capital, some respondents entering via the second level used their technological savvy to disengage, with these factors alone not being enough to confirm digital native status.

As the model progressed to the routinised mode of engagement, participants generally displayed lower levels of cultural capital to those higher up the model, suggesting that any notion of a united generation of 'digital natives' is reductive within my data. Instead, the differing levels of technological capabilities, and the various attitudes towards engagement amongst my respondents, are better understood through my reading of digital cultural capital, aligning with Sora Park's assertion that "this precondition of digital engagement is crucial to understanding why and how people differ in the way they adapt to their digital surroundings" (2017, p. 26).

Applying this in my own analysis, levels of capital, alongside participants' dispositions towards engagement, are significant in understanding the position at which respondents

enter the cascade model. These dispositions can be linked to the emphasis within existing literature that this age cohort ought to be tech-savvy, with participants' varying positions embedded in neoliberal selfhood, as I will assess in the following section. By realigning the factors often associated with 'digital natives' discourse within a disaggregated cultural capital argument, I considered how participants' tech-savvy, digital capability, and specific dispositions impacted upon engagement. These factors are important in capturing the level via which participants enter the model, and why they cannot move upwards - due to differing levels of digital capital, and contrasting dispositions with the mode above. As such, in terms of understanding the value of this engagement, the factors often associated with generation in 'digital natives' work became embedded within neoliberal cultural politics in my analysis. This crucial analytical thread, therefore, links my various key arguments together into a final conclusion.

Using neoliberal selfhood to understand value, engagement, and generation

As the study progressed, the significance of neoliberal selfhood in my analysis became increasingly apparent, with this concept entrenched across my data. This began with the introduction of self-branding (Marwick, 2013) - a key theory in understanding the value of fan-like engagement - aligning with neoliberal selfhood through participants' careful identity performance, which represented their agency to act within platform structures. In Chapter 4, I positioned guarded engagement and personal value as the antithesis to this ideological position, aligning respondents' desire for reinstated boundaries online and their knowledgeable performances of cultural capital with a specific cultural resistance to neoliberal selfhood. This was further reflected by participants' differentiated exercising of agency at this level through connected privacy, with agency across both these modes of engagement demonstrating how participants 'reproduce' and 'alter' the structures of the digital media marketplace (Webster, 2011, p. 48) through their specific neoliberal dispositions.

With fan-like and guarded engagement positioned as neoliberal polarities, in Chapter 5, I aligned the remaining modes of engagement between these two extremities, with each representing a different negotiated position within this ideological framework. Participants' cultural anxiety towards empty time was linked to neoliberalism unknowingly, with boredom being due to a cultural politics that constantly promotes more exciting lifestyles (Moran, 2007, p. 216). While routinised engagement is rooted in the everyday, the dominance of neoliberalism means that the everyday is tacitly embedded within this cultural politics, with participants' agency to fill time through routinised practice bound within the structures of

neoliberalism, further establishing the significance of this ideology across my analysis. Restricted engagement, however, was more explicitly neoliberal, with respondents' critique of their practices linked to self-improvement. Participants' discursive splitting of the self, into lived and aspirational versions, was based on their dispositions towards neoliberal selfhood, opening up a potential Marxist reading of reflective value, which was embedded in capitalist notions of engagement, with my participants perhaps exploited by this media environment. By restricting perceived 'negative' practices in this way, participants were able to realign themselves with their aspirational position regarding neoliberal selfhood as either 'right' or 'wrong'.

Once these positions are examined within the cascade model, the overarching significance of neoliberal selfhood becomes increasingly apparent. Respondents' position in the model is captured by their conceptualisation of 'right' and 'wrong' engagement, which is tied to levels of digital cultural capital and specific dispositions. Both of these factors are further rooted within neoliberalism, whereby respondents' technological dispositions and conceptualisation of engagement align with their position regarding neoliberal selfhood. My use of structuration theory throughout this analysis further illustrates the differing neoliberal dispositions associated with each mode of engagement, and the duality of participants' agency within the neoliberal structures of the digital media marketplace, and my cascade model. For participants, the 'correct' form of engagement at the level via which they enter the model, and how their resulting hybridisation is conceptualised, are inherently connected to how that mode of engagement is positioned neoliberally. At the fan-like level of engagement, the 'correct' approach to engagement aligns with self-branding, while at the guarded level, resisting neoliberal selfhood is perceived as 'correct'. For the majority of participants entering at the routinised mode, careful self-branding was perceived as 'correct', but not necessarily aspirational, despite respondents' own practice not aligning with this disposition, due to the intertwined relationship between the everyday and neoliberalism.

Such is the implicit nature of this relationship, that the practices respondents identified as 'negative' within the restricted mode of engagement were almost always associated with routinised consumption. This is perhaps because the contrasting forms of value associated with fan-like, guarded and restricted engagement all represent a clearer neoliberal position than routinised consumption, with community, personal, and reflective value more easily aligned with participants' differing perceptions of 'correct' engagement. Habitual value, being only tacitly embedded in neoliberalism, was less overtly related to participants' ideological standpoint. The other three modes of engagement, conversely, offer more explicit positions in this framework, with the associated forms of value (community, personal, and reflective)

able to be conceptualised clearly by respondents based on their neoliberal disposition of 'right' and 'wrong' engagement. Though other forms of value align participants with neoliberal selfhood in some way, participants' various critiques of routinised engagement demonstrate the unclear way in which this practice appears to position respondents with neoliberal selfhood. While the value of digital media engagement is multi-modal, it is not always clearly perceptible to my respondents, who privilege certain forms of value, due to the cultural politics of neoliberalism. The concept of neoliberal selfhood, therefore, links my analytical threads together, which I will summarise in the next section, before considering the limitations of this study.

The value of digital media engagement

Thus far, I have summarised the various narrative threads that run throughout my study, demonstrating how they tie together, and enabling an original challenge to a number of concepts within existing discourse. Firstly, I suggest that engagement is multi-modal and fluid, and the differing ways my participants hybridise their digital media engagement is dependent upon their position within the cascade model, which is linked to levels of digital capital, specific dispositions and, crucially, respondents' alignment regarding neoliberal selfhood. Digital media engagement in this study, therefore, complicates the emphasis upon textual productivity in existing work, with engagement influenced by how participants enter, and subsequently negotiate, the cascade model, and hence neoliberal ideologies. As I discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, such an approach is not a suggestion that audience productivity is normative within existing literature, or that there is a binary between unproductive and productive use. Rather, I argue that a greater significance is placed upon this element of audience practice within much fan studies work, as argued by Jonathan Gray (2010) and Rhiannon Bury (2018), with my cascade model addressing this existing limitation through exploring engagement as plural.

Additionally, I present value as multi-modal, with the fluidity of digital media engagement meaning that participants often struggle to articulate the value of their practice, due to the multivalent way in which it can align with neoliberal selfhood, causing conflicts of value between differing contexts. Respondents' subsequent privileging of productive engagement and devaluing of routinised practices, mirrors the aforementioned productive emphasis in existing literature, demonstrating the need to explore the plurality of value to further explain this conflict between my data and this prominent user and scholarly discourse.

Having started from a position of exploring the varied practices within a specific age group, through my chosen interview method and the data I collected, I also argue that the notion of 'digital natives', which continues to circulate (Ball et al, 2017; Dutton and Reisdorf, 2017; Nelissen and Van den Bulck, 2017; Gee et al, 2018), is unhelpful in exploring the variety of digital media practices across my respondents. As such, my data suggests that there is no united digital habitus amongst my respondents, and conversely, the main factors associated with 'digital natives' - technological savvy and capabilities - can be understood through assessing levels of digital cultural capital and participants' specific dispositions towards engagement. These factors are embedded in my respondents' neoliberal alignment, capturing the level via which participants enter the cascade model, which is crucial to understanding how engagement is hybridised. While the factors associated with generation, when repositioned within my reading of digital capital, were significant to my model, due to the way in which participants' digital media engagement was shaped by their levels of capital, this methodological approach to understanding digital media engagement became entrenched within the dominant cultural politics of neoliberalism, demonstrating its essentiality in understanding why and how my participants value and negotiate digital media engagement. While I did not set out to study this relationship, the emergence of neoliberalism as a key factor in my analysis emphasises the value of 'surprise' within 'ethnographic' (Nightingale, 1996) interview studies and furthermore, the value of my methodological approach, of "reaching knowledge not prefigured in one's starting paradigm" (Willis, 1980, p. 90). The value of digital media engagement for my generational participants, therefore, lies within the multi-modal negotiation of the cascade model, according to each user's perceived position within the framework of neoliberal selfhood.

Limitations of the study

In addition to the various significant findings presented thus far, this study does have certain limitations which are worth considering alongside its original contribution. As such, in this section, I will deliberate upon both the methodological and theoretical limitations of my work, before concluding the thesis by discussing directions for future study, and critically, the impact of this work upon the field. Before this, however, I wish to highlight four limitations of data gathering: the number of respondents (which potentially limits the scope of my data), the problems I faced regarding recruitment, the timeframe in which I collected my interview data, and the performative aspect of interviewee self-presentation. I will also discuss three further limitations of data analysis: creating my analytical model after the fact of my data collection, respondents' discourse that did not fit neatly into the model, and the choice of pursuing validity over generalisability, including my decision not to include a secondary

quantitative dataset. Finally, I will reflect upon three theoretical limitations: the potential use of axiology within my value framework, exploring my model through a fully Foucauldian approach, and the singularity of neoliberalism in my analysis. I will begin this discussion by reflecting upon the methodological restrictions associated with this project.

While recruiting large numbers of respondents is not essential in qualitative research, which prioritises 'thick' description over generalisability (Geertz, 1973), my analysis has been grounded within the discourse of a relatively small number of participants (34). The concepts I present, therefore, are perhaps more limited in their scope than a larger study of audience engagement would have been, although it is noteworthy that other studies in this field have utilised even smaller numbers (e.g. Eighmey and McCord, 1998; Sandvoss and Kearns, 2014). To ensure the validity of my approach through grounded theory, I continued interviewing until 'theoretical saturation' had been reached (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and further data collection would shed "no further light on the properties of their theoretical category" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 167). While I am not disappointed with the quality of data or the subsequent analysis, the limitations regarding the scope of this project should be taken into consideration. Similarly, as I discussed in Chapter 2 (see p. 74), recruiting participants outside of specific communities and fandoms was challenging, as many failed to perceive the value in speaking at length about media use that was so embedded within their routines. While this made for an interesting point of analysis, it did complicate recruitment, and after the first round of interviews, I had recruited 21 respondents, which was fewer than I had hoped for. Expanding recruitment through multiple entrance points offered a more efficient strategy, although the resulting size disparity between the interview clusters (see p. 82) demonstrates the difficulty of my approach.

There are other recruitment methods that may have yielded a greater number of respondents, and it is worth considering these alternatives to offset the limitations of my chosen approach. While recruiting outside of communities allowed me to look beyond specific interests, I could have sought respondents from a specific fandom, and structured my questions around their wider digital media practices. While this approach may have improved the process of recruitment, it is unlikely I would have observed the same variety of engagement, while I would also have been unable to recruit respondents who did not define themselves as fans. Similarly, recruiting specific tech consumers would have offered the same benefits and potential limitations, due to the focus on one specific approach to consuming media. Conducting an ethnography of public locations and/or specific media use offers another entrance point into digital engagement, although by selecting a specific location or platform, I may have limited my recruitment potential, with my expansion into

additional locations demonstrating the problems of a location-led approach. While these methods offer viable alternatives, it is unlikely they would have resulted in the same depth of data, while maintaining the aim of exploring media engagement outside of specific fandoms. The approach I selected, while challenging, was the best method of recruitment for the specific aims of this project. The nature of the study, perhaps, was more problematic to recruitment than the chosen method.

As an additional limitation of my data collection, due to my interviews being conducted over a specific time period, which I have been explicit about (see p. 74), my respondents' digital media engagement is, in essence, a snapshot of that particular moment. Both digital media and technology are relatively fast moving, and as such, there may be differences in my participants' discourse if I were to gather the data now. Some participants, for example, may have since changed how they engage, which could impact upon the cascade model. I would also anticipate a greater emphasis being placed on video and streaming if I were to speak to respondents now (e.g. Leijonhufvud, 2018; Martini, 2018), due to the rapid rise in online video viewing/streaming since the interviews took place, particularly on Facebook (Peterson, 2015).

Furthermore, there are also inherent limitations involved with the type of data collection I have chosen to pursue, with interview studies inevitably impacted by the performativity of the interview setting, and how participants choose to approach self-presentation in this context. As I have discussed throughout this thesis, my respondents performed numerous versions of their identities throughout the various interviews, which were articulated differently across my data, depending on context and purpose. In Chapter 3, I noted that respondents entering the cascade model via fan-like engagement performed a positive intellectualised identity by attempting to appear "cosmopolitan and sophisticated" (Seiter, 1990, p. 64). A development of this theme occurred during analysis in Chapter 4, where I argued that respondents within the guarded mode of engagement performed 'inconspicuous' and 'individualised' (Fresnoza-Flot and Shinozaki, 2017, p. 5) class-based respectability (Skeggs, 1997) through taste, by identifying 'good and 'bad' media texts, as well as critiquing the negative practice of generalised others, to appear savvy and knowledgeable of their media environment. In terms of restricted engagement, in Chapter 5 I also suggested that performativity within the interview setting was not always a case of presenting the self in a positive manner, with identity and notions of individualised class in this instance performed through neoliberal self-deprecation and self-critique. Finally, in Chapter 6, I addressed the inconsistencies in participants' self-presentation, by noting how respondents justified incoherent engagement practices that they were unable to clearly articulate through discussion of mood.

These significant differences regarding participants' self-presentation could have potentially limited my data in a number of ways. Firstly, as Linda Finlay suggests, "the fragility of the results rests on the fact that participants present what they want to be known about themselves" (2012, p. 321) with analysis thus being based on a reduced, snapshot portrayal of the larger, diverse practices and identities of each participant. In addition to identity management, the performative nature of interviews also serves as a reflection of the wider cultural resources available to that participant. According to Beverley Skeggs and Helen Wood, each research encounter offers "a particular mode of articulation that relates as much to available cultural resources, contexts and social relations as they do to the actual 'findings'" (2012, pp. 117-118). These various performative factors demonstrate the limitations of interviewing as a data collection method, with Erika Pearson noting that "assessing performance requires accounting for a number of often nebulous or inexact factors, such as hierarchical relationships or social values held by participants in the exchange" (2009, p. 1).

While these limitations are an inherent part of conducting an interview study (Skeggs and Wood, 2012), I could have attempted to offset these issues through self-interviewing, a method utilised by various audience scholars such as Carrielynn Reinhard (2018) and Martin Barker (1993), whereby the respondent is asked to record themselves answering questions without the presence of an interviewer. As Barker suggests: "Each person, trying to respond to my questions without my presence, constructed a fictional persona of me and talked to that", with the lack of interruption and interference by the interviewer "enabling people to respond to questions more fully than they themselves expected" (p. 165). Both Barker's and Reinhard's studies, however, focus on specific fan audiences, and such a method may not have yielded the same results for my study, which was not focused on a specific topic, scene or fandom, and often dealt with respondents who could not be defined as fans. Furthermore, while many of my participants' performances are indicative of the interview setting and the dynamic between respondent and interviewer, such discourses are a representation of something significant to that respondent, as Goffman notes:

> When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. (1959, p. 10)

Crucially, as Catherine Kohler Riessman, argues: "To emphasize the performative element is not to suggest that identities are inauthentic, but only that they are situated and accomplished in social interaction" (2003, p. 337). While it is important, therefore, to note the inherent performative limitations of an interview methodology, such an approach was essential to answering my research question, with participants' discourses inevitably situated within a specific social and performative context.

There are also certain limitations of my data analysis, which I wish to discuss to contextualise the significance of this study within the field. Firstly, by allowing my participants to frame engagement, I created my cascade model after the fact of my interviews, with certain epistemological issues being inherent within this approach. While a posteriori analyses are a common qualitative approach (Crabtree and Miller, 1999, p. 21; see also Altheide, 1987), my theoretical analysis was constructed through my own observations, meaning that "one must decide whether or not that which was being sought was, in fact, detected" (Currie, 1968, p. 587). I have previously noted the importance to this project of entering the field without a priori assumptions (see p. 81), which may have shaped analysis around my own definitions of engagement. However, by creating my model after the fact, analysis was built upon my own observations of perceived similarities, with the problem of this approach, according to Staffan Larsson, linking to "difficulties in judging when a similarity is present" (2009, p. 33). In order to offset this theoretical limitation, I ensured the prioritisation of validity in my data through thick description and grounded theory. While this limitation impacts upon all qualitative work of this nature, I would suggest that this approach was essential to answering my research question.

Furthermore, when theorising my data, there were respondents whose discourse did not fit neatly into the cascade model. This is perhaps due to confusion amongst some participants between personal and work-related engagement, which could also be theorised as a neoliberal blurring of work and personal identities, due to the "theme of enterprise that is at the heart of neoliberalism" (Rose, 1999, p. 230). Additionally, because of my own understanding of 'context collapse' (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 4), I had perhaps anticipated respondents would discursively (if not in terms of their identity management) distinguish between personal and professional digital media use. Gabriella, for example, seemed to have difficulty separating her work from her personal life, and as such, I was unable to gain a wholly clear picture of her digital engagement from the interview. This could have been addressed in a number of ways. Firstly, I could have provided a definition of engagement to my respondents, although I did not want to limit my data in this way. For some participants, work and personal identities online were so blurred that they could not be separated. When

asked about this, Victoria, an artist, noted: "I don't really see my [artistic] practice as being separate from myself". Elise (a small business owner) also demonstrated a similar blurring of professional and personal profiles, with much of her 'personal' productive engagement linked to her business, for example "having a rant" about customers.

