Personal Branding Through Imagification in Social Media

Identity Creation and Alteration Through Images

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Abstract

The general purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how individuals today, in a society where people spend more and more time on social media, create and alter their identity through images. The study is focused on Instagram, the most widespread social media only focused on photos. The study is based on a postmodern perspective and focuses on symbolic interactionism, identity capital and psychological self. The empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews with fifteen Instagram users, most of who are from the Stockholm, Sweden region. The study was influenced by the Grounded Theory method where emergent themes describing how individuals alter and create their identity through images were deduced from the interviews. These themes were: *showing a nuanced image of themselves, images as a means of conveying identity for recognition, imagification as personal branding tool* and *reflexive social interaction.*

The findings suggest that individuals show only a selected, a nuanced, part of their identity on Instagram and Instagram gives a greater freedom to express what people want to express as their identity and their self. By using photos in social media individuals are not as limited as they would otherwise be in the real world in terms of how they want to market their identity. But there is also a frustration among many users of Instagram and other social media as many feel that the nuanced and perfected image that many people convey is fake and annoying to see and this could thus have a negative impact on that person's personal brand. Images were seen to be more efficient than text for the purpose of personal branding and it also appeared that identity creation through images could create a more expressive society.

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1. Introduction

"There can be no words without images"

Aristotle

1.1 Background to the study

Figure 1.

Being hyped for some time social media and new visual technologies have become a means of communication that many people see as an essential part of their everyday lives. Many firms have realized the potential of this effective way of directly communicating with their target markets. Over the years market orientation and the business focus have shifted towards understanding the customer. This means that it has become progressively important to understand and to study the individual and how the individual relate to the organization's products. Consumers relate and create certain identity when they consume a particular good. Because of this shift of power with the customer, customers are now increasingly influencing the companies' decisions. Social media is here a facilitated and important factor and today's world requires this.

Back in 1997, Tom Peters coined the term personal branding. He introduced that brands consist of more than just inanimate entities; suggesting individuals are becoming effective means for branding.

To stand out in the digital intimacy and be unique individuals have to be their own brand (Peters, 1997). Today there are a number of ways and channels through which a person can create and develop their personal brand; one that has become more and more important during the last years is social media. Without a strong personal brand it can be problematic to position oneself on this competitive market. Hence, it is very important to identify the characteristics that make you

distinctive from your competitors. As consumers become more aware of their competition, the importance of being what one claims, being authentic, is becoming even more important. It is about influencing others, by creating a brand identity that associates certain perceptions and feelings with that identity. Branding is not just for companies anymore (Peters, 1997). Successful personal branding entails managing the perceptions effectively and controlling and influencing how others perceive and thinks of a person. Having a strong personal brand seems to be a very significant asset in today's online, virtual, and individual age where we spend more and more time online and where the online world is an important place to be seen. Social media facilitates the idea of personal branding through the identity creation for which images can be a tool. Today we live in a photographic-image saturated world and visually using images are powerful ways of communicating oneself.

Instagram, the popular photo-sharing app, allows people to share the photographs with their phones. The act of taking pictures is no longer enough to confirm reality and amplify people's experiences; only sharing can give us validation. The knowledge of sharing images makes digital photographs more personal. This straightforward act of taking pictures of everyday life has emerged to a contemporary strategy. Images give us an awareness of places and people that we have never encountered (Schroeder 1998). Thus, images in marketing communication have a persuasive role.

Instagram was launched in 2010 and it now has 90 million monthly active users and visualises 40 million photos per day (Forbes, 2013). One reason why this visual social networking service had its debut is because the technology used on smart-phones finally allowed high-quality photos, and fast processing of the photos and special effects on them. Users could now take a picture, improve it and send it to the world. Even the name capture the purpose of the app. Instagram describes themself as a fast, fun and beautiful way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Simply snap a photo and then choose a filter to transform the look and feel. Pictures are shared on Instagram but can also be uploaded on other social media platforms. The app is also somewhat of a social network, allowing users to follow others, comment, and like photos. The company, now owned by Facebook, imagined a world more connected by photos (Instagram 2013). Steven Bertoni (Forbes, 2013) showed the power of Instagram during hurricane Sandy when the social media phenomenon captured the storm. It is this utility and entertainment app that makes Instagram such a social force for major occasions.

All this creative activity has questioned the meaning of authenticity. Furthermore, authenticity has been argued as a significant aspect of consumer interaction with brands (Holt, 2004). Nevertheless

this aesthetics of act provides a margin to create a desirable image of life where every experience is visualized. Social media is a relatively new occurrence and it becomes more transparent with every day that goes by and as a personal brand you have to embrace transparency and openness to compete on the market. The phenomenon of Instagram is significantly innovative and this is why it is imperative to see its implication on the issue of personal branding through identity creation. One way to see that is by looking at the role of images on Instagram. Indeed, the theoretical problem lies in the lack of research and documentation about Instagram.

