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Issues from the Monograph Series, The Centre for Internet Research

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Abstract: *This paper discusses performed appearance and negotiated norms of appropriate behavior on the social network site Facebook. Whereas former studies tended to highlight how communicating on Facebook adapts to neo-liberal discourses on networking as means of self-promotion and intensified connectivity, we are going to argue that Facebook is rather about an ambiguous performativity of everyday life by which politicized discourses are filtered through social interaction and personal embodiment. Accordingly, we are going to demonstrate, how legitimate discourse on Facebook takes the form of "publicized modes" of appearance and an ongoing negotiation of "(in)appropriate" behavior, shared content and other forms of contribution.*

Keywords: social network sites, Facebook, networked publics, connectivity, discourse, performativity, self-accounting, participation, social play, phatic communication, small-talk

INTRODUCTION

In the following we analyze and discuss the interactions between publicly performed appearance and negotiations of appropriate forms of participation on the social network site Facebook. We take our point of departure in discourse analysis and recent research, which describes social network sites in general, and Facebook in particular, as "networked publics" (boyd 2011) which transgress former known borders of private and public. From this outset, we argue that relaxing the discursive ordering of former communicative contexts, appropriate ways of sharing and contributing have to be re-negotiated on social network sites. Facebook as the biggest social network site worldwide can be used as a case study of this new discursive laboratory. In pursuing this perspective, we, on the one hand, draw on further research on networked sociability and communication and, on the other hand, on Judith Butler's theory of discourse and performativity as outlined in her essays on speech acts (1997) and the genre of self-accounting (2005). The approach will be elaborated on through a case study on Danish Facebook users (focus group meetings and profile readings) partaken in continuation of a survey on the use of the Internet in Denmark (Finnemann et. al., 2012; Jensen & Soerensen, 2013a).

FACEBOOK AS NETWORKED PUBLICS, SOCIABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Contrary to Howard Rheingold's (1993) definition of online community, the aim of social network sites is to connect to people with whom you are already affiliated in order to establish a personal, social resource and uphold an open, self-defined channel for communicating (boyd 2008, boyd & Ellison 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin 2008). On this ground, boyd (2008) has talked about egocentric networks, but also (2011) suggested the alternate term "networked publics" in order to highlight that it constitutes a hybrid form of social organization, neither totally private/closed, nor totally public/open, but both internally and externally connected. This new, digital hybrid brings together

people from former, most often separated social contexts, from the private to the public and from the more informal to the more formal, which according to boyd establishes a situation of "mixed contexts" as well as "invisible audiences" (boyd 2011).[1] A range of studies in social network sites in general and Facebook in particular have confirmed that the personal networks, the so-called friends' lists, comprise a variety of relationships – ranging from partners, family and friends to colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances (see for instance Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield 2006, 2007, 2008).

Even though many researchers now agree in the conceptualization of networked publics, opinions diverge about the inherent perspectives for networked sociability and communication. In some studies on Facebook it has been highlighted how the network structure constitutes a "social convergence" or even "boundary turbulence" (boyd 2008, Stutzman & Kramer-Duffield 2010), opening issues of risk and trust that are only reinforced by the fact that the personal networks (the inner part of Facebook) are interconnected with the "pages" held by groups, institutions and organizations (the outer part of Facebook). This dilemma points to the issue of the choice of privacy policies on Facebook in terms of the degree of access given to (groups of) "friends" and the wider public, respectively, as well as the level of intimacy when posting – not to speak of the issue of giving Facebook the copyright. In other studies, it has been highlighted that freed from the discursive framing of either public or private, participating on Facebook is both less obliged and more emotionally invested, because it enhances a whole new register of social sensibilities to be continuously called upon to disclose, share and contribute in a socially mixed and fluent context (Haythornthwaite, 2005; Vetere, Howard & Gobbs; 2005). In yet other studies, being part of the networked publics simply is said to establish a digital co-presence, a sense of being connected and part of the vital stream of

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1 The concept of "networked publics" further designates how the social network is embedded in the specific affordances of the social network site in question and the technological characteristics of digital media: persistence, replicability, scalability, searchability (boyd, 2011).

communication which again (reinforced by the automatic monitoring of the "news", birthdays etc.) tricks a certain type of intensified, but empty "contact" communication and even a "hysteric" intimacy (Miller 2008, drawing on Wittel, 2001). The risk and balances of such type of communication are accordingly said to be basically a question of being online versus offline and being included versus being excluded.