I could also have conducted follow-up interviews to address unclear discourse, which may have added greater depth to certain respondents' interviews. My interview with Claire, in particular, could have benefitted from a follow-up discussion, due to a lack of detail provided during her initial interview. While Claire alluded to self-branding on numerous occasions, for example: "Facebook statuses are a good way to portray myself to the world", she did not go into much detail regarding the particularities of her practice, with much of her interview being focused on routinised engagement. Resultantly, I used Claire's discourse as an example of how productive engagement was not always linked to notions of fandom, but without details regarding her self-branding practices, I found her difficult to interpret and position. Unfortunately, as Claire was a third-year student in her final semester at the time of interview, it was not possible to arrange a follow-up interview. The transient nature of a number of my respondents made conducting follow-up interviews difficult, with many having left Huddersfield shortly after interview. As I had made contact through these participants' university email addresses, it was also difficult to follow up the interviews by showing my analyses to respondents, although I regret not having been able to do this.

These various methodological limitations of my study could also have been addressed through triangulating with a secondary quantitative dataset, to both validate my empirical analysis and explore potential further findings. While this approach is undoubtedly valuable in the correct context, the inclusion of secondary data that does not align with the scope and specific focus of my study risks a highly problematic mapping onto my findings, as opposed to offering further validity (Hinds et al, 1997, p. 411). My interest in exploring the nuances within a small generational cohort is unlikely to be supported by larger-scale quantitative data, which observes larger patterns, and therefore clashes with my aims while potentially failing to harmonise with my data. Similarly, my methodological emphasis upon being 'surprised' by the data (Willis, 1980) would not have been reflected by a secondary quantitative dataset, within which the critical factor of neoliberalism would have been rendered invisible due to the 'pervasive effects' of this ideology that shapes how "many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world" (Harvey, 2007, p. 3).

In addition to these methodological limitations regarding data collection and analysis, there are also three potential theoretical limitations within my study, which I will discuss before

concluding my thesis by assessing directions for future research. Firstly, as I noted during the Introduction (see p. 15), while my theorised framework of value addresses numerous discourses, there were other approaches I could have included, the most significant of which was axiology, 'the study of values' (Gunaratne, 2009, p. 368). The positions I selected within my framework aligned with my interest in assessing digital media engagement, with the works of Marx, Baudrillard and Bourdieu utilised within contemporary media research by other scholars (e.g. Andrejevic, 2010; 2013; Bolin, 2011; Fuchs, 2012; 2014; Suhr, 2012), enabling a coherent critique of the limitations of these various discourses. Axiology has not been utilised within media literature in the same way, with existing work (e.g. Gunaratne, 2009) focusing upon cross-national cultural differences (Hofstede, 2001). Adopting axiology within my framework, however, may have also aligned with an expanded notion of neoliberalism within my analysis, through a more Foucauldian approach to understanding the power structures at play within my use of this ideology (Read, 2009). Within this study, I chose to explore neoliberalism primarily through the work of Jim McGuigan (2014; 2016) and Nikolas Rose (1999), alongside contemporary digital work on self-branding (e.g. Hearn, 2008; Marwick, 2010; 2013). Much of this work, however, has a clear Foucauldian underpinning, due to its focus upon internalised self-governance. As Michel Foucault notes regarding neoliberalism:

> In practice, the stake in all neo-liberal analysis is the replacement every time of homo œconomicus as a partner of exchange with homo œconomicus as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings. (2008, p. 226)

My critical reading of neoliberalism, therefore, occurs through this Foucauldian underpinning, and by not further developing my analysis on the power relationships within my participants' digital media engagement, there is a potential theoretical limitation of my work due to my decision not to fully pursue a Foucauldian approach. Given that Foucault underpins my work in this way, it could be argued that a more Foucauldian analysis would be required to further assess the concepts I have presented in this thesis. Such an approach, alongside axiology, may allow a greater analysis of the power structures at play within my application of neoliberal selfhood, which I have left largely unexplored in order to focus on neoliberalism as a significant framework in my participants' engagement. A further Foucauldian exploration of my value categories may offer a greater understanding of why value is structured for my participants within a neoliberal framework, and the cultural significance of this ideological distinction. Similarly, while I have suggested certain Marxist readings across my value categories, specifically regarding the notion that my respondents are perhaps exploited through their neoliberal alignment, there is further scope for analysis within this thread. I

chose to draw upon Marxist theories of value within specific modes of engagement, but an expanded Marxist reading could also allow for further critique of neoliberalism within my cascade model.

Finally, I would suggest that the singularity of neoliberalism within my analysis offers an additional theoretical limitation to my work. I spent much of Chapter 1 arguing for a multi-discursive approach to value, suggesting that singular approaches are limiting within my data. Similarly, as John Gledhill (2004, p. 336) and Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky (2008, p. 117) note, there is not one form of neoliberalism across differing contexts, with neoliberalism thus able to be pluralised alongside value within my analysis. As I suggested in Chapter 1 (see p. 56), creating a model of multiplicity for neoliberalism within an already multi-discursive approach to value would have been complex and potentially problematic. Additionally, by conceptualising neoliberalism as I did, I was able to argue for a clearly definable version of this ideology that is drawn on within my data. As I have suggested in this Conclusion, I was surprised by the significance of neoliberalism in my analysis, but such an approach, I believe, is a strength to my data. Given the focus of my work upon pluralising value, which I set out to do from the start of this thesis, I have not been able to adopt a similar approach with neoliberalism. The potential significance of expanding neoliberalism in this way would need to be explored in future work. These methodological and theoretical limitations are not intended to lessen the significance of this study, but to offer a critical reflection upon my methods. Indeed, some of these limitations also offer potential for further study. To test the time-specific nature of my data, for example, further data collection would also allow me to study the cascade model longitudinally, to assess how engagement develops over time. As such, I will conclude this thesis by identifying the directions for future research that have emerged from my analysis, and the potential impact of this work upon the field.

Directions for future research

The originality of my approach to multi-modal digital engagement, and its value within a neoliberal cultural framework, offers several directions for future study both for myself and other researchers within this emergent field. In terms of my own work, further testing of the cascade model, both over a longer time-period and, perhaps, using an ethnographic approach outside of the parameters in this study, would allow me to further explore the multi-modality of engagement. There is no reason to suggest, for example, that additional modes of engagement could not be identified, further demonstrating the significance of my approach in moving discourse towards a multi-dimensional understanding of engagement. In

addition to pushing discourse beyond the limitations of fan-led definitions, in this study I have also developed existing work which seeks to complicate participation (e.g. Light, 2014; Park, 2017; Bury, 2018), by proposing a multi-dimensional model for digital media engagement that builds upon this literature. Through this approach, I am redefining users' engagement as multi-modal and inherently fluid, which has numerous implications upon the field. Firstly, by considering engagement in this way, we can no longer investigate digital audiences as either permanent 'fans' of something, or even as positioned statically within a scale. If engagement is fluid and multi-modal, within the field of digital audience research we need to explore not just how audiences engage with one subject in a specific moment, but how engagement varies across contexts, interests, and timeframes, in order to gain a clearer picture of contemporary digital media use.

Secondly, my suggestion that the value of digital media engagement is not always clear to participants offers several additional directions for further inquiry. If certain types of ingrained, everyday engagement have become devalued (both in audience and scholarly discourse), then why are they so prevalent? Similarly, how does this devaluation affect how we study users' engagement, if the worth of this consumption is not always apparent? I would encourage future work in this field to further explore this relationship between value and everyday engagement, in order to better understand these questions, while also moving participatory culture beyond productive consumption, and towards the everyday, which is essential in better understanding the value of engagement.

Additionally, through the recruitment methodology I selected for this study, I aimed to critically interrogate the significance of generation, arguing that the 'digital natives' concept is unhelpful in terms of understanding the range of digital media engagement within my study. Instead of a shared generational habitus, I argue for a range of different practices, which are embedded in digital capital and neoliberalism, as opposed to a person's status as a 'digital native'. While I cannot generalise beyond the remit of this study, I would anticipate that these significant factors would be likely to play a similar role in people's engagement practices across other age groups, with further work needed to explore this possibility. This emergence of neoliberalism as an analytical approach demonstrates the significance of exploring this cultural ideology further within digital audience research. As Jim McGuigan notes: "It is exceptionally difficult today not to see neoliberalism 'everywhere and in everything'. It is so manifestly there wherever we look, whether or not we are conscious of its presence" (2016, p. 10). The significance of neoliberalism in understanding why and how my participants engage further highlights McGuigan's observation, and this cultural

entrenchment presents an opportunity for future work to further explore this growing relationship between digital media and neoliberal selfhood.

I would also suggest that the significance of neoliberalism in my analysis demonstrates the need for more work on individualised class within this context. I accept that class has been somewhat underexplored in this thesis, as I chose to expand the notion to include generation, enabling a thorough critique of 'digital natives' discourse (see p. 51). A greater focus on class would further develop the arguments presented in this study, particularly regarding the relationship between digital capital and the cascade model. Finally, as I discussed during the Introduction, I am cautious about generalising from my findings within this study due to the relatively small number of respondents I recruited, and the specific aims and scope of this work. My arguments have emerged from my data, and are thus reflective of my respondents' discourses, and as such, my cascade model is not intended as a general theory, but is put forward as a concept that can be tested and developed in future studies, especially within other age groups, and via a greater focus upon class.

At the very beginning of this thesis I discussed my own digital media engagement, which I felt conflicted with the emphasis on audience productivity within much existing literature. As this study developed, and I realised just how varied engagement actually was for my respondents, many of whom introduced me to new platforms and new ways of thinking about media, I could not help but reflect on my own practice. Becoming so completely immersed in the *how* and *why* of digital media engagement made me extremely self-conscious of what I was doing online, and I subsequently began to restrict my engagement even further, re-aligning myself (without realising it) within my own neoliberal framework. Having emerged at the other side of this project, I have started to loosen my grasp on the 'right' and 'wrong' of digital media, and allowed myself to embrace (and even enjoy) the differing types of engagement. I still don't engage productively very often, despite starting a sparsely-decorated Instagram account, meaning the world will have to wait a little longer for my fanfic debut. In this study I have emphasised the need to broaden engagement beyond productivity, not just because of my own experiences, but due to the incredible range I observed across my respondents. Future research, therefore, should seek to find users who do not define themselves as fans, to explore the many significant nuances within the broader scope of digital media engagement. My experience, alongside the original empirical research I have presented here, suggests these people do exist - they're probably just reading this without responding.

Bibliography

Aarseth, A. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Abercrombie, N., & Longhurst, B. (1998). *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*. London: Sage.

Abbott-Chapman, J., & Robertson, M. (2001). Youth, leisure and home: Space, place and identity. *Society and Leisure*, 24(2), 485-506.

Abbott-Chapman, J., & Robertson, M. (2009). Adolescents' Favourite Places: Redefining the Boundaries between Private and Public Space. *Space and Culture*, 12(4), 419-434.

Abril, P. S., Levin, A., & Del Riego, A. (2012). Blurred Boundaries: Social Media Privacy and the Twenty-First-Century Employee. *American Business Law Journal*, 49(1), 63-124.

Adorno, T. W. (1991). *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. London: Routledge.

Akcayır M., Dundar, H., & Akcayır, G. (2016). What makes you a digital native? Is it enough to be born after 1980?. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 60, 435-440.

Alasuutari, P. (1995). *Researching culture: qualitative method and cultural studies*. London: Sage.

Alasuutari, P. (1999). Introduction: Three Phases of Reception Studies. In P. Alasuutari (Ed.), *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda* (pp. 1-21). London: Sage.

Albrechtslund, A., & Lauritsen, P. (2013). Spaces of everyday surveillance: Unfolding an analytical concept of participation. *Geoforum*, 49, 310-316.

Albury, K. (2015). Selfies, Sexts and Sneaky Hats: Young People's Understandings of Gendered Practices of Self-Representation. *International Journal of Communication*, 9, 1734-1745.

Allor, M. (1988). Relocation to the site of the audience. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5(3), 217-233.

Althaus, S., & Tewksbury, D. (2000). Patterns of Internet and Traditional News Media Use in a Networked Community. *Political Communication*, 17, 21-45.

Altheide, D. L. (1987). Reflections: Ethnographic content analysis. *Qualitative sociology*, 10(1), 65-77.

Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, J. M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 485-499). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Altieri, C. (2003). *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetic of the Affects*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Amin, A., & Thrift, N. (2002). *Cities: Reimagining the Urban.* Cambridge: Polity.

Andrejevic, M. (2002). The work of being watched. *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 19(2), 230–248.

Andrejevic, M. (2009). Critical Media Studies 2.0. *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture*,1(1), 35–51.

Andrejevic, M. (2010). Thin-Sliced Thoughts and Theory's Ends. *Media Tropes*, 2(2), 45-64.

Andrejevic, M. (2013). *Infoglut: How Too Much Information Is Changing the Way We Think and Know.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Andrejevic, M. (2014). The infinite debt of surveillance in the digital economy. In A. Jansson, & M. Christensen (Eds.), *Media, surveillance and identity: social perspectives* (pp. 91-108). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Andueza, A. (2015). *The Global Impact model: A way for assessing the social and economic impact.* Paper presented at EBU Knowledge Exchange, Geneva, Switzerland.

Ang, I. (1985). *Watching Dallas: Soap opera and the melodramatic imagination.* York: Methuen & Co.

Ang, I. (1989). Beyond Self-Reflexivity. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 13(2), 27-29.

Ang, I. (1990) Culture and Communications: Towards an Ethnographic Critique of Media Consumption in the Tansnational Media System. *European Journal of Communications*, 5, 239-260.

Ang, I. (1996). *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World.* Oxon: Routledge.

Ang, I. (2006). *Desperately Seeking the Audience.* London: Routledge.

Ang, I., & Hermes, J. (1991). Gender and/in Media Consumption. In J. Curran, & M. Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass Media and Society* (pp. 307-328). London: Edward Arnold.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Aris, A., & Bughin, J. (2005). *Managing Media Companies: Harnessing Creative Value.* Oxford: Wiley.

Arksey, H., & McKnight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An Introductory Resource with Examples.* London: Sage.

Arnould, E., & Wallendorf, M. (1994). Market-oriented ethnography: interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31, 484-504.

Aroldi, P., & Ponte, C. (2012) Adolescents of the 1960s and 1970s: An Italian-Portuguese comparison between two generations of audiences. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace,* 6(2).

Aschaffenburg, K. (1995). Rethinking images of the mobility regime: Making a case for women's mobility. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 14, 201-236.

Atkin, C. (1982). Changing male and female roles in TV and Teens. In M. Schwartz (Ed.), *TV and Teens: Experts look at the issues* (pp. 66–70). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Atkinson, R., & Flint, J. (2001). Snowball Sampling. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods* (pp. 1043-1044). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Awan, F. (2007). *Young People, Identity and the Media: A Study of Conceptions of Self-Identity Among Youth in Southern England* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/10466/1/Fatimah_Awan.pdf.

Babbie, E. (2011). *The Basics of Social Research* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Babrow, A. S., & Swanson, D. L. (1988). Disentangling antecedents of audience exposure levels: Extending expectancy-value analyses of gratifications sought from television news. *Communication Monographs*, 55, 1-21.

Bailly, K. D. (1994). *Methods of Social Research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Baldwin, T., & Stroman, A. (2007). How self-esteem classes are "breeding a selfish generation". *The Times*. Retrieved from: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/how-self-esteem-classes-are-breeding-selfish-generation-nfj5wr29j0w.

Ball, C., Francis, J., Huang, K-T., Kadylak, T., Cotten, S. R., & Rikard, R. V. (2017). The Physical–Digital Divide: Exploring the Social Gap Between Digital Natives and Physical Natives. *Journal of Applied Gerontology.* Retrieved from: http://journals.sagepub.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1177/0733464817732518

Balnaves, M., Hemelryk Donald, S., & Shoesmith, B. (2009). *Media Theories and Approaches: A Global Perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bamberger, M. (2000). Opportunities and Challenges for Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. In M. Bamberger (Ed.), *Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Development Projects* (pp. 3-34). Washington, D.C, WA: The World Bank.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2011). Branding the Post-Feminist Self: Girls' Video Production and YouTube. In M. C. Kearney (Ed.), *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture* (pp. 277-294). New York: Peter Lang.

Baralt, M. (2011). Coding Qualitative Data. In A. Mackey, & S. Gass (Eds.), *Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 222-244). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Barassi, V., & Trere, E. (2012). Does Web 3.0 come after Web 2.0? Deconstructing theoretical assumptions through practice. *New Media & Society*, 14(8), 1269-1285.

Barbrook, R. (1998). The Hi-Tech Gift Economy. *First Monday*, 3(12). Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue3_12/barbrook/.

Barbrook, R. (2003). Giving is receiving. *Digital Creativity*, 14(2), 91-94.

Bardhi, F., Rohm, A. J., & Sultan, F. (2010). Tuning in and tuning out: media multitasking among young consumers. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9, 316-333.