Following slightly different divisions, it has been claimed in some studies that self-disclosure on Facebook takes the form of impression management and social capital building in a self-boosting and (even if discretely) competitive discursive environment (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009; Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield & Vitak, 2011). Recently, van Dijck (2013a/b) has taken this point further by claiming that partaking on social network sites in a rising era of connectivity is still more about self-promotion, driven by an ambition to heighten one's network score, now measured by means of services such as KLOUT. In other studies, it has rather been claimed that partaking in self-accounting on Facebook is personally empowering exactly due to the fact that it is anchored in the personal network and thereby a joint interest in being supportive and mutually reassuring (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin 2008). We want to argue here, that all these different perspectives come together in the very ambiguity of Facebook that can be conceptually grasped through Butler's theory of discourse as performativity.

In the following sections, we first present the methods of our case study to be followed by an outline of the composition of our sample of Danish Facebook-users in order to be able to analyse their perceptions of, attachment to and modes of appearance and participation on Facebook, including their friending policies and every-day uses. Next, we present Butler's theory of performativity as a discursive practice commemorating politicized public discourses filtered through social processes of social control and empowerment, such as for instance the normalizing discourse of self-management. Finally, we use this theory for analysing our case and expand on the concept of contact communication, relating it to a particular finding in our study, namely the

controversy of small talking. The aim is to address the tacit negotiations of legitimate discourse on Facebook in terms of what Butler phrases as "publicized modes" of appearance (Butler 2005), "appropriate" behaviour and "proper" stories, respectively (Butler 1997).

METHODS: SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

In a survey on the use of the Internet in Denmark from 2009,[2] we asked how people use social media, including social network sites (Finnemann et. al., 2011). The survey documents that Facebook at the time was far the most known and used social media in Denmark. 86% knew Facebook, whereas 78% knew the video sharing site Youtube, and only 39% knew another formerly big social network, MySpace. 57% used social media in general and 52% used Facebook, slightly more women than men. Among the youngest, aged 18-24, 77% used Facebook. For the eldest, aged 65 and above, the figure was only 31 %.[3] Besides gender and age, the level of Internet use is important – among the 95% who used the Internet daily, 54% used Facebook. For the weekly users it was only 31%.

The survey was followed by a qualitative study on the use of Facebook. Among the respondents, who used or had used Facebook (N=970), interviewees were selected for focus group meetings (N=20) according to age, gender, region and social groups (male=10, female=10, age from 23 to 75, jobs ranging from unemployed to academics). Subsequently four focus group meetings were held in the three major cities of Denmark (spring 2010) and from the summer of 2010

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2 The survey was conducted in 2009 within the national research project Changing Borders. Mediatization and Cultural Citizenship (2008-2011), supported by the National Research Council for Independent Research | Humanities. The survey is extensively reported on by Finnemann et. al., 2012 (www.changingborders.au).

3 According to Facebook's own statistics on facebook.com, Denmark now has more 3 million users, giving a penetration rate of almost 65 percent (January, 2014). Further statistics suggest that Denmark has the relative eldest Facebook-population and (one of) the highest levels of Facebook-use among the elder population (60+).

to the summer of 2012 we had access to the still active profiles (N=16).[4]

In choosing the combination of on- and offline methods, we have taken inspiration from the discussions between researchers on methodology in Internet-based research and the adherent ethical standards (Jensen & Soerensen, 2013a).[5] By combining such approaches, we aimed at a study taking into account the demographic variations throughout the survey, the negotiated norms generated in the focus groups and the actual practices demonstrated by the users on their profiles. Further, we have identified the networked publics in our group of respondents as well as patterns of use, or what Bakardjieva (2006) has called use genres.

Considering the amount of friends and the use of the different Facebook features, our respondents were distributed among three distinctive groups of use with about one third in each: the more steady users (more than 100 friends, regular and broad use); the more casual users (between 50 and 100 friends, random and rather narrow use); and the occasional visiting users (less than 50 friends, rare and mostly passive use in the sense that the profiles were merely used to follow friends and surf groups or sites). There were no super-users (advanced, "trendsetting" use), which in other studies have comprised 10 to 20% of the users. However, also in these cases 80 to 90 % were more random or even rare users (Baym, 2010; Hargittai & Hsieh, 2011).