Bargh, J. A., McKenna, K., & Fitzsimons, G. M. (2002). Can You See the Real Me? Activation and Expression of the "True Self" on the Internet. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(1), 33-48.

Barker, C. (2008). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

Barker, M. (1993). Seeing how far you can see: on being a 'fan' of 2000 AD. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media* (pp. 159-183). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Barker, M. (2005). The Lord of the Rings and 'Identification': A Critical Encounter. *European Journal of Communication*, 20(3), 353-378.

Barker, M., & Mathijs, E. (Eds.) (2008). *Watching the Lord of the Rings: Tolkien's World Audiences.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Barrios, L. (1988). Television, telenovelas, and family life in Venezuela. In J. Lull (Ed.), *World families watch television* (pp. 49-79). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Barton, D., & Lee, C. (2013). *Language Online: Investigating Digital Texts and Practices*. Oxon: Routledge.

Baszanger, I., & Dodier, N. (2004). Ethnography: Relating the part to the whole. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (4th ed.) (pp. 9-34). London: Sage.

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (C. Levin, Trans.). St Louis, MO: Telos Press. (Original work published 1972)

Baudrillard, J. (1996). *The System of Objects* (J. Bennedict, Trans.). London: Verso. (Original work published 1968)

Baudrillard, J. (1998). *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (C. Turner, Trans.). London: Sage. (Original work published 1970)

Bauman, R. (1971). Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 84(331), 31-41.

Bauman, Z. (1996). From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity. In S. Hall, & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 18-36). London: Sage.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge: Polity.

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogues and dialectics.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Baym, N. (2000). *Tune in, log on: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Baym, N. (2005). Introduction: Internet Research as It Isn't, Is, Could Be, and Should Be. *The Information Society*, 21, 229-232.

Baym, N. (2007). The new shape of online community: The example of Swedish independent music fandom. *First Monday*, 12(8). Retrieved from: http://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1978/1853.

Baym, N. (2009). A Call for Grounding in the Face of Blurred Boundaries. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14, 720-723.

Baym, N. (2010). *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Baym, N. (2011). The Swedish Model: Balancing Markets and Gifts in the Music Industry. *Popular Communication*, 9(1), 22-38.

Baym, N. (2012). Fans or friends?: Seeing social media audiences as musicians do. *Participations Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 9(2), 286-316.

Baym, N. (2015). Connect With Your Audience! The Relational Labor of Connection. *The Communication Review*, 18(1), 14-22.

Baym, N., & boyd, d. (2012). Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 56(3), 320-329.

Baym, N., & Ledbetter, A. (2009). Tunes that Bind? Predicting Friendship Strength in a Music-Based Social Network. *Information, Communication & Society,* 12(3), 408-427.

Baym, N., Zhang, Y. B., Kunkel, A., Ledbetter, A., & Lin, M. C. (2007). Relational quality and media use in interpersonal relationships. *New Media & Society*, 9(5), 735-752.

Beck, J. (2009). *Tapping the wire: Audience response research in a non-linear age*. Paper presented at ESOMAR Worldwide Media Measurement, Stockholm, Sweden.

Beck, U. (2002). The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies. *Theory, Culture and Society,* 19(1-2), 17-44.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*. London: Sage.

Beebe, B. (2008). The semiotic account of trademark doctrine and trademark culture. In G. Dinwoodie, & M. Janis (Eds.)., *Trademark Law and Theory: A Handbook of Contemporary Research* (pp. 42-64). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks, How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Bennett, S. (1997). *Theatre Audiences: A theory of production and reception*. London: Routledge.

Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008). The 'Digital Natives' Debate: A Critical Review of the Evidence.' *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(5), 775-786.

Bennett, T., & Woollacott, J. (1987). *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. London: Macmillan.

Bennett, T., Grossberg, L., & Morris, M. (Eds) (2005). *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E. B., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M., & Wright, D. (2008). *Culture, Class, Distinction*. London: Routledge.

Benoit, W. (2011). Content Analysis in Political Communication. In E. Bucy, & R. Holbert (Eds.), *The Sourcebook for Political Communication Research: Methods, Measures, and Analytical Techniques* (pp. 268-282). New York, NY: Routledge.

Benson, E. (2015). A Return to the Enduring Features of Institutions: A Process Ontology of Reproduction and Endurance. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 45(3), 291-314.

Benson, R. (1999). Field theory in comparative context: A new paradigm for media studies. *Theory and Society*, 28, 463-498.

Berger, A. (2006). *50 Ways to Understand Communication: A Guided Tour of Key Ideas and Theorists in Communication, Media, and Culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Berkenkotter, C. (1981). Understanding a writer's awareness of audience. *College Composition and Communication,* 32(4), 388-399.

Bermejo, F. (2007). *The Internet Audience: Constitution and Measurement*. New York, NY: Sage.

Bertilsson, M. (1984). The Theory of Structuration: Prospects and Problems. *Acta Sociologica,* 27(4), 339-353.

Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods Research*, 10(2), 141-163.

Bignell, J. (2004). *An Introduction to Television Studies* (2nd ed.). Abingdon: Routledge.

Bingham, W., & Moore, B. (1959). *How to Interview* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Harper and Brothers.

Bird, E. (2003). *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World*. London: Routledge.

Bishop, J. (2013). *Examining the Concepts, Issues, and Implications of Internet Trolling*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Biskup, J., & Flegel, U. (2000). Transaction-Based Pseudonyms in Audit Data for Privacy Respecting Intrusion Detection. In H. Debar, L. Mé, & S. F. Wu (Eds.), *Recent Advances in Intrusion Detection: Third International Workshop, RAID 2000, Toulouse, France, October 2-4, 2000 Proceedings* (pp. 28-49). New York, NY: Springer.

Blackburn, R. M. (1998). A new system of classes: but what are they and do we need them?. *Work, Employment and Society*, 12(4), 735-742.

Blom, J. N., & Hansen, K. R. (2015). Click Bait: Forward-Reference as Lure in Online News Headlines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 76, 87-100.

Blood, R. (2003). Weblogs and Journalism: Do They Connect?. *Nieman Reports*, 61-98.

Bloor, M. (1997). Techniques of Validation in Qualitative Research: a Critical Commentary. In G. Miller, & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and Method in Qualitative Research* (pp. 37-50). London: Sage.

Boas, T. C., & Gans-Morse, J. (2009). Neoliberalism: From new liberal philosophy to anti-liberal slogan. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(2), 137-161.

Bober, M. (2004). Virtual Youth Research: An Exploration of Methodologies and Ethical Dilemmas from a British Perspective. In E. Buchanan (Ed.), *Readings in Virtual Research Ethics: Issues and Controversies* (pp. 288-316). London: Information Science Publishing.

Bolin, G. (2011). *Value and the Media: Cultural Production and Consumption in Digital Markets.* Fulham: Ashgate.

Bolin, G. (2012). The Labour of Media Use. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(6), 796-814.

Bolin, G. (2017). *Media Generations: Experience, Identity and Mediatised Social Change.* London: Routledge.

Bolin, G., & Skogerbø, E. (2013). Age, Generation and the Media. *Northern Lights*, 11(1), 3-14.

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006). *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (C. Porter, Trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1987)

Bolter, J. (1991). *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bond, B. (2015). Portrayals of Sex and Sexuality in Gay- and Lesbian- Oriented Media: A Quantitative Content Analysis. *Sexuality & Culture*, 19(1), 37-56.

Booth, P. (2010). *Digital Fandom: New Media Studies.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Booth, P., & Kelly, P. (2013). The changing faces of *Doctor Who* fandom: New fans, new technologies, old practices?. *Participations Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 10(1), 56-72.

Booth, W. C. (1974). *A rhetoric of irony* (Vol. 641). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bordwell, D. (1989). *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bottero, W. (2004). Class Identities and the Identity of Class. *Sociology*, 38(5), 985-1003.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972)

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-248). New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1980)

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (R. Johnson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (L. Clough, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1989)

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago press.

Bowman, S., & Willis, C. (2003). We Media, How audiences are shaping the future of news and information. *The Media Center at The American Press Institute*. Retrieved from: http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/weblog.php.

boyd, d. (2006a). A blogger's blog: Exploring the definition of a medium. *Reconstruction 6(4)*. Retrieved from: http://www.danah.org/papers/ABloggersBlog.pdf.

boyd, d. (2006b). Friends, friendsters, and Myspace top 8: Writing community into being on social network sites. *First Monday, 11(12)*. Retrieved from: http://www.firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/issue/view/206.

boyd, d. (2007). Why youth <3 social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth Identity and Digital Media* (pp. 119-142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

boyd, d. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

boyd, d., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.

boyd, d., & Heer, J. (2006). Profiles as Conversation: Networked Identity Performance on Friendster. *Proceedings of Thirty-Ninth Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Press. Retrieved from: http://www.danah.org/papers/HICSS2006.pdf.

Brabazon, T. (2006). The Google Effect: Googling, Blogging, Wikis and the Flattening of Expertise. *Libri*, 56, 157-167.

Brady, A. (2006). Opportunity Sampling. In V. Jupp (Ed.), *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods.* London: Sage.

Brake, D. (2009). *As if nobody's reading?: The imagined audience and socio-technical biases in personal blogging practice in the UK* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/4.

Brake, D. (2012). Who Do They Think They're Talking To? Framings of the Audience by Social Media Users. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 1056-1076.

Bransen, J. (2008). Personal identity management. In C. Mackenzie, & K. Atkins (Eds.), *Practical Identity and Narrative Agency* (pp. 101-120). London: Routledge.

Brennen, B. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies.* Oxon: Routledge.

Briggs, M. (2009). *Television, Audiences and Everyday Life*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

Brooker, W., & Jermyn, D. (Eds.) (2003). *The Audience Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Brown, S. (1996). Q methodology and qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 6(4), 561-567.

Bruckman, A., Luther, K., & Fiesler, C. (2015). When Should We Use Real Names in Published Accounts of Internet Research?. In E. Hargittai, & C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital*

Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online (pp. 243-258). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Brügger, N. (2009). Website history and the website as an object of study. *New Media & Society*, 11, 115-132.

Bruns, A. (2007). Produsage: Towards a Broader Framework for User-Led Content Creation. In *Proceedings Creativity and Cognition 6*. Retrieved from: http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6623/1/6623.pdf.

Bruns, A. (2008a). *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Bruns, A. (2008b). The Future Is User-Led: The Path towards Widespread Produsage. *Fibreculture Journal*, 11, 1069-1076.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 97-113.

Buckingham, D. (1993). *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Buckingham, D. (2007). Digital Media Literacies: rethinking media education in the age of the Internet. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 2(1), 43-55.

Buckingham, D. (2011). Foreword. In M. Thomas (Ed.), *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology and the New Literacies* (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bucy, E.P., Gantz, W., & Wang, Z. (2007). Media technology and the 24-hour news cycle. In C. A. Lin, & D. J. Atkin (Eds.), *Communication technology and social change: theory and implications* (pp. 143-163). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Buffardi, L. E., & Campbell, W. K. (2008). Narcissism and social networking web sites. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 34(10), 1303-1314.

Burgess, R. (1984). *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Burroughs, B. (2014). Facebook and FarmVille: A Digital Ritual Analysis of Social Gaming. *Games and Culture*, 9(3), 151-166.

Burston, J., Dyer-Witheford, N., & Hearn, A. (Eds.) (2010). Digital Labour: Workers, authors, citizens. Special Issue. *Ephemera*, 10(3/4), 214-539.

Burton, G. (2010). *Media and Society: Critical Perspectives*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.

Bury, R. (2018). *Television 2.0: Viewer and Fan Engagement with Digital TV.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Busse, K., & Gray, J. (2011). Fan Cultures and Fan Communities. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The Handbook of Media Audiences* (pp. 427-442). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Busse, K. (2015). Fan Labor and Feminism: Capitalizing on the Fannish Labor of Love. *Cinema Journal*, 54(3), 110-115.

Campos, M. (2007). Ecology of Meanings: A Critical Constructivist Communication Model. *Communication Theory*, 17, 386-410.

Cannon, L. W., Higginbotham, E., & Leung, M. L. A. (1988). Race and Class Bias in Qualitative Research on Women. *Gender and Society*, 2(4), 449-462.

Canter, L. (2012). *Web 2.0 and the changing relationship between British local newspaper journalists and their audiences* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3774/.

Carpentier, N. (2011). New Configurations of the Audience?. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The Handbook of Media Audiences* (pp. 190-212). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Carpentier, N., Schrøder, K., & Hallett, L. (2014). Audience/Society Transformations: Introduction. In N. Carpentier, K. Schrøder, & L. Hallett (Eds.), *Audience Transformations: Shifting Audience Positions in Late Modernity* (pp. 1-12). New York, NY: Routledge.

Carter, C., & Steiner, L. (2004). Mapping the Contested Terrain of Media and Gender Research. In C. Carter, & L. Steiner (Eds.), *Critical Readings: Media and Gender* (pp. 11-36). Maidenhead: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.

Castells, M. (1998). *The rise of the network society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Castells, M. (2007). Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society. *International Journal of Communication*, 1, 238-266.

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castoriadis, C. (1986). The nature and value of equality. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 11(4), 373-390.

Cerulo, K. A. (1997). Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 385-409.

Chadwick, D., Olivier, M., Samarati, P., Sharpston, E., & Thuraisingham, B. (2003). Privacy and Civil Liberties. In E. Gudes, & S. Shenoi (Eds.), *Research Directions in Data and Applications Security* (pp. 331-346). Cambridge: Kluwer.

Chandler, D. (1998). *Personal Home Pages and the Construction of Identities on the Web in Theory and Practice*. Paper presented at the Fourth Conference on Writing Development in Higher Education, Aberystwyth.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 163-88). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2008). Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method. In S. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of Emergent Methods* (pp. 155-172). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2016). The power of stories, the potential of theorizing for social justice studies. In N. Denzin & M. Giardina (Eds.)*, Qualitative inquiry through a critical lens* (pp. 41-56). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cheng V. J. (2004). *Inauthentic: The Anxiety Over Culture and Identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Child, J. T., & Starcher, S. C. (2015). Fuzzy Facebook privacy boundaries: Exploring mediated lurking, vague-booking, and Facebook privacy management. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 483-490.

Christie, I. (2012). *Audiences: The Key Debates*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Chung, T., & Asher, S.R. (1996). Children's goals and strategies in peer conflict situations. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 42, 125-147.

Churchich, M. (1990). *Marxism and Alienation*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press.

Cinque, T., & Vincent, J. B. (2018): The emerging televisual: technology futures and screens for all things. *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, 1-14.

Click, M. A. (2007). Untidy: fan response to the soiling of Martha Stewart's spotless image. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, & C. L. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (pp. 301-315). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Clough, P. (2009). The new empiricism: Affect and sociological method. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12(1), 43-61.

Cohen, A. P. (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community.* London: Tavistock.

Cohen, J. (2015). *The surveillance-innovation complex: The irony of the participatory turn*. Retrieved from:
https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=068096001126024096069082119117114117122011005035010028104088103024123022074004067091031007000042033007027069113096125006113079049007088022007111081105127127067040035014064085023074021122002068094082116082072025006027119103106089080125106089105116&EXT=pdf

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94, Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure, S95-S120.

Coleman, S., & Dyer-Witheford, N. (2007). Playing on the Digital Commons: Collectives, Capital and Contestation in Videogame Culture. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(6), 934-953.

Collins, J. (2000). Television and postmodernism. In P. Marris, & S. Thornham (Eds.), *Media studies: A reader* (pp. 380-384). New York, NY: NYU Press.

Colombo, F., & Fortunati, L (2011) (Eds.). *Broadband Society and Generational Changes.* Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang.

Condon, S., & Cech, C. G. (1996). Functional comparison of face-to-face and computer mediated decision-making interactions. In S. C. Herring (Ed.), *Computer-mediated*

communication: Linguistic, social, and cross-cultural perspectives (pp. 65-80). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.

Cornwall, A. (2016). Introduction. In A Cornwall, F. G. Karioris, & N. Lindisfarne (Eds.), *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism* (pp. 1-28). London: Zed.

Cotten, S. R., Ford, G., Ford, S., & Hale, T. (2014). Internet use and depression among retired older adults in the U.S.: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 69(5), 763–771.

Cotton, J. L. (1985). Cognitive dissonance in selective exposure. In D. Zillmann, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Selective exposure to communication* (pp. 11-34). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Couldry, N. (2004). Liveness, Reality and the Mediated Habitus from Television to the Mobile Phone. *Communication Review*, 7, 353-361.

Couldry, N., & Littler, J. (2011). Work, power and performance: Analysing the 'reality' game of The Apprentice. *Cultural Sociology*, 5(2), 263-279.

Couldry, N., Livingstone, S., & Markham, T. (2010). *Media Consumption and Engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention* (2nd ed.)*.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cowan-Jenssen, S., & Goodison, L. (2009). Narcissism: fragile bodies in a fragile world. *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 7, 81–94.

Crabtree, B. F., & Miller, W. L. (Eds.). (1999). *Doing qualitative research.* London: Sage.

Crawford, K., & Robinson, P. (2013). Beyond Generations and New Media. In J. Hartley, J. Burgess, & S. Bruns (Eds.), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (pp. 472-479). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell

Creeber, G. (2009). Digital Theory: Theorizing New Media. In G. Creeber, & R. Martin (Eds.), *Digital Cultures: Understanding New Media* (pp. 11-29). Maidenhead: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.

Creeber, G., & Martin, R. (Eds.) (2009). *Digital Cultures: Understanding New Media*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Creswell, J., & Miller, D. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory Into Practice,* 39(3), 124-130.

Crompton, R. (1996). The Fragmentation of Class Analysis. *British Journal of Sociology* 47(1), 56 - 67.

Crompton, R. (1998). *Class and Stratification* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Crompton, R. (2008). *Class and Stratification* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Crompton, R., & Scott, J. (2000). Introduction: The State of Class Analysis. In R. Crompton, F. Devine, M. Savage & J. Scott (Eds.) *Renewing Class Analysis* (pp. 1-15). Oxford: Blackwell.

Croteau, D., & Hoynes, W. (2013). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* (5th ed.). London: Sage.

Crow, G., & Maclean, C. (2000). Community. In G. Payne (Ed.), *Social Divisions* (pp. 223-41). Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Crow, G., & Wiles, R. (2006). *Managing anonymity and confidentiality in social research: the case of visual data in community research*. Retrieved from: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/459/1/0808_managing%2520anonymity%2520and%2520confidentiality.pdf.

Cupach, W. R., & Imahori, T. T. (1993) Identity management theory: Communication competence in intercultural episodes and relationships. In R. L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 112-131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework*. London: Sage.

Currah, A. (2007). Managing creativity: the tensions between commodities and gifts in a digital networked environment. *Economy and Society*, 36(3), 467-494.

Curran, J., Fenton, N., & Freedman, D. (2012). *Misunderstanding the Internet*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Currie, L. A. (1968). Limits for qualitative detection and quantitative determination. Application to radiochemistry. *Analytical chemistry*, 40(3), 586-593.

Cushion, S. (2012). *The Democratic Value of News: Why Public Service Media Matter*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Danet, B. (2001). Studies of Cyberpl@Y: Ethical and Methodological Aspects. *Ethics Work Group, Association of Internet Researchers*. Retrieved from: http://atar.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msdanet/papers/ethics2.pdf.

Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2013). *The new way of the world: On neoliberal society*. London: Verso.

Das, R. (2010). Meaning at the Interface: new genres, new modes of interpretative engagement?. *Communication Review,* 13(2), 140-159.

Das, R., Kleut, J., & Bolin, G. (2014). New Genres - New Roles for the Audience?. In N. Carpentier, K. Schrøder, & L. Hallett (Eds.), *Audience Transformations: Shifting Audience Positions in Late Modernity* (pp. 30-46). New York, NY: Routledge.

Davies, B., & Bansel, P. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 20(3), 247-259.

Davies, W. (2014). Neoliberalism: A bibliographic review. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 31(7-8), 309-317.

Davis, C. H. (2013). Audience Value and Transmedia Products. In T. Storsul, & A. Krumsvik (Eds.), *Media Innovations: A Multidisciplinary Study of Change* (pp. 175-190). Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom.

Dayter, D. (2014). Self-praise in microblogging. *Journal of Pragmatics,* 61, 91-102.

Dayter, D. (2016). *Discursive self in microblogging: Speech acts, stories and self-praise.* Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Deacon, D., Bryman, A., & Fenton, N. (1998). Collision or Collusion? A Discussion of the Unplanned Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 1, 47-63.

Deacon, D., & Keightley, E. (2011). Quantitative Audience Research Embracing the Poor Relation. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The Handbook of Media Audiences* (pp. 302-319). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

DeFleur, M. (1966). *Theories of Mass Communication.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Dettmar, K. J. (2004). *Countercultural literacy: learning irony with The Simpsons.* In J. Albreti (Ed.), *Leaving Springfield: The Simpsons and the Possibility of Oppositional Culture* (pp. 85-106). Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Delwiche, A. (Ed.) (2013). *The Participatory Cultures Handbook.* London: Routledge.

Dena, C. (2009). *Transmedia Practice: theorising the practice of expressing a fictional world across distinct media and environments* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://ciret-transdisciplinarity.org/biblio/biblio_pdf/Christy_DeanTransm.pdf.

Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Denzin, N. K. (1979). The Interactionist Study Of Social Organization: A Note On Method. *Symbolic Interaction*, 2(1), 59–72.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive Interactionism.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln Y. S. (Eds.) (1998). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Devine, F. (1997). *Social Class in America and Britain.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Devine, F., & Savage, M. (2000). Conclusion: Renewing Class Analysis. In R. Crompton, F. Devine, M. Savage & J. Scott (Eds.), *Renewing Class Analysis* (pp. 184–99). Oxford: Blackwell.

Domenici, K., & Littlejohn, S. W. (2006). *Facework: Bridging Theory and Practice.* London: Sage.

Drotner, Kirsten. (2008). Leisure Is Hard Work: Digital Practices and Future Competencies. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (pp. 167-184). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Duffett, M. (2013). *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the study of media fan culture*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Duffy, B. E. (2017). *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational* Work. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Duffy, B. E., & Hund, E. (2015). "Having it all" on social media: Entrepreneurial femininity and self-branding among fashion bloggers. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2).

Duffy, B. E., & Pooley, J. D. (2017). "Facebook for Academics": The Convergence of Self-Branding and Social Media Logic on Academia.edu. *Social Media + Society*, 1-11.

Dumova, T. (2012). Social Interaction Technologies and the Future of Blogging. In T. Dumova, & R. Fiordo (Eds.), *Blogging in the Global Society: Cultural, Political and Geographical Aspects* (pp. 249-274). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.

du Plooy, T. (2006). Genre Analysis. In P. Fourie (Ed.), *Media Studies: Content, Audiences and Production*, *Volume 2* (pp. 59-101). Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta.

Dumenco, S. (2014). I wrote this column about the media. You won't believe what happened next. *Advertising Age,* 85(12), 38.

Dutton, W. H., & Reisdorf, B. C. (2017). Cultural divides and digital inequalities: attitudes shaping Internet and social media divides. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-21.

Eagleton-Pierce, M. (2016). *Neoliberalism: the key concepts.* London: Routledge.

Eco, U. (1968). *La Struttura Assente, La Ricera Semiotica e il Metodo Strutturale,* [The absent structure, semiotic research and the structuralist method]. Milan, Italy: Bompiani.

Edmunds, J., & Turner, B. (2002). *Generations, Culture and Society.* Buckingham: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.

Efimova, L., & Grudin, J. (2007). *Crossing Boundaries: A Case Study of Employee Blogging.* Paper presented at Fortieth Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-40), Hawaii.

Eilberg-Schwartz, H., & Doniger W. (1995). *Off With Her Head!: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Eighmey, J., & McCord, L. (1998). Adding value in the information age: Uses and gratifications of sites on the World Wide Web. *Journal of business research*, 41(3), 187-194.

Elliot, A. (2008). *Concepts of the Self* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Ellis, C., Kiesinger, C., & Tillmann-Healy, L. (1997). Interactive interviewing: talking about emotional experience. In R. Hertz (Ed.), *Reflexivity and Voice* (pp. 119-149). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellison, N. (2004). Reconsidering Political and Popular Understandings of the Digital Divide. *New Media & Society*, 6(5), 341-362.

Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication*, 11(2), 415-441.

Ellison, N., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12, 1143-1168.

Ermisch, J. (1986). Fortunes of Birth: The Impact of Generation Size on the Relative Earnings of Young Men. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy,* 35, 266-282.

Espiritu, Y. L. (2001). "We don't sleep around like white girls do": family, culture, and gender in Filipina American lives. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture*, 26(2), 415-440.

Evans, E. (2011). *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media, and Daily Life*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fayazmanesh, S. (2006). *Money and Exchange: Folktales and Reality.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Felski, R., & Fraiman, S. (2012). Introduction. *New Literary History*, 43, v-xii.

Ferrari, J., Johnson, J., & McCown, W. (1995). *Procrastination and Task Avoidance: Theory, Research, and Treatment*. London: Plenum.

Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-Step* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Finlay, L. (2006). 'Rigour', 'Ethical Integrity' or 'Artistry'? Reflexively Reviewing Criteria for Evaluating Qualitative Research. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69(7), 319-326.

Finlay, L. (2012). Five lenses for the reflexive interviewer. In J. Gubrium, J. Holstein, A. Marvasti, & K. McKinney (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (2nd ed.) (pp. 317 – 332). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fish, S. (1983). Short people got no reason to live: Reading irony. *Daedalus*, 112(1), 175-191.

Fiske, J. (1987). *Television Culture*, London: Routledge.

Fiske, J. (1988). Meaningful Moments. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5, 246-251.

Fiske, J. (1990). *Introduction to Communication Studies* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Fiske, J. (1992). The cultural economy of fandom. In L.A. Lewis (Ed.), *The Adoring Audience* (pp. 30-49). London: Routledge.

Fiske, J. (1998). Television: polysemy and popularity. In R. Dickinson, R. Harindranath, & O. Linné (Eds.), *Approaches to Audiences: A Reader* (pp. 62-83). London: Edward Arnold.

Flick, U. (1992). Triangulation Revisited. Strategy of or Alternative to Validation of Qualitative Data. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 22, 175-97.

Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). London: Sage.

Fogelman, K. (2002). Surveys and sampling. In M. Coleman & A. Briggs (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* (pp. 93-107). London: Sage.

Foucault, M. (1988). The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom. In: J. W. Bernauer, & D. M. Rasmussen (Eds.), *The Final Foucault* (pp. 1-20). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (G. Burchell, Trans.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fourie, P. (2001). *Media studies: Content, audiences and production*. Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta.

Francis, K. (2013). Ethnography. In B. Taylor, & K. Francis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in the Health Sciences: Methodologies, methods and processes* (pp. 66-76). Oxon: Routledge.

Freidson, E. (1975). *Doctoring together*. New York, NY: Elsevier.

Fresnoza-Flot, A., & Shinozaki, K. (2017). Transnational perspectives on intersecting experiences: gender, social class and generation among Southeast Asian migrants and their families. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-18

Frey, J., & Fontana, A. (1991). The group interview in social research. *Social Science Journal,* 28, 175-187.

Friedman, W. (2009). Ad-on: "Q" score may suggest better TV performance. *MediaPost*. Retrieved from: http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/98834/ad-on-q-score-may-suggest-better-tv-performance.html?edition.

Frow, J. (1995). *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fuchs, C. (2010). Labour in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet. *The Information Society*, 26, 179–96.

Fuchs, C. (2012). The Political Economy of Privacy on Facebook. *Television & New Media*, 13(2), 139–59.

Fuchs, C. (2014). *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage

Fuchs, C. (2015). *Culture and Economy in the Age of Social Media.* Oxon: Routledge.

Fuchs, C., & Dyer-Witheford, N. (2012). Karl Marx @ Internet Studies. *New Media & Society*, 15(5), 782-796.

Fuchs, C., & Fisher, E. (2015). Introduction: Value and Labour in the Digital Age. In E. Fisher & C. Fuchs (Eds.), *Reconsidering Value and Labour in the Digital Age* (pp. 3-25). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gaines, D. (1991). *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead End Kids*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Gandini, A. (2016). Digital work: Self-branding and social capital in the freelance knowledge economy. *Marketing Theory,* 16(1), 123-141.

Ganley, D., & Lampe, C. (2009). The ties that bind: Social network principles in online communities. *Decision Support Systems*, 47, 268-274.

Gardiner, M. (2012). Henri Lefebvre and the 'Sociology of Boredom'. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 29(2), 37-62.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Malden, MA: Polity Press/Blackwell Publishing.

Gauntlett, D. (2008). *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

Gauntlett, D., & Hill, A. (1999). *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.

Gee, E., Takeuchi, L., & Wartella, E. (Eds.) (2018). *Children and Families in the Digital Age: Learning Together in a Media Culture.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Geertz, C. (1973). *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gehl, R. W. (2011). Ladders, samurai and blue collars: Personal branding in Web 2.0. *First Monday*, 16(9), 3-24. Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3579/3041

Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.

Giddens, A. (1977). *Studies in Social and Political Theory*. London: Routledge.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Gill, S. (1995). Globalisation, market civilisation, and disciplinary neoliberalism. *Millennium*, 24(3), 399-423.

Gillmor, D. (2004). *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People for the People*. Cambridge: O'Reilly.

Gilroy-Ware, M. (2017). *Filling the Void: Emotion, Capitalism and Social Media*. London: Repeater.

Gitlin, T. (1983). *Inside Prime Time*. London: Routledge.

Gitlin, T. (1989). The postmodern predicament. *The Wilson Quarterly*, 13(3), 67-76.

Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.

Gledhill, J. (2004). Neoliberalism. In D. Nugent, & J. Vincent (Eds.), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics* (pp. 332-348). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Godbout, J., & Caillé, A. (1998). *The world of the gift* (D. Winkler, Trans.). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press. (Original work published 1992)

Goel, S., & Salganik, M. (2010). Assessing respondent-driven sampling. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107, 6743-6747.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*. London: The Penguin Press.

Golding, P., & Murdock, G. (2000). Culture, Communications and Political Economy. In J. Curran, & M. Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass Media and Society* (3rd ed.) (pp. 70–92). London: Edward Arnold.

Goldkuhl, G., & Cronholm, S. (2003). Multi-grounded theory – Adding theoretical grounding to grounded theory. *Proceedings of 2nd European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management (ECRM), Reading.* Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267195830_Multi-grounded_theory_-_Adding_theoretical_grounding_to_grounded_theory.

Goldsmith, D., & Fitch, K. (1997). The normative context of advice as social support. *Human Communication Research*, 23, 454-476.

Goldstein, D. M. (2012). Decolonialising 'actually existing neoliberalism'. *Social Anthropology*, 20(3), 304-309.

Goldthorpe, J. (1996). Class Analysis and the Reorientation of Class Theory. *British Journal of Sociology*, 47(3), 481-505.

Goldthorpe, J. (2007). *On Sociology*, *Vol. 2* (2nd ed.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gorton, K. (2009). *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Gomes, C. (2017). *Transient Mobility and Middle Class Identity: Media and Migration in Australia and Singapore.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Graves, L. (2007). *Emergence, Affordance, Determinism: News-Related Blogs as a Case Study in Technological Effects*. Paper presented at International Communications Association, San Francisco, CA.

Gray, J. (2003). New audiences, new textualities: Anti-fans and non-fans. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(1), 64-81.

Gray, J. (2010). *Show Sold Separately*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Gray, J., Sandvoss, C., & Harrington, L. (2007). Why study fans?. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, & L. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (pp. 1-18). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Grazian, D. (2003). *Blue Chicago.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Green, J., & Jenkins, H. (2011). Spreadable Media: How Audiences Create Value and Meaning in a Networked Economy. In Nightingale, V. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Media Audiences* (pp. 109-127). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Grossberg, L. (1988). Wandering Audiences, Nomadic Critics. *Cultural Studies*, 2(3), 377-392.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.) (2001). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A., & McKinney, K. (Eds.) (2012). *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Guest, G., & MacQueen, K. (2008). Reevaluationg Guidelines in Qualitative Research. In G. Guest, & K. MacQueen (Eds.), *Handbook for Team-based Qualitative Research* (pp. 205-226). Lanham, MD: Altamira.

Guignon, C. (1984). Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time. In C. Calhoun, & R.C. Solomon (Eds.), *What is an Emotion? Classic Reading in Philosophical Psychology* (pp. 230-243). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gumbrecht, M. (2004). *Blogs as Protected Space.* Paper presented at World Wide Web Conference, New York, NY.

Gunaratne, S. A. (2009). Emerging global divides in media and communication theory: European universalism versus non-Western reactions. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 19(4), 366-383.

Gunter, B., & Wober, M. (1992). *The Reactive Viewer*. London: John Libbey and Company.

Hadas, L., & Shifman, L. (2013). Keeping the Elite Powerless: Fan-Producer Relations in the "Nu Who" (and New YOU) Era. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 30(4), 275-291.

Hall, J., & Baym, N. (2011). Calling and texting (too much): Mobile maintenance expectations, (over)dependence, entrapment, and friendship satisfaction. *New Media & Society*, 14(2), 316-331.

Hall, J., Baym, N., & Miltner, K. (2014). Put down that phone and talk to me: Understanding the roles of mobile phone norm adherence and similarity in relationships. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 2(2), 134-153.

Hall, S. (1973). Encoding and decoding in the media discourse. *Stenciled paper*, 7, 1-20.

Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972-79* (pp. 128-138). London: Routledge.

Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of 'ideology': Return of the repressed in media studies. In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran and J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Culture, society and the media* (pp. 52-86). London: Methuen.

Hall, S. (1987). Minimal Selves. In H. A. Baker, M. Diawara, & R. H. Lindeborg (Eds.) (1996), *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (pp. 114-119). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In K. Woodward (Ed.) (1997), *Identity and Difference* (pp. 51-59). London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1992). The Question of Cultural Identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.), *Modernity and its Futures* (pp. 273-325). Cambridge: Polity.

Hall, S., & O'Shea, A. (2013). Common-sense neoliberalism. *Soundings*, 55(55), 9-25.

Halsey, A. H. (1986). *Change in British Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hamilton, N., & Stoltz Chinchilla, N. (2001). *Seeking Community in a Global City: Guatemalans and Salvadorans in Los Angeles*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Hampton, K., & Wellman, B. (1999). Netville online and offline: Observing and surveying a wired suburb. *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 43, 475-492.

Hampton, K., & Wellman, B. (2001). Long distance community in the network society: Contact and support beyond Netville. *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 45, 476-495.