Our study has confirmed former findings on networked publics but also brought forth some new observations. For instance, the composition of the friend lists as well as the choices of privacy settings varied according to age, gender and level of activity. In our study, the group with a persistent use consisted partly of a group of younger women in their 20's, partly a group of slightly elder men in their 30's and 40's. This group of people had the most varied friend lists but also the most strict privacy policies in terms of access,

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4 Copenhagen (1: N=9), Aarhus (2: N=5), Odense (3: N=3 + 4: N=3).

5 Results have been sent to the interviewees and in case of longer citations, screen dumps etc. notified consent has been asked for.

only allowing "friends" to follow their profiles. Contrary to common expectations, the younger women were more restrictive than the elder men about what to disclose, particularly in terms of photographs (Larsen, 2009; Livingstone 2007).[1] Surprisingly, the most private pictures and intimate postings, for instance declarations such as "I love you", stem from the group of men in their 30s and 40s (and even 50s) (cf. Jensen & Soerensen, 2013b).

The random and rare users, of different gender and age, had less mixed circles, typically dedicated to the family or certain leisure or civic activity groups. Most of them claimed to have restricted profile access to "friends" only, but in fact some had part of their profile (the "about" feature) open to the general public of Facebook. In both groups of users only few would consider to discriminate among their friends regarding access. Rather, it was generally acknowledged that it is the particular quality of Facebook that you do address all the same way and thereby can expect to be treated the same way yourself. Despite what has been assumed, in particular in public debate on privacy issues, the general approach could be phrased as a sensible and careful use, dictated by the awareness that you never know what will be exposed to the wider public of Facebook due to the networked structure and the automatic monitoring. Therefore, even with strict privacy settings, you have to behave the way you would do in every other public context. As one interviewee said: *"As a matter of fact, you are sitting in a glass house with a microphone on"* (Male, age 50).

Even some of the steady users, for instance the younger women, did not use the core feature, the status-update, much. When they did, they did it in an almost "clinic", matter-of-factual way, maybe using their I-phone and the popular feature for "checking in" at different places in the city. Scrolling down the wall of the younger women, almost all posts are linked to events and places they are going to join, has joined recently, or just "like". They display what the Swedish media researcher André Jansson (2009) has called an indexical rather than symbolic communication in transmitting their embodied position and using the multimodality of the media. Following from this, the younger women can be said to attune to the networked sociability and communication in a generation

specific way, addressing the new possibilities of media convergence in a "cool" manner, confirming the thesis of "contact" communication but not of "hysteric" intimacy.

In the following, we report on the focus groups interviews as well as the profile readings. The interviews were semi-structured and guided by the thesis of the discursive openness of networked publics. From this, three sections of questions were introduced, each referring to perceptions of, engagement in and behavior on Facebook. These questions have subsequently directed the content analysis and the profile readings and generated three distinct themes: the ambivalence of self-accounting, the social negotiation of contributing and sharing, and the contempt and fear of small-talking. Whereas former studies of the performativity of everyday talk and interaction on social media have taken inspiration from the traditions of ethnomethodology and pragmatics (Lomborg, 2013) or human interaction and norm evolution theory (Mc Laughlin & Vitak, 2012) we take our perspective from the post-structuralist discourse theory and analysis as developed by the rhetorician Judith Butler. Before addressing these themes in our analysis, we therefore present our theoretical framework.

PERFORMATIVITY, NORMALIZATION AND SOCIAL REGULATION

At the core of Butler's theory of performativity, developed from a background in literature and rhetoric, is the hypothesis that politicized regimes of legitimate discourse arise in public domains that deem some kind of speech, talk and stories more morally qualified than others. Such discursive regimes are socially embedded and distributed, and social interchange accordingly tends to take the form of stylized repetitions of acknowledged linguistic and behavioral scripts: "The subject's production takes place not only through the regulation of that subject's speech, but through the regulation of the social domain of speakable discourse" (Butler 1997:133). However, social mimicry is ambiguous and counteracted by mis-citations as well as deliberate social critique. Since the social scripts are never just there, they are in fact merely imaginary. For Butler,

this is what performativity is about: what is supposed to be there in the first place is brought about by the very enactment of (the idea of) it. This again means that in particular in times of social rupture, established discourses can be destabilized and a room opened for critical investigation and negotiation.

Performativity, in other words, designates speech in the sense that it, in citing powerful discursive scripts, tend to bring about what it utters. According to Butler, speech gains its manifest power from the fact that we as human beings are socially interdependent and speech the medium through which we become socially alive or deadened (1997: 25ff). Speech is what hails us into social beings, but it also mutes, excludes and hurts through taboos, stigmas, foreclosures and hate speech. In a critique of Austen's speech act theory as well as Bourdieu's subsequent revision, Butler claims that neither institutional authorization nor social hierarchy predetermines the outcome of a given speech act, for instance a hail or a curse. Rather it stems from the situated embodiment, filtered through personal as well as collective history and in this sense is also negotiable (ibid 1997:146ff). Important to Butler's speech act theory is, that since we as humans are driven by a desire for social recognition, we are mutually exposed in social intercourse; it is risky and calls for an ethical stand and a claim of authenticity. A claim, which is tested not as much against the factual or empirical truth of the saying as against the truthfulness of the engagement – to be seen as being doing social intercourse.

Performativity, according to Butler (2005), also forms the genre of self-accounting which is distinguished by a rhetorical claim of authenticity to be displayed by an ambition to critical self-investigate. In her essay *Giving an Account of Oneself* from 2005, Butler draws on Foucault's theory of self-governmentality, when she argues that the modern subject has to be self-reflective and engage in a continuous being-seen-doing (self-reflection) in order to be acknowledged as a subject that counts. The legitimate form of this doing is self-accounting, and when self-accounting the modern subject simultaneously embody given social scripts in order to have a say *and* negotiate them since they will always bear the imprint of the individual body and voice. The self-account,

then, becomes a speech act through which the subject can critically explore the relation between self and other and self and society, respectively, but is also deemed to do so in "a publicized mode of appearance" in order to be recognized as a legitimate member of the collective (ibid: 114). The reflective self-account is directed by a claim of truth, not in any empirical sense, but rather in the sense of a likely match between life and discourse. However, it is also dependent on given regimes of truth – as far as we tell the truth, we according to Butler pay respect to a given social rationality at the expense of what cannot be told, maybe not even known. Further, since we in self-accounting are thrown on the other (our public) as listener and judge, we cannot be said to truly "own" ourselves. What we can do is to perform well, according to the situation, the implied relations and, not at least, the given media and its generic conventions.

In the case of Facebook, we would say that it is significant to the networked publics in the sense that it calls upon its users to partake in a continuous collaborative self-accounting, notified by speed, reach and density (Baym, 2010; Dijck, 2013). We also want to argue here, that the networked publics of Facebook at this moment in (media) history takes the form of a social experiment due to the restructuring of the borders of public and private that calls for negotiation and re-signification. Still, we will also argue that in mastering the particular art of self-accounting, users have to adjust to the social media specific remix of traditions from oral confession and textual life-writing to digital micro/blogging, short-messaging and chatting (Miller & Shephard, 2004; Lüders, Prøitz & Rasmussen, 2010). The called-for authenticity when self-accounting is evaluated according to not as much the referential truth as the ability to (re)vitalize the generic conventions which also means to bring them further, making them meaningful to the present audience. Such balances may be the reason why one interviewee in our study claimed to have so many reflections about how to perform that she "freezes in front of the screen" (female, age 54). Interpreting this "stiffening" in front of the screen we would say that her worries are caused as much by the challenge of telling it "the right

way" as telling the "right life" – even if this is also part of the challenge of doing self-accounting on Facebook.

SELF-ACCOUNTING AND PUBLICIZED MODES OF APPEARANCE

Former research on self-representation on social network sites in general and Facebook in particular tend to highlight either the aspect of self-management and social capital-building (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009; Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield & Vitak, 2011) or the aspect of personal empowerment and social support (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin 2008). In our study, we have found that the modes of self-accounting display an intricate interplay of, on the one hand, personal success and the "good life", and, on the other hand, stories of the everyday and mundane and even the misfits of everyday life. The latter signifies the user as an ordinary and devoted member of the networked collective. In rhetorical research on computer-mediated communication this has been conceptualized as ethos (Warnick, 2007). Ethos may not be pertained in every single posting but is rather identified over a span of time to be evaluated by the circle of friends who will know the implications of a statement as the following:

> "I think that visiting the dentist will be a proper thing to do considering all the trashing, life has exposed me to recently. Hopefully the last one this year taken Saturday afternoon. Rest in peace, dear grandma." (Male 31, Dec. 2011)

What such a status update testifies is that self-accounting on Facebook is *also* about engaging in an everyday discourse and displaying oneself as an equal participant in the general socializing on the platform. It is about distinguishing oneself as a unique individual in charge of one's own life, but it is also about displaying a proper humility and ordinariness. In this sense, self-accounting on Facebook is in fact a publicized mode of appearance. We will return to the responses to this type of self-exposure and the possible empowerment in the next section.

The focus group meetings further disclosed that even if Facebook can be used for a lot of different purposes, the main purpose of having a profile still is

to affiliate (more or less) with "friends". Accordingly, users to some extent have to disclose themselves, if not in very intimate ways then by now and then signalling the actual "state of the art", showing up or reacting to one's "friends". If people look in vain for activity, they will probably not return to you. On the other hand, if they are spammed with all sorts of updates they will probably "mute" or "ignore" you. Thus, several interviewees had experienced to hide news feeds from certain "friends", in particular the ones with a lot of gaming activities. At the same time, it was generally agreed that there are no universal rules of turn-taking, sequence or pairing, the way these conversational rules are maintained in face-to-face simultaneous talk. When people talk one-to-many non-simultaneously on Facebook *"they do it for their own sake"*, and not because they expect immediate feedback from distinct others, as one younger woman (age 25) said.

The same way of arguing came at the fore in all focus groups, namely that the liveliness of Facebook depends on the will to contribute even if there are no further universal (or local) rules for the type and scope of contributing. Even the more steady users admitted that the benefit from using Facebook is the opportunity to follow family, friends and/or acquaintances without necessarily having to disclose and share on your own behalf or give immediate response: *"When I – finally – log on Facebook, it is to pry on [the profiles of] the others"* (Woman, age 25). Whereas this young woman took this position rather provocatively, others did see themselves as followers rather than sharers. However, they also claimed to leave traces, typically by using the like-feature in order to indicate their presence. Accordingly, they claimed to distinguish between legitimate following and illegitimate lurking. In this way, they touched upon the fact of co-surveillance (Albrechtslund, 2008) but also upon a more subtle social ethics in the making at the crossroads of the personal networks and the wider networked publics of Facebook.

Appropriate ways of sharing and contributing
Pursuing this issue further, implicit norms of non/appropriate forms of sharing

and contributing were explored in the interviews. In trying to make sense of the seemingly consistency of what can be disclosed on the personal profiles or on groups and pages, respectively, we have been inspired by Butler's notion of "in/proper" talk as well as her notion of "preferred" as opposed to" prohibited" stories (Butler, 1997:135ff). When asked about in/proper talk and stories to tell or not to tell on the personal profiles, the interviewees across focus groups and types of users found a consensus about the phenomenon of over-sharing and what *cannot* be said or told. They agreed that you don't want to hear about serious illness, death, bodily functions and psychic problems. Or rather, you may accept and even appreciate rather "clean" postings on such issues now and then but you do not want to know in detail and at length. Several interviewees knew of examples of such stories and acknowledged the possible catharsis achieved by posting about for instance serious illness. However, they were considered generally inappropriate. Even accounting for the consensus-seeking mechanism of focus group meetings, such attitudes were consistent across groups.

When comparing such statements to the de facto behavior on the profiles, we can confirm that this approach is generally maintained. Whereas there are some posts concerned with season illnesses such as for instance flu and cough, there are none about severe illness, or if so, only disguised as seen in the former update on life bashing. In the research literature on social network sites it has been an issue whether they are used to expose, exchange information about and get support in case of health or social problems in the kind of help-to-self-help-way that has been seen on other user-generated platforms such as newsgroups or blogs (Parks, 2011). However, it is less researched yet, and there may be national and cultural differences as well as differences as to the particular site.