Hampton, K. N., Lee, C., & Her, E. J. (2011). How new media affords network diversity: Direct and mediated access to social capital through participation in local social settings. *New Media & Society*, 13(7), 1031-1049.

Haralovich, M. (1992). Sit-coms and suburbs: positioning the 1950s homemaker. In L. Spigel, & D. Mann (Eds.), *Private Screenings: Television and the female consumer* (pp. 111-141). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Hargittai, E. (2010). Digital Na(t)ives? Variation in Internet Skills and Uses among Members of the "Net Generation". *Sociological Inquiry*, 80(1), 92-113.

Harper, R., Whitworth, E., & Page, R. (2012). Fixity: Identity, time and durée on Facebook. *Selected Papers of Internet Research.*

Harris, C., & Chasin, J. (2006). *The Impact of Technological Innovation on Media Exposure Tracking: In Search of The New Traditional*. Paper presented at ARF Audience Measurement Symposium, New York, NY.

Hartley, J., Burgess, J., & Bruns, A. (Eds.) (2015). *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2007). Neoliberalism as creative destruction. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, 610(1), 21-44.

Harvey, D. (2010). *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. London: Verso.

Hasebrink, U., & Popp, J. (2006). Media repertoires as a result of selective media use: A conceptual approach to the analysis of patterns of exposure. *Communications*, 31, 369-387.

Hassan, R. (2004). *Media, Politics and the Network Society.* Maidenhead: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.

Hay, J. (2005). *Overhaulin' TV and government (Thoughts on the political campaign to Pimp Your Ride).* Retrieved from: http://www.flowtv.org.

Hayashi, K. (2010). Kokyou Hoso NHK no Ichika. [NHK as the Public Broadcasting: the Future of Audience-First Policy]. In A. Kitada (Ed.), *Jiyuu heno Toi 4 [Communication questions of liberty, vol.4]* (pp. 179-203). Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.

Hearn, A. (2008). Meat, Mask, Burden: Probing the contours of the branded self. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8(2), 197-217.

Heckathorn, D. (1997). *Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations.* Retrieved from: http://www.respondentdrivensampling.org/reports/RDS1.pdf.

Heckathorn, D. (2002). Respondent-Driven Sampling II: Deriving Valid Population Estimates from Chain-Referral Samples of Hidden Populations. *Social Problems*, 49(1), 11-34.

Heckathorn, D. (2007). Extensions of Respondent-Driven Sampling: Analyzing Continuous Variables and Controlling for Differential Recruitment. *Sociological Methodology*, 37, 151-207.

Held, D. (2006). *Models of Democracy* (3rd ed.). Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Hennink, M., & Simkhada, P. (2004). Sex Trafficking in Nepal: Context and Process. *Asia Pacific Migration Journal*, 13(3), 305-338.

Hermes, J. (1995). *Reading women's magazines. An analysis of everyday media use*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hermes, J. (2014). Rediscovering twentieth-century feminist audience research. In C. Carter, L. Steiner, & L. McLaughlin (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender* (pp. 61-70). Oxon: Routledge.

Herring, S. (1996). *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* Pragmatics and Beyond Series. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2006). Bourdieu, the media and cultural production. *Media Culture & Society*, 28(2), 211-231.

Hesse-Biber, S., & Leavy, P. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (2017). *HE students by HE provider, level of study, mode of study and domicile 2015/16*. Retrieved from: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/12-01-2017/sfr242-student-enrolments-and-qualifications.

Highmore, B. (2002). *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Highmore, B. (2011). *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday*. London: Routledge.

Highmore, B. (2013). Feeling Our Way: Mood and Cultural Studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 10(4), 427-438.

Hills, M. (2002). *Fan Cultures*. London: Routledge.

Hills, M. (2009). Participatory culture: mobility, interactivity and identity. In G. Creeber, & R. Martin (Eds.), *Digital Cultures: Understanding New Media* (pp. 30-38). Maidenhead: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.

Hills, M. (2013). Fiske's 'textual productivity' and digital fandom: Web 2.0 democratization versus fan distinction?. *Participations Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 10(1), 130-153.

Hills, M. (2014). Playing and Pathology: Considering Social Media as 'Secondary Transitional Objects'. In C. Bainbridge, & C. Yates (Eds.), *Media and the inner world: psycho-cultural approaches to emotion, media and popular culture* (pp. 185-200). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hills, M. (2015). The expertise of digital fandom as a 'community of practice': Exploring the narrative universe of Doctor Who. *Convergence*, 21(3), 360-374.

Hinds, P. S., Vogel, R. J., & Clarke-Steffen, L. (1997). The possibilities and pitfalls of doing a secondary analysis of a qualitative data set. *Qualitative Health Research*, 7, 415-23.

Hobson, D. (1982). *Crossroads: The drama of a soap opera*. London: Methuen.

Hodge, R., & Tripp, D. (1986). *Children and television: A semiotic approach*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holden, J., & North, N. (2008). *Audience Value Across Media: Beyond a Measure of Exposure*. Paper presented at the ESOMAR Worldwide Multi Media Measurement conference, Budapest, Hungary.

Holsti, O. (1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Philippines: Addison-Wesley.

Horvat, E. M. (2001). Understanding equity and access in higher education: the potential contribution of Pierre Bourdieu. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of the theory and practice (Volume 16)* (pp. 195-238). New York, NY: Agathon.

Hutchby, I. (2001). Technologies, Texts and Affordances. *Sociology*, 35(2), 441-456.

Hyde, L. (1983). *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Hyman, H. H. (1954). *Interviewing in social research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Illouz, E. (2003). *Oprah Winfrey and the glamour of misery: An essay on popular culture.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Illouz, E. (2007). *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capital.* Cambridge: Polity.

Iorio, S. H. (2004). Focused interviews. In S. H. Iorio (Ed.), *Qualitative research in journalism. Taking it to the streets* (pp. 109-125). Mahwah, NJ; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

James, W. (1983). *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to students on Some of Life's Ideals.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1899)

Jansson, A. (2015). Polymedia Distinctions: The Sociocultural Stratification of Interpersonal Media Practices in Couple Relationships. *Nordicom Review,* 36(2) 33-50.

Jarrett, K. (2016). *Feminism, Labour, and Digital Media.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Jarvinen, D. W., & Nicholls, J. G. (1996). Adolescents' social goals, beliefs about the causes of social success, and satisfaction in peer relations. *Developmental Psychology,* 32(3), 435–441.

Jenkins, H. (1992). *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. (1999). The work of theory in the age of digital transformation. In T. Miller, & R. Stam (Eds.), *A Companion to Film Theory* (pp. 234-261). New York, NY: Wiley.

Jenkins, H. (2004). The cultural logic of media convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 7(1), 33-43.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable Media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Jenkins, R. (1996). *Social Identity.* London: Routledge.

Jensen, K. B. (2010). *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network: Mass, and Interpersonal Communication.* Oxon: Routledge.

Joiner, R., Gavin, J., Brosnan, M., Cromby, J., Gregory, H., Guiller, J., Maras, P., & Moon, A. (2013). Comparing First and Second Generation Digital Natives' Internet Use, Internet Anxiety, and Internet Identification. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking,* 16(7), 549-552.

Jung, J. Y., Qiu, J. L., & Kim, Y. C. (2001). Internet connectedness and inequality: Beyond the "divide". *Communication Research,* 28(4), 507-535.

Jung, T. (2008). Gaining Weight: How Media Exposure, Socioeconomic Status, Sedentary Lifestyle and Dietary Habits Work Together - A Secondary Analysis of a Nationally Representative Study. *The Open Communication Journal,* 2, 67-73.

Kalisch, P. A., & Kalisch, B. J. (1984). Sex role stereotypes of nurses and physicians on TV: a dichotomy of occupational portrayals. *Sex Roles 10*, 11(12), 533-553.

Kangal, K. (2016). The Karl Marx Problem in Contemporary New Media Economy: A Critique of Christian Fuchs' Account. *Television & New Media*, 17(5), 416-428.

Kaplan E. A. (1983). Is the gaze male?. In A. Snitow, C. Stansell, & S. Thompson (Eds.), *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (pp. 309-327). New York, NY: Monthly Review.

Kaplan-Weinger, J., & Ullman, C. (2015). *Language in Use in Schools and Communities.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Katona, Z., Zubcsek, P.P., & Sarvary, M. (2011). Network Effects and Personal Influences: The diffusion of an online social network. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 425-443.

Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilisation of mass communication by the individual. In J. Blumler, & E. Katz (Eds.), *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research* (pp. 249-268). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Keats-Rohan, K.S.B. (Ed.) (2007). *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook.* Oxford: P&G.

Kellner, D. (1999). The X-Files and the aesthetics and politics of postmodern pop. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57(2), 161-175.

Kendall, L. (2007). Shout into the Wind, and It Shouts Back: Identity and Interactional Tensions on Livejournal. *First Monday*, 12(9). Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/article/viewArticle/2004/1879.

Kennedy, H. (2016). *Post, mine, repeat: Social media data mining becomes ordinary*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kennedy, J. (2016). Conceptual boundaries of sharing. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(4), 461-474.

Key, W. (1980). *The Clam-Plate Orgy: And Other Subliminals the Media Use to Manipulate Your Behavior*. New York, NY: Signet.

Kingfisher, C., & Maskovsky, J. (2008). Introduction: The limits of neoliberalism. *Critique of Anthropology*, 28(2), 115-126.

Kirklees Council (2011). Census Information. Retrieved from: https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/information-and-data/census-information.aspx.

De Bruyckere, P., Kirschner, P. A., & Hulshof, C. D. (2015). *Urban myths about learning and education.* London: Academic Press.

Kiss, J. (2014). A new medium seeks old skills. *British Journalism Review*, 25(3), 33-38.

Kissin, B. (1986). *Conscious and Unconscious Programs in the Brain*. New York, NY: Plenum.

Kitzinger, J. (2004). Audience and readership research. In J. D. H. Downing (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Media Studies* (pp. 167-182). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kitzmann, A. (2003). That Different Place: Documenting the Self within Online Environments. *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 26(1), 48-65.

Kitzmann, A. (2004). *Saved from Oblivion: Documenting the Daily from Diaries to Web Cams*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Klein, N. (2000). *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. London, Flamingo.

Klein, N. (2002). *Fences and Windows.* London: Flamingo.

Kleinsmiede, H. (2001). Multimedia Challenging Epistemology; Epistemology Challenging Multimedia: Noting this Reciprocity for Multimedia Design. In R. Earnshaw, & J. Vince (Eds.), *Digital Content Creation* (pp. 60-91). London: Springer.

Klenke, K. (2008). *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*. Bingley: Emerald.

Kowalski, R., & Leary, M. (1990). Strategic self-presentation and the avoidance of aversive events: Antecedents and consequences of self-enhancement and self-depreciation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 26(4), 322-336.

Kreiss, D., Finn, M., & Turner, F. (2011). The Limits of Peer Production: Some Reminders From Max Weber for the Network Society. *New Media & Society*, 13(2), 243-259.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal Discourse*, London: Bloomsbury.

Kuehn, K., & Corrigan, T. (2013). Hope Labor - The Role of Employment Prospects in Online Social Production. *The Political Economy of Communication*, 1(1), 9-25.

Kuiken, J., Schuth, A., Spitters, M., & Marx, M. (2017). Effective headlines of newspaper articles in a digital environment. *Digital Journalism*, 5(10), 1300-1314.

Kumar, K. (1978) *Prophecy and Progress*. London: Penguin.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Lambert, A. (2013). *Intimacy and Friendship on Facebook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Langbauer, L. (1993). The city, the everyday, and boredom: the case of Sherlock Holmes. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 5(3), 80-120.

Langellier, K. (2001). 'You're Marked': Breast Cancer, Tattoo and the Narrative Performance of Identity. In J. Brockmeier & D. Carbaugh (Eds.), *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self, and Culture*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

La Pastina, A. C. (2005). Audience Ethnographies: A Media Engagement Approach. *Global Media Journal*, 4(6), 1-18.

LaRose, R. (2010). The problem of media habits. *Communication Theory*, 20, 194-222.

LaRose, R., & Eastin, M. (2004). A Social Cognitive Theory of Internet Uses and Gratifications: Toward a New Model of Media Attendance. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 48(3), 358-377.

Larsson, S. (2009). A pluralist view of generalization in qualitative research. *International journal of research & method in education*, 32(1), 25-38.

Lasch, C. (1979). *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. New York, NY: Norton

Lash, S., & Friedman, J. (1991). *Modernity and Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lasswell, H. (1948). The Structure and Function of Communication in Society. In L. Bryson (Ed.), *The Communication of Ideas* (pp. 37-51). New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34, 673-693.

Lavallée, P. (2014). Indirect sampling for hard-to-reach populations. In R. Tourangeau, B. Edwards, T. P. Johnson, K. M. Wolter, & N. Bates (Eds.), *Hard-to-Survey Populations* (pp. 445-467). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lazarsfeld, P. (1944). The controversy over detailed interviews: An Offer for Negotiation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 8, 38-60.

Lazega, E. (1997). Network analysis and qualitative research: a method of contextualization. In G. Miller, & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and Method in Qualitative Research* (pp. 119-138). London: Sage.

Leary, M. R. (2004). *The Curse of the Self: Self-Awareness, Egotism, and the Quality of Human Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (Eds.) (2003). *Handbook of Self and Identity*. London: Guilford Press.

Leaver, T. (2008). Watching *Battlestar Galactica* in Australia and the Tyranny of Digital Distance. *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture & Policy*, 126(1), 145-154.

Lee, A., & Cook, P. S. (2015). The conditions of exposure and immediacy: Internet surveillance and Generation Y. *Journal of Sociology*, 51(3), 674-688.

Lee, H.C., Ma, D.H., & Lee, T.K. (2007). *Program quality evaluation: Experience of a new assessment tool*. Paper presented at the ESOMAR Worldwide Multi Media Measurement conference, Dublin, Ireland.

Lefebvre, H. (1987). The Everyday and Everydayness (C. Levich, Trans.). *Yale French Studies*, 73, 7-11.

Lefebvre, H. (1988). Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics: Remarks Occasioned by the Centenary of Marx's Death (D. Reifman, Trans.). In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 75-88). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Critique of Everyday Life, Volume 1* (J. Moore, Trans.). London: Verso. (Original work published 1947)

Lefebvre, H. (1995). *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes September 1959-May 1961* (J. Moore, Trans.). London: Verso. (Original work published 1962)

Leijonhufvud, S. (2018). *Liquid Streaming: The Spotify Way To Music* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1171660&dswid=article.

Lembo, R. (2000). *Thinking through television*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lenhart, A. (2005). *Unstable Text: An Ethnographic Look at How Bloggers and Their Audience Negotiate Self-Presentation, Authenticity and Norm Formation* (Master's Thesis). Available from: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.208.6677andrep=rep1andtype=pdf

Lenhart, A., & Fox, S. (2006). 'Bloggers'. *Pew Internet and American Life Project* (19 July). Retrieved from: http://www.pewInternet.org/PPF/r/186/report_display.asp.

Lessig, L. (2008). *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in a Hybrid Economy*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Levin, D., & Arafeh, S. (2002). *The Digital Disconnect*. Washington, DC, WA: Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Levinson, P. (1999). *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium*. London: Routledge.

Levy, M., & Windahl, S. (1984). Audience activity and gratifications: A conceptual clarification and exploration. *Communication Research*, 11, 51-78.

Lewis, J. (1991). *The ideological octopus: An exploration of television and its audience*. London: Routledge.

Liebes, T., & Katz, E. (1990). *The export of meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lievrouw, L., & Livingstone, S. (Eds.) (2002). *The Handbook of New Media*. London: Sage.

Light, B. (2014). *Disconnecting with Social Networking Sites*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lin, C. (2002). Perceived gratifications of online media service use among potential users. *Telematics and Informatics*, 19(1), 3-19.

Lin, C., & Atkin, D. (2014). *Communication Technology and Social Change: Theory and Implications*. Oxon: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lindlof, T., & Taylor, B. (2011). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Litt, E. (2012). Knock, knock, Who's there? The imagined audience. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 56(3), 330-345.

Littlejohn, S. (1996). *Theories of Human Communication*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Liu, L. (2008). Yang and Yin in Communication: Towards a Typology and Logic of Persuasion in China. *Diogenes*, 55(1), 120-132.

Livingstone, S. (1998). Relationships between audiences and publics: Prospects for audience reception studies. In T. Liebes, & J. Curran (Eds.), *Media, Ritual and Identity* (pp. 237-255). London: Routledge.

Livingstone, S. (2003). The changing nature of audiences: From the mass audience to the interactive media user. In A. Valdivia (Ed.), *Companion to Media Studies* (pp. 337-359). Oxford: Blackwell.

Livingstone, S. (2004a). *The challenge of changing audiences: or, what is the researcher to do in the age of the internet?*. Retrieved from: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000412.

Livingstone, S. (2004b). Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies. *The Communication Review*, 7, 3-14.

Livingstone, S. (2005). On the relation between audiences and publics. In: S. Livingstone (Ed.), *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere* (pp. 17-42). Portland, OR: Intellect.

Livingstone, S. (2008). Engaging With Media - A Matter of Literacy?. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 1, 51-62.

Livingstone, S., & Das, R. (2009). *The End of Audiences? Theoretical Echoes of Reception amid the Uncertainties of Use*. Retrieved from: http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/WhosWho/AcademicStaff/SoniaLivingstone/pdf/Livingstone -and-Das,-manuscript.pdf.