One case, in particular, illustrates the social dynamics in questions of in/proper talk and stories of illness and suffering. One of the interviewees, a 44-year-old woman, distanced herself very much from sharing of illness and death by telling a story about a friend who almost used Facebook as a kind of diary on her husband's cancer, death and funeral. Shortly after the focus group meeting,

she learned that she had cancer herself. She started posting about this in the "clean" way, she had pled for, and in order to explain why she was not as present as usual on Facebook. In Butler's terms, we would say that she tried to stick to a discursive regime from other types of (mass) media, allowing for stories of coping and surviving (Butler, 1997). However, as she told us by mail, (some of) her friends did not like to be confronted with this when they opened their Facebook account (to surf around, chat and relax), and accordingly she deleted all these postings. In fact she cut off three months of postings. But she then had changed her mind regarding other people's postings in similar situations. After a while she could be seen posting on her personal fight on cancer again, now supported by her remaining friends and also connecting to the broader issue and civic initiatives etc. which indicates that she in fact has found a way to use Facebook as a medium for empowerment.

Other reported incidents about over-sharing and inappropriate discourse were about unrequited love, sexual actions and inclinations and mentioning of intimate body parts. Such stories and types of self-accounting were, on the one hand, considered stories not to tell but, on the other hand, exceptions could be made depending on how the story was told and the modus taken. Besides "cleanness", humor and irony ("coolness") would compensate. In fact everything might be said, it was claimed – if only with a twist, even if it was also agreed upon that humor and irony can be delusive since such effects are also very subjective and in particular on the Internet may cause misunderstandings due to the lack of bodily co-presence. "Twisting" stories, related to supposedly socially controversial feelings, might according to Butler be interpreted as a way to undo a troubled discourse but it might also be interpreted as a way to open up foreclosures and prohibitions related to the body, to sexuality and distress, depending on the given situation (Butler, 1997:136-137).

Other types of in-appropriate sharing were allegedly political confessions and polarizing or otherwise radical messages. In fact, in the focus group in which this particular subject was addressed most substantially, the interviewees

tended to claim that all political disclosures are illegitimate: *"I have never written anything political about myself or others"* (Woman, age 23). In continuation hereof, it was agreed upon that while Facebook may be used for pursuing political purposes when looking for and joining events, groups and pages, on the personal wall this is inappropriate, except for indicating for instance engagement in relief work and the like. The difference between what you do on the personal walls and what you do when looking outwards and joining more open groups was brought forth by a single father and a female sclerosis patient. They both subscribed to relevant pages and groups but did not post much on the issues on their wall. Another interviewee, a labor union representative, used his profile to engage in a range of groups and events around labor market issues. He did in fact also address it on his personal wall now and then but then typically mitigated by means of humor. The interviewees in this way discriminated between private and public but in so doing also dismissed very intimate disclosures from the inner and supposedly more private part of Facebook in order to transport troubled discourses to marked spaces of the outer, more public part.

Finally, it was considered inappropriate to talk about people not present on Facebook, to speak ill of any third person and to expose disagreements among interlocutors (see also Mc Laughlin & Vitak, 2012 on this issue). It was further considered whether it was inappropriate to express negative feelings and attitudes at all and it was agreed upon that one should not only behave the way one behaves in other (semi)public groups but also be more careful online due to the lack of contextual clues (Baym, 2010):

> "I try to keep my tone and manners the way I do it among us here, now. And try to keep a sensible and sober voice. […] Since you don't have that face-to-face-situation that makes you able to read the persons you talk to." (Male, age 43).

Whereas this interviewee also tended to avoid ambiguous talk, others welcomed such talk, especially if wrapped in humor and irony. As it turned out, it was much more difficult to verbalize proper talk, except by the basic ethics of talking the way you want to be talked to. Thus, the positive norm of the

preferred stories was primarily defined by its negation. One may say that the prohibitions deliver the framework of the expected conviviality and the desirable social intercourse. According to Lundby (2009) – referring to the micro-sociologist Georg Simmel – "pure" sociality is social intercourse in which manners are directed by the premise that the joy of the individual maximizes with the joy of the collective. Visiting the profiles of our interviewees, conviviality means an educated perspective on daily news, public affairs and popular culture, or a sophisticated take on everyday life that makes it surprising, fresh or even bizarre. Preferred stories, then, are the clever perspectives on everyday life, which is inclusive rather than exclusive, driven by personal or empirical interests of either private or political character.