Livingstone, S., & Lunt, P. (1994). *Talk on television*. London: Routledge.

Livingstone, S., & Sefton-Green, J. (2016). *The Class: Living and Learning in the Digital Age*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Lobato, R., & Thomas, J. (2015). *The Informal Media Economy*. Cambridge: Polity.

Longo, B. (2010). Human+Machine Culture: Where We Work. In R. Spilka (Ed.), *Digital Literacy for Technical Communication* (pp. 147-168). New York, NY; Routledge.

Loos, E., Haddon, L., & Mante-Meijer, E. (Eds.) (2012). *Generational Use of New Media.* London: Routledge.

Lotz, A. D., & Ross, S. (2004). Bridging Media Specific Approaches: The Value of Feminist Television Criticism. *Feminist Media Studies,* 4(2), 187-204.

Luers, E. (2008). *Web 2.0 and Audience Research: An analaysis focussing on the concept of involvement* (unpublished Master's thesis). University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany.

Lull, J. (1988). The Audience as Nuisance. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5, 239-242.

Lund, A. (2015). A Contribution to a Critique of the Concept Playbour. In E. Fisher & C. Fuchs (Eds.). *Reconsidering Value and Labour in the Digital Age* (pp. 63-79). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (1996). Rethinking the focus group in media and communication research. *Journal of Communication*, 46(2), 79-98.

Lyon, D. (2018). *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life.* Cambridge: Polity.

Maccoby, E. E. (1990). Gender and relationships: A developmental account. *American Psychologist,* 45(4), 513-520.

Macgilchrist, F. (2013). Is empowerment still a useful concept? Rethinking media practice with Rancière and the emancipated spectator. In R. Scullion, R. Gerodimos, D. Jackson, & D. G. Lilleker (Eds.), *The Media, Political Participation and Empowerment* (pp. 91-102). Oxon: Routledge.

Macnamara, J. (2010). *The 21st century media (r)evolution: emergent communication practices.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2012). Polymedia: Towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(2) 169-187.

Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2013). *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia.* Oxford: Routledge.

Maguire, E. (2015). Self-branding, hotness, and girlhood in the video blogs of Jenna Marbles. *Biography*, 38(1), 72-86.

Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Mannheim, K. (1952). *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge.* London: RKP.

Manning, P. (1992). *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Manovich, L. (2001). *The language of new media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1989). *Designing Qualitative Research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Marshall, G. (1997). *Repositioning Class.* London: Sage.

Marshall, P. D (2006). New media - new self: the changing power of celebrity. In P. D. Marshall (Ed.), *The Celebrity Culture Reader* (pp. 634-644). London: Routledge.

Martin, B. (1998). Knowledge, identity and the middle class: from collective to individualised class formation?. *The Sociological Review*, 46(4), 653-686.

Martini, M. (2018). On the user's side: YouTube and distant witnessing in the age of technology-enhanced mediability. *Convergence*, 24(1), 33-49.

Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2010). I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience. *New Media & Society*, 13(1), 114-133.

Marwick, A. E. (2010). *Status update: Celebrity, publicity, and self branding in Web 2.0.* Unpublished doctoral thesis, New York University, New York.

Marwick, A. E. (2012). The public domain: Social surveillance in everyday life. *Surveillance & Society*, 9(4), 378.

Marwick, A. E. (2013) *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity and Branding in Social Media Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Marx, K. (1971). *Theories of Surplus-Value,* Part III (J. Cohen & S.W. Ryazanskaya, Trans.). Moscow: Progress Publishers. (Original work published 1964)

Marx, K. (1973). *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (M. Nicolaus, Trans.). London: Penguin. (Original work published 1939)

Marx, K. (1976). *Capital, Volume I* (B. Fowkes, Trans.). London: Penguin. (Original work published 1867)

Marx, K. (1978). *Capital, Volume II* (D. Fernbach, Trans.). London: Penguin. (Original work published 1885)

Marx, K. (1981). *Capital, Volume III* (D. Fernbach, Trans.). London: Penguin. (Original work published 1894)

Massey, D. (1993). Power geometry and a progressive sense of place. In J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson, & L. Tickner (Eds.). *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (pp. 59-69). London: Routledge.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender.* Cambridge: Polity.

Massumi, B. (2005). The future birth of the affective fact. *Conference proceedings: Ethics and Politics of Virtuality and Indexicality*. University of Leeds (June 30), pp. 1-12.

Mathieu, D., & Brites, M. J. (2015). Expanding the Reach of the Interview in Audience and Reception Research: The Performative and Participatory Models of Interview. In F. Zeller, C. Ponte, & B. O'Neill (Eds.), *Revitalising Audience Research: Innovations in European Audience Research* (pp. 44-61). New York, NY: Routledge.

Mauss, M. (1990). *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (W. D. Halls, Trans.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 1950)

Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, 279-300.

Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Mazer, J. P., Murphy, R. E., & Simonds, C. J. (2007). I'll see you on "Facebook": The effects of computer-mediated teacher self-disclosure on student motivation, affective learning, and classroom climate. *Communication Education*, 56(1), 1-17.

McCarthy, A. (2005). *The republic of Tyra*. Retrieved from: http:/www.flowtv.org.

McCoy, C. A., & Scarborough, R. C. (2014). Watching "bad" television: Ironic consumption, camp, and guilty pleasures. *Poetics*, 47, 41-59.

McCracken, G. (1988). *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

McEwan, B., & Sobre-Denton, M. (2011). Virtual Cosmopolitanism: Constructing Third Cultures and Transmitting Social and Cultural Capital Through Social Media. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 4(4), 252-258.

McGee, M. (2005). *Self-help Inc.: Makeover culture in American life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

McGuigan, J. (2014). The Neoliberal Self. *Culture Unbound*, 6, 223–240.

McGuigan, J. (2016). *Neoliberal culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

McKenna, K. Y., & Bargh, J. A. (1998). Coming out in the age of the Internet: Identity "demarginalization" through virtual group participation. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 75(3), 681-694.

McLuhan, H. M. (1962). *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

McQuail, D. (1997). *Audience Analysis*. London: Sage.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (6th ed.). London: Sage.

Mead, G. H. (1967). *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation.* New York, NY: William Morrow & Company.

Mead, M. (1935). *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies.* New York, NY: William Morrow & Company.

Mehdizadeh, S. (2010). Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on Facebook. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 13(4), 357-364.

Meinhof, U. (2005). Initiating a public: Malagasy music and live audiences in differentiated cultural contexts. In: S. Livingstone (Ed.), *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere* (pp. 115-138). Portland, OR: Intellect.

Menchen Trevino, E. (2005). *Blogger Motivations: Power, Pull, and Positive Feedback.* Retrieved from: blog.erickamenchen.net/2005/06/28/blogger-motivations-power-pull-and-positve-feedback.

Menneer, P. (1987). Audience Appreciation: A Different Story From Audience Numbers. *Admap*, (June), 36-40.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merton, R. (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Micu, A., Plummer, J., & Cook, W. (2007). *On the road to a new effectiveness model: Measuring emotional responses to television advertising*. ARF white paper. Retrieved from: http://www.aaaa.org/working/essentials/Documents/tv_road.pdf.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller C. L. (1987). Qualitative differences among gender-stereotyped toys: implications for cognitive social development. *Sex Roles 16*, 9(10), 473-488.

Miller, J., & Glassner, B. (2004). The inside and the outside: finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (2nd ed.) (pp. 125-139). London: Sage.

Miller, T., & McHoul, A. (1998). Helping the self. *Social Text*, 57(Winter), 127-155.

Miron, D. (2003). Enjoyment of violence. In J. Bryant, D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, & J. Cantor (Eds.), *Communication and Emotion: Essays in honor of Dolf Zillmann* (pp. 445–472). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mitgang, L. D. (2000). *Big Bird and Beyond: The New Media and the Markle Foundation*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

Monette, D. R., Sullivan, T. J., DeJong, C. R., & Hilton, T. P. (2014). *Applied Social Research: A Tool for the Human Services* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. S. (1988). Measurement techniques for the study of communication networks. In C. Tardy (Ed.). *A Handbook for the Study of Human Communication: Methods and Instruments for Observing, Measuring and Assessing Communication Processes* (pp. 107-138). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing

Moran, J. (2006). *Reading the Everyday*. London: Routledge.

Moran, J. (2007). *Queuing for Beginners: The Story of Daily Life from Breakfast to Bedtime*. London: Profile Books.

Morgan, D. (1988). *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Morley, D. (1986). *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. London: Routledge.

Morley, D. (1992). *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

Morley, D. (1993). Active Audience Theory: Pendulums and Pitfalls. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 13-19.

Morley, D. (2000). *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*. Oxon: Routledge.

Morley, D., & Brunsdon, C. (1999). *The Nationwide Television Studies*. London: Routledge.

Morley, D., & Robins, K. (1995). *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*. Oxon: Routledge.

Morrison, V., & Gomy, P. (2008). *Should we forget advertising awareness? Measuring emotional and implicit attitudes*. Paper presented at the ESOMAR Worldwide Multi Media Measurement conference, Budapest, Hungary.

Mortensen, T., & Walker, J. (2002). *Blogging thoughts: Personal publication as an online research tool*. Retrieved from:

http://www.hivolda.no/attachments/site/group23/Researching_ICTs_in_context-Ch11-Mortensen-Walker.pdf.

Mouton, J., & Morais, H. C. (1988). *Basic Concepts in the Methodology of the Social Sciences*. Pretoria, South Africa: HSRC.

Mueller, G. E. (1958). The Hegel Legend of "Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis". *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19(3), 411-414.

Murphy, B. C., & Eisenberg, N. (2002) An Integrative Examination of Peer Conflict: Children's Reported Goals, Emotions, and Behaviors. *Social Development*, 11(4), 534–557.

Murphy, P. (1999). Media cultural studies' uncomfortable embrace of ethnography. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 23(3), 205-221.

Musser, J., & O'Reilly, T. (2006). *O'Reilly Radar: Web 2.0, Best Principles and Practices*. Retrieved from: oreilly.com/catalog.

Napoli, P. (2010). Revisiting mass communication and the work of the audience in the new media environment. *Media Culture & Society*, 32(3), 505-516.

Napoli, P. (2011). *Audience evolution: New technologies and the transformation of media audiences*. Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press.

Napoli, P. (2012). Audience Evolution and the Future of Audience Research. *International Journal on Media Management*, 14(2), 79-97.

Nardi, B., Schiano, D., Gumbrecht, M., & Swartz, L. (2004). Why We Blog. *Communications of the ACM*, 47(12), 41-46.

Neff, G. (2012). *Venture Labor: Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Negri, A. (1991). *Marx beyond Marx*. London: Pluto.

Nelissen, S., & Van den Bulck, J. (2018). When digital natives instruct digital immigrants: Active guidance of parental media use by children and conflict in the family. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(3), 375-387.

Neuendorf, K., Atkin, D., & Jeffres, L. (2001). Reconceptualizing channel repertoire in the urban cable environment. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 45(3), 464-482.

Newcomb, H. (1988). One night of prime time: an analysis of televisions multiple voices. In J. Carey (Ed.), *Media, myth, and narratives: television and the press* (pp. 88-112). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Newhagen, J., & Rafaeli, S. (1996). Why communication researchers should study the internet: A dialogue. *Journal of Communication*, 46(1), 4-13.

Nienhaus, B. (1993). *Lost Causes: Mass media exposure's empirical meanings in survey research, introduction to commodity relations* (Doctoral thesis). Available from: http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/103651.

Niens, U., & Cairns, E. (2003). Explaining Social Change and Identity Management Strategies: New Directions for Future Research. *Theory & Psychology*, 13(4), 489-509.

Nightingale, V. (1996). *Studying Audiences: The Shock of the Real*. London: Routledge.

Nonnecke, R. B. (2000). *Lurking in email-based discussion lists* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from: http://www.cis.uoguelph.ca/~nonnecke/research/blairsthesis.pdf.

Nonnecke, B., & Preece, J. (2000). Lurker demographics: Counting the silent. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 73-80). ACM.

Nonnecke, B., & Preece, J. (2001). *Why lurkers lurk*. Paper presented at Americas Conference on Information Systems, Boston, MA.

Ocejo, R. (2013). *Ethnography and the City: Readings on Doing Urban Fieldwork*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Odella, F. (2011). Social Networks and Communities: From Traditional Society to the Virtual Sphere. In M. Safar, & K. Mahdi (Eds.), *Social Networking and Community Behavior Modeling: Qualitative and Quantitative Measures* (pp. 1-25). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.

O'Donnell, R. (1990). *Adam Smith's Theory of Value and Distribution: A Reappraisal*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

O'Farrell, M., & Vallone, L. (1999). *Virtual Gender: Fantasies of Subjectivity and Embodiment*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Office for National Statistics (2011). *2011 Census.* Retrieved from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census.

Office for National Statistics (2016). *Internet Users in the UK: 2016.* Retrieved from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016.

Oliver, D., Romm Livermore, C., & Sudweeks, F. (2009). *Self-Service in the Internet Age: Expectations and Experiences*. London: Springer.

Olsen, W. (2006). *Triangulation in social research: qualitative and quantitative methods can really be mixed*. Retrieved from: http://research.apc.org/images/5/54/Triangulation.pdf.

Ong, W. J. (1982). *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen.

O'Reilly, K. (2012). *Ethnographic Methods* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

Oskamp, S., & Schultz, P. W. (2005). *Attitudes and Opinions*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ouellette, L. (2004). ''Take responsibility for yourself'': Judge Judy and the neoliberal citizen. In S. Murray, & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Reality TV: Remaking television culture* (pp. 231-250). New York: New York University Press.

Owen, B. M., & Wildman, S. S. (1992). *Video economics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Page, R. (2012). The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags. *Discourse & communication*, 6(2), 181-201.

Page, R. (2014). Hoaxes, hacking and humour: analysing impersonated identity on social network sites. *The language of social media*, 46-64.

Pahl, R. E. (1989). Is the emperor naked? Some questions on the adequacy of sociological theory in urban and regional research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 13, 709-720.

Pahl, R. E. (1993). Does Class Analysis Without Class Theory Have a Future?. *Sociology*, 27(2), 253-258.

Palfrey, J., & Gasser, U. (2008). *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. New York, NY: Basic.

Palmgreen, P., & Rayburn, J. (1985). An expectancy-value approach to media gratifications. In J. Rosengren, P. Palmgreen, & L. Wenner (Eds.), *Media Gratification Research* (pp. 61-72). New York, NY: Arno Press.

Papacharissi, Z. (2007). Audiences as Media Producers: Content Analysis of 260 Blogs. In M. Tremayne (Ed.), *Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media* (pp. 3-20). London: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2009a). The virtual geographies of social networks: a comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld. *New Media & Society*, 11(1-2), 199-220.

Papacharissi, Z. (2009b). The virtual sphere 2.0: the internet, the public sphere, and beyond. In A. Chadwick, & P. H. Howard (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics* (pp. 230-245). New York, NY: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2010). *A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Papacharissi, Z., & Easton, E. (2013). In the Habitus of the New: Structure, Agency, and the Social Media Habitus. In. J. Hartley, J, Burgess, & A. Bruns (Eds.), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (pp. 171-184). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Papacharissi, Z., & Rubin, A. (2000). Predictors of Internet usage. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 44, 175-196.

Park, D. W. (2009). Pierre Bourdieu's Habitus and the Economy of the Media. *Democratic Communiqué,* 23(1), 1-21.

Park, S. (2017). *Digital Capital.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pauly, J. J. (1991). A beginner's guide to doing qualitative research in mass communication. *Journalism Monographs*, 125, 1-29.

Pavlik, J. (2012). *Media in the Digital Age*. Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press.

Peacock, J., Purvis, S., & Hazlett, R. (2007). Coping with television production, Individuals in Mass Media Organisations. *Creativity and Constraint*, 131-144.

Pearson, E. (2009). All the World Wide Web's a stage: The performance of identity in online social networks. *First Monday*. Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2162/2127.

Pearson, R., & Uricchio, W. (1990). How Many Times Shall Caesar Bleed in Sport? Shakespeare and the Cultural Debate About Moving Pictures. *Screen*, 31(3), 243-261.

Peck, J., Theodore, N., & Brenner, N. (2009). Post-neoliberalism and its malcontents. *Antipode,* 41(SI), 94-116.

Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of applied developmental psychology*, 30(3), 227-238.

Perloff, R. M. (2013). *The Dynamics of Political Communication: Media and Politics in a Digital Age*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Perry, D. (2001). *Theory and Research in Mass Communication: Contexts and Consequences*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Perse, E. (1990). Audience selectivity and involvement in the newer media environment. *Communication Research*, 17, 675-697.

Perse, E., & Courtright, J. (1993). Normative Images of Communication Media Mass and Interpersonal Channels in the New Media Environment. *Human Communication Research*, 19(4), 485-503.

Peters, M. A. (2001). *Poststructuralism, Marxism, and neoliberalism: Between theory and politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Peterson, E., & Berger, M. (2008). *Measuring Multimedia Content in a Web 2.0 World: Objectives, definitions and KPI's for online video*. Retrieved from: https://robertoigarza.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/rep-measuring-multimedia-content-nedstat-2008.pdf.