The status update as phatic communication and the issue of small-talking

But what could be said then? The typical status update is about *"what you are doing right now"* (Male, age 43), an intended real-time reporting on the actual state of affairs. Such type of communication comes close to what the rhetorician Roman Jakobson (1964[1960]) has termed a register of phatic communication. Taking his outset in Jakobson, Miller (2008) goes further and talks about phatic communication as a type of empty signalling, the aim of which is to uphold the very channel of communication. This in fact complies well into what several interviewees stated, namely that Facebook is about *"the very possibility of contact"* (Male, age 34) or *"being able to communicate"* (woman, 25 years) – that is communication for the sake of communication. Applying this framework to the core feature of Facebook, the status update, we have found four generic types on the 16 profiles:

1. The situation report. A short statement on what is happening right now (or is about to happen), sometimes followed by a self-disclaimer: "Only short of the conclusion, now", "A new weak ahead", "Still caughing!", "Looking forward to", "Yeahh!".

2. The evaluative report. A short statement about what has been happening (a moment ago), sometimes followed by a self-disclaimer: "Fabulous weekend", "Block buster trip to Copenhagen", "Job done. Well done!".

3. The sheer self-disclosure, declaration or idiomatic statement: "Argh", "I love you", "Can't wait", "Mick Oegendahl president".

4. Interpellation, invocation, or interlocution. Examples of which are: "Anybody want to ….?", "Happy Christmas", "Thanks for …", "Easy now …"

They all refer to the overall phatic framework even if they can also be said to refer to Jakobson's more specific speech functions. 3 and 4, then, are concerned with the addresser and the addressee, respectively, and thereby also denote in the first case the emotive function and, in the latter, the conative function. 1 and 2 are both concerned with the referential function since they refer to actual events and situations. In our material, for instance, referential communication can be identified as a particular style among a group of male informants who do in fact use their profiles to pursue certain professional interests or leisure activities and engage in public debates (for instance labour union, tenor's association, military history or sports). What Jakobson calls the poetic function, on the other hand, is found in creative uses of spelling, grammar and audio-visuals, or in experiments with fictive profiles. Meta-linguistic messages are most often used to establish humor or irony such as in the following commenting on the challenge of self-publishing: *"What to post?"*

The challenge is that phatic communication may come very close to and be difficult to distinguish from small-talk which, on the one hand, was downgraded in all the focus groups, but which, on the other hand, is what most postings admittedly are about: *"I see it as mostly small-talk and pass-time"* (Male, age 53).

The dilemma of small-talk is further illustrated by the fact that researchers in social media such as Vetere, Howard & Gobbs (2005) and in particular Miller (2008) tend to claim not only the element of small-talking but

also a more profound decline in communication since the phatic is the non-dialogic, the non-substantial and non-narrative. In the context of Facebook it is supposed to designate a forced, almost hysteric but superfluous intimacy. The dilemma was resolved by our interviewees by means of the notion of "smart" small-talk. Smart small-talk then, is providing the seemingly mundane with a twist that calls upon reflection, and it most often has to do with formal features: *"It is the funny thing, the funny way, I mean the way it is written"*, said a female, age 44, *"... but again it has to be [pictures] with a turn of the screw"*, said a male, age 70.

In other words, smart small-talk is talk that uses the transience of the medium to transmit a screwed snapshot of everyday life – lifting the ordinariness of the experience into something extraordinary and "right on the spot". From this perspective, seemingly trivial or even non-sense postings such as*: "I am now home!"* or *"I wonder what I am going to have for dinner on Saturday"* can be understood as ways of miming everyday discourses that may be banal but also raise the issue of small-talk and create a social play (Lundby, 2009). That humor and social play – if used with circumspection – was appreciated, was expressed in a range of different ways (see also Lomborg, 2013 for this particular finding).

According to Jansson (2009), the challenge in digital communication is to create a generic mode of communication by which issues of spacing and embodiment are performed through the "texture" of the speech, a concept he has taken from the sociologist Henri Lefevbre. The concept denotes the way a sense of time, space and social context is transmitted through words, pictures and sounds – or rather the multimodal combination hereof. Textures have a proximity to give a trace of or direct access to the object, exemplified by the following status-update by which a user gave access to his personal music archive: *"Now, there is WIMP"* (linking to getwimp.dk). They can also configure a unique digital presence by the very continuity, consistency and variety of the flow and thereby also evoke attachment. Jansson highlights the way textures form different immaterial routes and patterns in terms of whole sets of handling

and experiencing the media (cf. Soerensen, 2009). Textures can thereby also constitute another type of smart small-talk that is only grasped by a persistent collaborative use that may provide the seemingly trivial or even non-sense with meaning. For one of the profiles, this happens through the rhythm in reporting on the interchange of working, relaxing with the girl-friend and playing golf, and the way the addresser continuously calls upon his "friends" by direct interpellations. For another user, this happens through picturing the routines (and brakes of routine) of life on a farm with many animals, combined with discrete advocating of the private enterprise of therapy and simple living, offering different product and services. For yet another, it happens through linking to, participating in and calling for comments on local/seasonal cultural events and markets. The specific atmosphere of these profiles arises in the combination of a certain media practice with a certain aesthetic style or design and the aggregation of self-disclosures and feedback.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

The few interviewees who did not use it any longer expressed the most divergent discourse around Facebook. They each had more specific reasons, but were also now convinced non-users and argued that they did not want to support an enterprise that can make whatever use of their private data and spread them whether you want it or even know of it or not – and further provides a channel for massive, personal promotion besides the enterprise marketing. They also mentioned the time consuming aspect and the fact that they did not like the mainstreaming of what we do and how. They thereby highlighted the pitfalls discussed by Trebor Scholz who claims that we are all "Becoming Facebook" (2010). Web 2.0 ideology simply works through us since we are marketing our lifestyle to each other – the books we read, the restaurants we go to, the films we watch, the people we admire, the music we listen to, the news we think are important etc. It is in this sense that we are not merely "on" Facebook but that we are "becoming" Facebook: We are the brand

(cf. Kember & Zylinska, 2012).

The general discourse around Facebook, however, was that it is only a tool that you can make whatever use of, you want – as far as you take sensible precautions as to the degree of privacy and intimacy and consider the absence of formal social regulation; but it also came forth that the Facebook users in our study share very distinctive conceptualizations of the implicit norms on Facebook as to non/appropriate forms of performance and participation. Using our theoretical approach, we have found that these implicit norms are engendered by the networked publics, but that they pay tribute to more classic social virtues such as humility towards one's audience and showing oneself to be an equal/ordinary part of the shared platform. Further, we have found a rather explicit notion of over-sharing (in terms of illness, social disaster, politics, disagreements and extreme feelings) as well as a notion of appropriate sharing (the funny/clever take on the media and the everyday).

In continuation hereof we have also found a rather consistent moral codex in terms of handling different types of practices such as legitimate vs. illegitimate lurking and defriending/blocking of "friends" vs. distinguishing among them. We have further been able to identify a high degree of consistency between the saying in the interviews and the doing on the profiles in these matters, whereas a more complex picture was identified in terms of discourses on and practices of small-talking and the use of irony. Small-talking in fact seems to be a highly contested issue that deserves further investigation and we have suggested using the notion of everyday discourses and "textures".

All in all we have addressed Facebook as a social laboratory of what we have termed the networked publics and found that users re-establish a distinction between private and public from within but in some cases also revert it in terms of reserving the all too private and intimate communication to marked spaces of the networked publics in order to maintain a playful social intercourse on the personal profiles. However, discursive regimes of proper public as opposed to private talk are also challenged. Even if the personal profiles, contrary to what has been feared in particular in terms of the younger

users, are conceptualized as potentially public spheres, (some) users allow themselves to communicate more intimately and publish more private information such as family and holiday albums. Typically public discourses on (cultural) politics and social affairs can be accepted on the personal profiles as far as they are properly dosed and served with humour. In these ways, the borders of appropriate ways on contributing and sharing are constantly renegotiated and not fixed. The users in this study also agreed that the codes of conduct implied in other types of either more private or more public social interaction such as turn-taking and sequence are dispelled on Facebook which further contribute to signify online networked publics as different from off-line private or public contexts.

We have further suggested that communication on Facebook is distinguished by not only what other researchers have conceptualized as phatic or contact communication, but also the multi-modal textures to be further explored in future research. It is claimed that the multimodality combined with the smooth movement between media via Facebook constitutes an im/material flow that enhances personally meaningful tracks and routes across media and contexts: private-public, political-cultural, and socially or substantially defined communities and thereby also an emotional and habitual bond.

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