Peterson, T. (2015). Facebook users are posting 75% more videos than last year. *AdAge*. Retrieved from: http://adage.com/article/digital/facebook-users-posting-75-videos-year/296482/.

Petronio, S. (2002). *Boundaries of privacy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Pew Research Center (2016). *Social Media Update 2016*. Retrieved from: http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/.

Phillips. A. (2012). *Missing Out: In praise of the unlived life*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Phillips, W. (2015). *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship Between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture*. London: MIT Press.

Phillips, W., & Milner, R. M. (2017). *The ambivalent Internet: Mischief, oddity, and antagonism online*. Cambridge: Polity.

Philo, G. (1999). *Message Received: Glasgow Media Group Research, 1993-1998*. Glasgow: Pearson.

Picard, R. (2010). *Value Creation and the Future of News Organizations: Why and How Journalism Must Change to Remain Relevant in the Twenty-First Century*. Lisbon, Portugal: Media XXI.

Pilcher, J. (1995). *Age and Generation in Modern Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pink, S., & Leder Mackley, K. (2013). Saturated and situated: expanding the meaning of media in the routines of everyday life. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(6), 677-691.

Postmes, T., & Baym, N. (2005). Intergroup dimensions of Internet. In J. Harwood, & H. Giles (Eds.), *Intergroup communication: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 213-238). New York: Peter Lang.

Plutschow, H. (1995). *Japan's Name Culture: The Significance of Names in a Religious, Political and Social context.* London: Routledge.

Potter, W. (1996). *An Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Prandy, K. (1998). Deconstructing Classes: Critical Comments on the Revised Social Classification. *Work Employment and Society*, 12(4), 743-753.

Pratten, R. (2010). *Audience Engagement and Content Strategy for Transmedia Storytellers.* Retrieved from: http://www.tstoryteller.com/audience-engagement-and-content-strategy-for-transmedia-storytellers.

Preece, J., Maloney-Krichmar, D., & Abras, C. (2003). History of online communities. *Encyclopedia of community*, *3*, 1023-1027.

Preece, J., Nonnecke, B., & Andrews, D. (2004). The top five reasons for lurking: improving community experiences for everyone. *Computers in human behavior*, 20(2), 201-223.

Prensky, J. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon (MCB University Press)*, 9(5), 1-6.

Prensky, J. (2012). *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom: Hopeful Essays for 21st Century Learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Press, A., & Livingstone, S. (2006). Taking audience research into the age of new media: Old problems and new challenges. In M. White, & J. Schwoch (Eds.), *Questions of Method in Cultural Studies* (pp. 175-200). Oxford: Blackwell.

Priest, S. H. (2010). *Doing Media Research: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Prior, M. (2007). *Post-broadcast democracy: How media choice increases inequality in political involvement and polarizes elections.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Proulx, S., Heaton, L., Choon, M. J. K., & Millette, M. (2011). Paradoxical empowerment of producers in the context of informational capitalism. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 17(1), 9-29.

Pudner, K. (2007). Comment me back: Expectations of intimacy in the culture of blog. *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 21(1), 65-71.

Pulcini, E. (2012) *The Individual without Passions: Modern Individualism and the Loss of the Social Bond* (K. Whittle, Trans.)*.* Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy,* 6(1), 65-78.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, R. (Ed.). (2002). *Democracies in flux: The evolution of social capital in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 8(3), 238-264.

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: a comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science Technology Society*, 30(5), 350-361.

Quinn, K., & Papacharissi, Z. (2014). The place where our social networks reside: Social media and society. *Media and Social Life*, 1, 189-208.

Radway, J. (1984). *Reading the romance*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Radway, J. A. (1988). Reception Study: Ethnography and the Problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects. *Cultural Studies,* 2(3), 359-376.

Raney, A. A. (2003). Disposition-based theories of enjoyment. In J. Bryant, D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, & J. Cantor (Eds.), *Communication and Emotion: Essays in Honor of Dolf Zillmann* (pp. 61-84). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Raney, A. A., & Bryant J. (2002). An integrated theory of enjoyment. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 402-415.

Rapley, T. (2001). The art(fullness) of open-ended interviewing: some considerations of analysing interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 33-54.

RationalWiki (2018). *Daily Mail*. Retrieved from: https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Daily_Mail.

Rau, P. L. P., Gao, Q., & Ding, Y. (2008). Relationship between the level of intimacy and lurking in online social network services. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(6), 2757-2770.

Rawlins, W. (1983). Openness as problematic in ongoing friendships: two conversational dilemmas. *Communication Monographs*, 50(1), 1-13.

Raynes-Goldie, K. (2010). Aliases, creeping, and wall cleaning: Understanding privacy in the age of Facebook. *First Monday*, 15(1). Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2775/2432.

Read, J. (2009). A genealogy of homo-economicus: Neoliberalism and the production of subjectivity. *Foucault studies*, 25-36.

Reed, A. (2005). My Blog Is Me: Texts and Persons in UK Online Journal Culture (and Anthropology). *Ethnos*, 70(2), 220-242.

Reinhard, C. (2018). *Fractured Fandoms: Contentious Communication in Fan Communities.* New York, NY: Lexington.

Renckstorf, K., McQuail, D., & Jankowski, N. (1996). *Media Use as Social Action: A European Approach to Audience Studies.* London: Libbey.

Repko, A. (2008). *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reynolds, R. (2016). Defining, designing for, and measuring social constructivist digital literacy: development in learners: a proposed framework. *Education Tech Research*, 64(4), 735-762.

Rheingold, H. (1993). *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Riano, P. (1994). *Women in Grassroots Communication: Furthering Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ridell, S. (2012). Mode of Action Perspective to Engagements with Social Media: Articulating Activities on the Public Platforms of Wikipedia and YouTube. In H. Bilandzic, G. Patriarche, & P. Traudt (Eds.), *The Social Use of Media: Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research* (pp. 19-35). Bristol: Intellect.

Rideout, V., & Hammel, E. (2006). *The Media Family*, Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

Riessman, C. K. (2003). Analysis of Personal Narratives. In J. Holstein & J. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns* (pp. 331-146). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rimke, H. M. (2000). Governing citizens through self-help literature. *Cultural Studies*, 14(1), 61-78.

Robertson, M., & Williams, M. (Eds.) (2004). *Young people, leisure and place: Cross-cultural perspectives.* New York, NY: Nova Science Publisher, Inc.

Robinson, L., Cotten, S. R., Ono, H., Quan-Haase, A., Mesch, G., Chen, W., Schulz, J., Hale, T. M., & Stern, M. J. (2015). Digital inequalities and why they matter. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(5), 569-582.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research: A Resource for Users of Social Research Methods in Applied Settings* (3rd ed.). Chichester: Wiley.

Robson, G., & Butler, T. (2001). Coming to terms with London: middle-class communities in a global city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 25, 70-86.

Robson, J. (2016). Engagement in structured social space: an investigation of teachers' online peer-to-peer interaction. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 41(1), 119-139.

Roemer, J. (1982). *A General Theory of Exploitation and Class.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Roeschenthaler Wolfe, K. (2014). *Blogging: How Our Private Thoughts Went Public.* Plymouth: Lexington.

Rogge, J. (1989). The media in everyday family life: some biographical and typological aspects. In E. Seiter, H. Borchers, G. Kreutzner, & E. M. Warth (Eds.), *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power* (pp. 168-179). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rojas, V., Roychowdhury, D., Okur, O., Straubhaar, J., & Estrada-Ortiz, Y. (2000). *Beyond Access: cultural capital and the roots of the digital divide.* Retrieved from: http://www.utexas.edu/research/tipi/research/Beyond_Access.pdf.

Rojas, V., Straubhaar, J., Roychowdhury, D., & Okur, O. (2004). Communities, cultural capital and the digital divide. In E. Bucy, & J. Newhagen, (Eds.), *Media Access: Social and Psychological Dimensions of New Technology Use* (pp. 107-130). London: LEA.

Romele, A., & Severo, M. (2016). The Economy of the Digital Gift: From Socialism to Sociality Online. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(5), 43-63.

Rose, A. J., & Rudolph, K. D. (2006). A review of sex differences in peer relationship processes: Potential trade-offs for the emotional and behavioral development of girls and boys. *Psychological Bulletin,* 132(1), 98-131.

Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power and Personhood.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Rosen, J. (2004). The Weblog: An Extremely Democratic Form in Journalism. In: J. Lebkoswky, & M. Ratcliffe (Eds.), *Extreme Democracy: The Book* (pp. 106-112). Lulu.com.

Rosenberg, J., & Egbert, N. (2011). Online Impression Management: Personality Traits and Concerns for Secondary Goals as Predictors of Self-Presentation Tactics on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 17, 1-18.

Rosengren, K. E. (1994). *Media Effects and Beyond: Culture, Socialization and Lifestyle.* Oxon: Routledge.

Rosengren, K. E., & Windahl, S. (1972). Mass media consumption as a functional alternative. In D. McQuail (Ed.), *Sociology of Mass Communications: Selected Readings* (pp. 166-194). Middlesex: Penguin.

Rosenstein, A., & Grant, A. (1997). Reconceptualizing the role of habit: A new model of television audience activity. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 41(3), 324-344.

Rosow, I. (1978). What is a Cohort and Why?. *Human Development,* 21, 65-75.

Ross, K., & Nightingale, V. (2003). *Media and audiences: New perspectives.* Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.

Rowe, D. (2011). Obituary for the Newspaper? Tracking the Tabloid. *Journalism*, 12(4), 449-466.

Rubin, A. (1984). Ritualized and instrumental television viewing. *Journal of Communication*, 34(3), 67-77.

Rubin, A. (2002). The uses-and-gratifications perspective of media effects. In J. Bryant, & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 525-548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2010). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2011). *Research Methods for Social Work* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2005). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ruddock, A. (2001). *Understanding Audiences: Theory and Method.* London: Sage.

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication and Society*, 3(1), 3-37.

Rust, R. T., Kamakura, W. A., & Alpert, M. I. (1992). Viewer preference segmentation and viewing choice models of network television. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 21(1), 1-18.

Ryle, G. (2009). *The Concept of Mind* (60th Anniversary Ed.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 1949).

Saad-Filho, A., & Johnston, D. (2005). *Neoliberalism: A critical reader*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sampson, H. (2004). Navigating the waves: the usefulness of a pilot in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 4(3), 383-402.

Sandvoss, C. (2005). *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption*. Cambridge: Polity.

Sandvoss, C. (2007). The death of the reader: literary theory and the study of texts in popular culture. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, & L. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (pp. 19-32). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Sandvoss, C. (2011a). Fans online: Affective media consumption and production in the age of convergence. In M. Christensen (Ed.), *Online Territories: Globalization, Mediated Practice and Social Space* (pp. 49-74). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Sandvoss, C. (2011b). Reception. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The Handbook of Media Audiences* (pp. 230-250). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sandvoss, C. (2012). From national hero to liquid star: identity and discourse in transnational sports consumption. In C. Sandvoss, A. Bernstein, & M. Real (Eds.), *Bodies of Discourse: Sports Stars, Media, and the Global Public* (pp. 171-192). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Sandvoss, C. (2015). Challenging boundaries: fans and cultural industries. In K. Oakley, & J. O'Connor (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to the Cultural Industries* (pp. 357-370). London: Routledge.

Sandvoss, C., & Kearns, L. (2014). From interpretive communities to interpretive fairs: ordinary fandom, textual selection and digital media. In L. Duits, K. Zwaan, & S. Reijnders (Eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures* (pp. 91-108). Surrey: Ashgate.

Sas, C., Dix, A., Hart, J., & Su, R. (2009). *Dramaturgical Capitalization of Positive Emotions: The Answer for* Facebook *Success?.* Retrieved from: http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/ewic_hci09_paper14.pdf.

Sashi, C.M. (2012). Customer Engagement, Buyer-Seller Relationships, and Social Media. *Management Decision*, 50(2), 253-272.

Savage, M. (2000). *Class Analysis and Social Transformation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Savage, M. (2015). *Social Class in the 21st Century.* London: Pelican Books.

Savage, M., Bagnall, G., & Longhurst, B. (2001). Ordinary, Ambivalent and Defensive: Class Identities in the Northwest of England. *Sociology,* 35(4), 875-892.

Savage, M., Bagnall, G., & Longhurst, B. (2005). *Globalization and Belonging.* London: Sage.

Schafer, M. T. (2011). *Bastard Culture! How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production.* Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

Schau, H. J., & Gilly M. C. (2003). We are what we post? Self-presentation in personal web space. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(3), 385-404.

Schlenker, B. R. (1980). *Impression Management: The Self-Concept, Social Identity, and Interpersonal Relations.* Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Schlosser, A. (2005). Posting versus Lurking: Communicating in a Multiple Audience Context. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, 260-265.

Scholz, T. (Ed.) (2013). *Digital Labour: The Internet as Playground and Factory*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Schrøder, K. C. (1988). The pleasure of 'Dynasty': The weekly reconstruction of self-confidence. In P. Drummond & R. Paterson (Eds.), *Television and its audience: International research perspectives.* London: British Film Institute.

Schrøder, K. C. (2011). Audiences are Inherently Cross-media: audience studies and the cross-media challenge. *Communication Management Quarterly*, 18, 5-27.

Schwandt, T.A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schweizer, H. (2008). *On waiting.* London: Routledge.

Scott, J. (2013). *Social Network Analysis* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

Seale, C. (2012). *Researching Society and Culture* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seale, J., Georgeson, J., Mamas, C., & Swain, J. (2015). Not the right kind of 'digital capital'? An examination of the complex relationship between disabled students, their technologies and higher education institutions. *Computers & Education*, 82, 118-128.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Seiter, E. (1990). Making Distinctions in TV Audience Research: Case Study of a Troubling Interview. *Cultural Studies*, 4(1), 63-84.

Seiter, E. (1992). Semiotics, Structuralism, and Television. In R. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism* (pp. 31-66). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Selwyn, N. (2004). Reconsidering political and popular understandings of the digital divide. *New Media & Society*, 6(3), 341-362.

Selwyn, N. (2009). The digital native - myth and reality. *Aslib Proceedings*, 61(4), 364-379.

Sender, K. (2006). Queens for a day: Queer eye for the straight guy and the neoliberal project. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23(2), 131-151.

Sennett, R. (1992). *The fall of public man*. London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Serfaty, V. (2004). *The Mirror and the Veil: An Overview of American Online Diaries and Blogs*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi.

Shannon, C., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press.

Shapiro, E. (2015). *Gender Circuits: Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Shapiro, M. (2002). Generalizability in Communication Research. *Human Communication Research*, 28(4), 491-500.

Shefrin, E. (2004). Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and participatory fandom: Mapping new congruencies between the internet and media entertainment culture. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(3), 261-281.

Shepherd, M. (2015). Interview methods for project management research. In B. Pasian (Ed.), *Designs, methods and practices for research of project management* (pp. 185-202). Surrey: Gower-Ashgate.

Sherry, M., & Martin, K. (2015). Jersey Shore: Part Fantasy, Part Train Wreck, Cloaked in Neoliberalism. *The Journal of Popular Culture,* 47(6), 1271-1282.

Shih, C. (2009). *The* Facebook *Era: Tapping Online Social Networks to Market, Sell and Innovate*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Siapera, E. (2010). *Cultural Diversity and Global Media.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sias, P. M., Pedersen, H., Gallagher, E. B., & Kopaneva, I. (2012). Workplace Friendship in the Electronically Connected Organization. *Human Communication Research*, 38(3), 253-279.

Sidel, R. (1991). *On Her Own: Growing Up In The Shadow Of The American Dream*. New York, NY: Viking.

Signorielli, N. (1990). Children, television, and gender roles. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 11(1), 50-58.

Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (1988). *Cultivation Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Silke, A. (2004). The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism. In A. Silke (Ed.), *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievement & Failures* (pp. 57-71). Oxon: Frank Cass.

Silverblatt, A. (Ed.) (2013). *The Praeger Handbook of Media Literacy: Volume 1*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage.

Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.

Silvey, R. (1944). Methods of listener research employed by the British Broadcasting Corporation. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 190-230.

Silvey, R. (1951). Methods of viewer research employed by the British Broadcasting Corporation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 89-94.

Silvey, R. (1974). *Who's Listening? The Story of BBC Audience Research*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Simon, H. (1997). *Administrative behavior: A study of decision-making processes in administrative organizations* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Sinha, J. (2016). Millennials and Social Capital: Explorations in Re-inventing the American Dream. In. A. Greenberg, T. Gullotta, & M. Bloom (Eds.), *Social Capital and Community Well-Being: The Serve Here Initiative* (pp. 13-32). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Skageby, J. (2010). Gift-giving as a conceptual framework: framing social behavior in online networks. *Journal of Information Technology*, 25(2), 170-177.

Skageby, J. (2012). A Systematic Approach to Online Sharing Motivations: A Cross-Disciplinary Synthesis of Rhetorical Analysis and Gift Research. In. H. Li (Ed.), *Virtual Community Participation and Motivation: Cross-Disciplinary Theories* (pp. 192-207). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.

Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage.

Skeggs, B. & Wood, H. (2012). *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value*. Oxon: Routledge.

Smith, M. A., & Kollock, P. (Eds.). (1999). *Communities in cyberspace*. London: Routledge.

Smith, M. L. (1986). The Whole is Greater: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches in Evaluation Studies. In D.D. Williams (Ed.), *Naturalistic Evaluation* (pp. 37-54). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Smythe, D. (1977). Communications: Blindspot of Western Marxism. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 1(3), 1-27.

Social Chorus (2013). *The Earned Media Value Index*. Retrieved from: http://info.socialchorus.com/rs/socialchorus/images/The-Earned-Media-Value-Index-SocialChorus.pdf.

Sonderling, S. (2001). Media and Psychoanalysis. In P. Fourie (Ed.), *Media studies: Content, audiences and production* (pp. 321-335). Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta.

Sontag, S. (1964). Notes on camp. *Camp: Queer aesthetics and the performing subject: A reader*, 53-65.

Sorapure, M. (2003). Screening Moments, Scrolling Lives: Diary Writing on the Web. *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 26(1), 1-23.

Spracklen, K. (2015). *Digital Leisure, the Internet and Popular Culture Communities and Identities in a Digital Age*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spurgeon, C. (2008). *Advertising and New Media*. London: Routledge.

Stace, W. (1955). In *The philosophy of Hegel: A systematic exposition*. New York. NY: Dover Publications, Inc. (Original work published 1924)

Statista (2017). *Social Media Statistics & Facts*. Retrieved from: https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/.

Stewart, M. (2016) The Myth of Televisual Ubiquity, *Television & New Media*, 17(8), 691-705.

Stewart, S. (1993). *One Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Strater, K., & Lipford, H. (2008). *Strategies and struggles with privacy in an online social networking community*. Retrieved from: http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/ewic_hc08_v1_paper11.pdf.

Stroud, N. J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior*, 30, 341-366.

Strough, J., & Berg, C. A. (2000). Goals as a mediator of gender differences in high-affiliation dyadic conversations. *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 117-125.

Stutzman, F. (2006). An evaluation of identity-sharing behaviour in social network communities. *Journal of the International Digital Media and Arts Association*, 3(1), 10-18.

Suhr, H. C. (2012). *Social Media and Music: The Digital Field of Cultural Production.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Sum, N. L. (2009). The production of hegemonic policy discourses: 'competitiveness' as a knowledge brand and its (re-) contextualizations. *Critical policy studies*, 3(2), 184-203.

Sundar, S. S., Edwards, H.H., Hu, Y., & Stavrositu, C. (2007). Blogging for better health: Putting the 'public' back in public health. In M. Tremayne (Ed.), *Blogging, citizenship and the future of media* (pp. 83-102). New York, NY: Routledge.

Suzuki, L. K., & Calzo, J. P. (2004). The search for peer advice in cyberspace: An examination of online teen bulletin boards about health and sexuality. *Journal of applied developmental psychology*, 25(6), 685-698.

Svendsen, L. (2005). *A philosophy of boredom* (J. Irons Trans.). London: Reaktion Books. (Original work published 1999)

Svoen, B. (2007). Consumers, Participants, and Creators: Young People's Diverse use of Television & New Media. *ACM Computers in Entertainment*, 5(2), 1-16.

Swartz, D. (1997). *Culture: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Takahashie, T. (2010). MySpace or Mixi? Japanese engagement with SNS (social networking sites) in the global age. *New Media & Society*, 12(3), 453-475.

Tamborini, R. (2003). Enjoyment and social functions of horror. In J. Bryant, D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, & J. Cantor (Eds.), *Communication and Emotion: Essays in Honor of Dolf Zillmann* (pp. 417-433). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tandoc Jr., E. C., & Jenkins, J. (2017). The Buzzfeedication of journalism? How traditional news organizations are talking about a new entrant to the journalistic field will surprise you!. *Journalism*, *18*(4), 482-500.

Tanner, C., Maher, J., & Fraser, S. (2013). *Vanity: 21st Century Selves*. Berkshire: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Tapscott, D. (1998). Educating the net generation. *Educational Leadership*, 56(5), 6-11.

Tapscott, D., & Williams, A. (2008). *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*. New York, NY: Atlantic.

Taylor, V., & Rupp, L. J. (1991). Researching the Women's Movement: We Make Our Own History, but Not Just as We Please. In M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook (Eds.), *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* (pp. 119-132). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Tenenboim, O., & Cohen, A. A. (2015). What Prompts Users to Click and Comment: A Longitudinal Study of Online News. *Journalism*, 16(2), 198-217.

ter Wal, J., D'Haenens, L., & Koeman, J. (2005). (Re)presentation of ethnicity in EU and Dutch domestic news: a quantitative analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27(6), 937-950.

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative Research: Analysis types and software tools*. New York, NY: Falmer.

Tester, K. (1994). *Media Culture and Morality*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Tewksbury, D. (2005). The seeds of audience fragmentation: specialization in the use of online news sites. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 49(3), 332-348.

The Janissary Collective: Blank, P., Brown, W., Deuze, M., Ems, L., Lewis, N., McWilliams, J., & Speers, L. (2013). Participatory Culture and Media Life: Approaching Freedom. In. J.J. Henderson, & A. Delwiche (Eds.). *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* (pp. 257-265). New York, NY: Routledge.

Thomas, M. (2011). Technology, Education, and the Discourse of the Digital Native: Between Evangelists and Dissenters. In M. Thomas (Ed.), *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology and the New Literacies* (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.

Thompson, C. J. (2000). Postmodern consumer goals made easy. In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick, & C. Huffman (Eds.), *The why of consumption: Contemporary perspectives on consumer motives, goals, and desires* (pp. 120-139.). London: Routledge.

Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity.

Thompson, S. K. (2006). Targeted random walk designs. *Survey Methodology*, 32(1), 11-24.

Thompson, S. K. (2011). Adaptive network and spatial sampling. *Survey Methodology*, 37(2), 183-196.

Thomson, S. (1997). Adaptive sampling in behavioural surveys. *NIDA Research Monograph*, 296-319.

Thornton, S. (1996). *Club cultures: Music, media, and subcultural capital*. Cambridge: Polity.

Thurnell-Read, T. (2016). 'Real ale' enthusiasts, serious leisure and the costs of getting 'too serious' about beer. *Leisure Sciences*, 38(1), 68-84.

Tobin, S. J., Vanman, E. J., Verreynne, M., & Saeri, A. K. (2015). Threats to belonging on Facebook: Lurking and ostracism. *Social Influence*, 10(1), 31-42.

Tong, S. T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., & Walther, J. B. (2008). Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(3), 531-549.

Toraskar, K. (1991). How Managerial Users Evaluate Their Decision Support: A Grounded Theory Approach. In H. Nissen, H. Klein, & R. Hirschheim (Eds.), *Information Systems Research: Contemporary Approaches and Emergent Traditions* (pp. 195-225). Proceedings of the IFIPWG 8.2 Working Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Trauth, E. M. (2000). *The Culture of an Information Economy: Influences and Impacts in the Republic of Ireland*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Trees, A., & Manusov, V. (1998). Managing Face Concerns in Criticism Integrating Nonverbal Behaviors as a Dimension of Politeness in Female Friendship Dyads. *Human Communication Research*, 24(4), 564-583.

Tripp, D. (1983). Co-authorship and negotiation: the interview as an act of creation. *Interchange*, 14(3), 32-45.

Trost, J. (1986). Statistically non-representative stratified sampling: a sampling technique for qualitative studies. *Qualitative Sociology*, 9(1), 54-57.

Trottier, D. (2012). *Social Media as Surveillance: Rethinking Visibility in a Converging World.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Trottier, D., & Lyon, D. (2012). Key Features of Social Media Surveillance. In C. Fuchs, K. Boersma, A. Albrechtslund, & M. Sandoval (Eds.), *Internet and surveillance: The challenges of Web 2.0 and social media* (pp. 89-105). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tsfati, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2005). Why Do People Watch News They Do Not Trust? The Need for Cognition as a Moderator in the Association Between News Media Skepticism and Exposure. *Media Psychology*, 7, 251-271.

Tulloch, J. (1989). Approaching the audience: the elderly. In E. Seiter, H. Borchers, G. Kreutzner, & E. M. Warth (Eds.), *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power* (pp. 180-203). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tulloch, J., & Jenkins, H. (1995). *Science Fiction Audiences: Watching Doctor Who and Star Trek.* London: Routledge.

Turkle, S. (1996a). *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Turkle, S. (1996b). Parallel Lives: Working on Identity in Virtual Space. In: D. Grodinand, & T. R. Lindlof (Eds.), *Constructing the Self in a Mediated World* (pp. 156-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2009). *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement.* New York, NY: Atria.

Twenge, J. M., Konrath, S., Foster, J. D., Campbell, W. K., & Bushman, B. J. (2008). Egos Inflating Over Time: A Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality*, 76(4), 875-901.

Tyma, A., Herrmann, A., & Herbig, A. (2015). Introduction: The Beginnings: #WeNeedAWord. In A. Herbig, A. Herrmann, & A. Tyma (Eds.), *Beyond New Media: Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age* (pp. ix-xxiv). Lanhan, MD: Lexington.

Ulin, J. (2010). *The Business of Media Distribution.* Burlington, MA: Focal.

Urquhart, C. (1997). Exploring Analyst-Client Communication: Using Grounded Theory Techniques to Investigate Interaction in Informal Requirements Gathering. In A. S. Lee, J. Liebenau, & J. J. DeGross (Eds.), *Information Systems and Qualitative Research* (pp. 149-181). London: Chapman and Hall.

Urquhart, C. (2000). An Encounter with Grounded Theory. In E. Trauth (Ed.), *Qualitative Research in IS: Issues and Trends* (pp. 104-140). Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.

Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Researchers: A Practical Guide.* London: Sage.

Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century.* London: Routledge.

Van der Heide, B., D'Angelo, J. D., & Schumaker, E. M. (2012). The Effects of Verbal Versus Photographic Self-Presentation on Impression Formation in Facebook. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 98-116.

Vandewater, E., Rideout, V., Wartella, E., Huang, X., Lee, J., & Shim, M. (2007). Digital childhood. *Pediatrics*, 119(5), 1006-1015.

van Dijck, J. (2004). Composing the Self: Of Diaries and Lifelogs. *Fibreculture*, 3. Retrieved from: http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue3/issue3_vandijck.html.

van Dijck, J. (2008). Digital photography: Communication, identity, memory. *Visual Communication*, 7(1), 57-76.

van Dijck, J. (2012). Facebook as a tool for producing sociality and connectivity. *Television & New Media*, 13(2), 160-176.

van Dijck, J. (2013). You have one identity: performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media Culture & Society*, 35(2), 199-215.

van Dijck, J., & Nieborg, D. (2009). Wikinomics and its discontents: a critical analysis of Web 2.0 business manifestos. *New Media & Society*, 11(5), 855-874.

Van House, N.A. (2009). Collocated photo sharing, story-telling, and the performance of self. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies,* 67, 1073-1086.

van Rees, K., & van Eijck, K. (2003). Media repertoires of selective audiences: The impact of status, gender, and age on media use. *Poetics*, 31, 465-490.

van Teijlingen E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social Research Update*, 35.

Veen, W., & Vrakking, B. (2006). *Homo Zappiens: Growing up in a Digital Age.* London: Continuum.

Veletsianos, G. (2016). *Social media in academia: Networked scholars.* London: Routledge.

Venugopal, R. (2015). Neoliberalism as concept. *Economy and Society*, 44(2), 165-187.

Vickey, T. (2011). *Social Capital and the Role of LinkedIn to Form, Develop and Maintain Irish Entrepreneurial Business Networks.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Visser, M. (1986). *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos of an Ordinary Meal.* Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Vogt, W. P. (1999). *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences.* London: Sage.

Vorderer, P., Klimmt, C., & Ritterfeld, U. (2004). Enjoyment: At the heart of media entertainment. *Communication Theory*, 14, 388-408.

Vogt, P., Gardner, D., & Haeffele, L. (2012). *When to Use What Research Design.* New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Volkmer, I. (Ed.) (2006). *News in Public Memory: An International Study of Media Memories across Generations.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Vos, T., & Heinderyckx, F. (2015). *Gatekeeping in Transition.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Wall, M. (2005). Blogs of War: Weblogs as News. *Journalism*, 6(2), 153-172.

Walther, J. B. (2008). Problems and interventions in computer-mediated virtual groups. In E. A. Konijn, S. Utz, M. Tanis, & S. B. Barnes (Eds.), *Mediated Interpersonal Communication* (pp. 271-289). New York, NY: Routledge.

Walther, J. B., & Boyd, S. (2002). *Attraction to computer-mediated social support.* Retrieved from: https://msu.edu/~jwalther/docs/support.html.

Warhol, R. (1999). The Inevitable Virtuality of Gender: Performing Femininity on an Electronic Bulletin Board for Soap Opera Fans. In M. O'Farrell, & L. Vallone (Eds.), *Virtual Gender: Fantasies of Subjectivity and Embodiment* (pp. 91-107). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and counterpublics.* Cambridge: Zone Books.

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wayne, M. (2015). Guilty Pleasures and Cultural Legitimation: Exploring High-Status Reality TV in the Postnetwork Era. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 48(5), 990-1009.

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu.* London: Sage.

Webster, J. G. (2011). The Duality of Media: A Structurational Theory of Public Attention. *Communication Theory*, 21, 43-66.

Webster, J. G. (2014). *The Marketplace of Attention: How Audiences Take Shape in the Digital Age.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Webster, J. G., & Phalen, P. (1997). *The Mass Audience: Rediscovering the dominant model.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Webster, J. G., Phalen, P. F., & Lichty, L. L. (2006). *Ratings analysis: The theory and practice of audience research* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Weibull, L. (1985). Structural factors in gratifications research. In K.E Rosengren, P. Palmgreen, & L. Wenner (Eds.), *Media Gratification Research: Current Perspectives* (pp. 123-147). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Wellman, B., Salaff, J., Dimitrova, D., Garton, L., Gulia, M., & Haythornthwaite, C. (1996). Computer Networks as Social Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, 211-238.

Westlake, E. J. (2008). Friend me if you Facebook. Generation Y and performative surveillance. *Drama Review*, 52(4), 21-40.

Wilde, A. (1980). Irony in the postmodern age: toward a map of suspensiveness. *Boundary*, 2, 5-46.

Wildermuth, N. (2008). Constrained Appropriations: Practices of Media Consumption and Imagination amongst Brazilian Teens. In K. Drotner & S. Livingstone (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Children, Media and Culture* (pp. 351-370). London: Sage.

White, R., & Wyn, J. (2008). *Youth and Society: Exploring the Social Dynamics of Youth Experience* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Whyte, W. F. (1981). *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, B. (1993). *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Williams, R. (1974). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Routledge.

Willis, P. (1980). Notes on method. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 88-95). London: Hutchinson.

Willis, P. (2000). *The Ethnographic Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity.

Willis, P., & Trondman, M. (2000). Manifesto for ethnography. *Ethnography*, 1(1), 5-16.

Wilson, T. (2009). *Understanding Media Users: From Theory to Practice*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Winkle-Wagner, R. (2010). *Cultural Capital: The Promises and Pitfalls in Educational Research*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Woodward, K. (Ed.) (1997). *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage.

Wright, C. R. (1975). *Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective*. New York, NY: Random House.

Wright, R. (1991). Cohort Size and Earnings in Great Britain. *Journal of Population Economics,* 4, 295-305.

Xia, B. (2015). Marx in Chinese Online Space: Some Thoughts on the Labour Problem in Chinese Internet Industries. In E. Fisher, & C. Fuchs (Eds.), *Reconsidering Value and Labour in the Digital Age* (pp. 80-98). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yamakoshi, S. (2011). *Public Service Media and Its Audience in Japan: A Discursive Analysis*. Retrieved from: http://ripeat.org/wp-content/uploads/tdomf/3108/Yamakoshi_RIPE2012_revised.pdf.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Young, A. L., & Quan-Haase, A. (2013). Privacy protection strategies on Facebook: The Internet privacy paradox revisited. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(4), 479-500.

Yuan, E., & Webster, J. G. (2006). Channel repertoires: Using peoplemeter data in Beijing. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media,* 50(3), 524-536.

Yunekura, R., & Ogawa, K. (2011). Social TV System for Public Broadcasting Services: Analysis of user behaviour in a large-scale field trial of teleda. *Keio Communications Review*, 35, 67-90.

Zappavigna, M. (2012). *The Discourse of* Twitter *and Social Media*. London: Continuum.

Zappavigna, M. (2014a). Coffee Tweets: Bonding around the bean. In P. Seargeant, & C. Tagg (Eds.), *The Language of Social Media: Communication and Community on the Internet* (pp. 139-160). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zappavigna, M. (2014b). Enacting identity in microblogging through ambient affiliation. *Discourse & Communication*, 8(2), 209-228.

Zdanow, C. (2011). *Investigating the Relationship Between the Social Phenomenon of* Facebook *and Narcissistic Socio-cultural Tendencies* (Master's thesis). Available from: academia.edu.

Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S., & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(5), 1816-1836.

Zillmann, D. (2000). Mood management in the context of selective exposure theory. *Communication Yearbook*, 23, 103-122.

Zizek, S. (2009). *First as Tragedy, then as Farce.* London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2010). *Living in the End Times.* London: Verso.

Zubernis, L., & Larsen, K. (2012). *Fandom At The Crossroads: Celebration, Shame and Fan/Producer Relationships.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Zywica, J., & Danowski, J. (2008). The faces of Facebookers: Investigating social enhancement and social compensation hypotheses; predicting Facebook™ and offline popularity from sociability and self-esteem, and mapping the meanings of popularity with semantic networks. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(1), 1-34.