1.2 Purpose and objectives of the study

In view of the above, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate and analyse the role of images in the process of personal branding through Instagram. The aim is to fill the theoretical gap in social media concerning the use of images in personal branding. By highlighting Instagram, this study, foreground the role of image making in this contemporary culture. In doing so this study examines the dynamic way of communicating a person's identity and self. The approach for this research aims to add an academic understanding to the relationship between social media, personal branding and images. This approach attempts to give the authors a way of conceptualizing the role of images.

The main research question of this thesis is consequently:
How do people create and alter their identity through images?

To answer this question this thesis will also look at the following sub-questions:
Are images an effective way of communicating identity?
Is the identity communicated through Instagram authentic?

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is inspired by the theories of symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2009), identity capital of Côté (1997) and destination images theory of Gartner (1994). Furthermore, studies of symbolic interactionism indicate that the interaction between individuals suggests that meaning is produced. The theory advocates that individuals' consciousness is an outcome of how individuals interact with others. Symbolic interactionism studies how individuals build significance during social communication. The theory implies that interaction between people helps us to create our own identity and the main concept in symbolic interactionism is about the self. The purpose of this study is to see how the third element image helps users to project the self. Also the theory implies that people are pragmatic individuals who frequently need to adjust

their behaviour to the actions of other individuals (Charon 2009). It is of great importance to be able to understand and interpret the meanings and symbols in different situations. Thus, symbolic interactionism indicates that individuals are best understood by understanding their environment.

1.4 Research methodology and analysis

The methodology for this study is based on a qualitative approach with the results relying mainly on primary data. This data was obtained by performing semi structured in-depth interviews with a number of respondents. All of the respondents were living in Stockholm and most of them were young people between the ages of 20 to 30. The age set was used mainly due to the fact that this is the main age span for users of Instagram but also that people in this age group feel more aware of the importance and the possibility to affect their personal brand. The set of subjects was chosen through the snow balling sampling method where certain respondents led to other respondents that were of interest for the study. The objective of these interviews was to get an understanding of how and why these people used Instagram. The subjects were mainly personal users of Instagram with a clear understanding of the social media platform as a personal marketing tool. A few of the subjects were users of Instagram through their professional position. Furthermore, a few examples of images that the users find relevant as a way of showing how they describe their identity are used as supporting secondary visual data that are analysed and integrated within the findings of this study. That is to say, the analysis takes a two-step approach based on coding and visual analysis.

1.5 Significance of the thesis

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding for how images, and more specifically Instagram, help people to create their identity. When creating an identity through images it does not only have to be for others but it can also be a way of creating it for oneself, meaning that people might auto communicate the identity, communicate it to themselves. This knowledge can in turn be applied to not only personal branding but also in a wider array of marketing where one can better understand how to use images as way of communicating and building a company identity and image. We live in a time where people's identity is displayed and captured as much in real life as it is in the digital sphere. The power of this medium should therefore be acknowledged mainly because of the possibility it gives to the user, whether that is a company or a personal user, to alter and create an identity and image that not necessarily has to correspond with their real life identity. Social media has now existed for several years but Instagram immediately became a success upon its launch. By studying and portraying how the media is used and why it is so effective this thesis will have provided both academic and practical insights into the field of marketing mainly by

displaying the possibilities that exist with such a growing and powerful marketing tool. The amount of research about social media in marketing has grown rapidly during the last few years but the study of the use of images in this area is still rather limited. More and more companies are using the platform due to its effectiveness and the numbers of personal users are constantly growing (Forbes, 2013). This thesis will therefore contribute with insights into how companies can adopt the practices of personal users of Instagram and the possibilities it can bring as a necessary marketing channel.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This study is aimed at understanding how images are used as a means of creating an identity, specifically through Instagram. There are other platforms of social media that might very well be used for the same purpose, for example Facebook, but this study has solely focused on Instagram, as it is the major social media platform based solely on images. The sampling has also been done in a non-representative way and the subjects that participated make up a rather homogenous group. They are all rather young, well educated, come from a rather similar social background and from the same geographic area. Because of this the results and conclusions of this study can only be applied to Instagram and not to other social media platforms and to this specific group of people in this specific geographic location. It should also be noted that the majority of the population of the world is still not using Instagram even though the number is growing. Instagram is in this study described as a possible tool for creating an identity but it is not the intention to depict it as the unique or best way to do this.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

Chapter one of this thesis introduces the study, the main objectives of the research and a background to the ideas and the phenomenon that is social media and Instagram in particular. Chapter two presents the literature that the study is based on and explains and critically analyses the main theories that are to be researched, the role of images and tribes among others. In the following chapter the method used for collecting the data for the study is described. The reasoning behind the choice of the qualitative method and the form of analysis is developed more in detail. Chapter four presents the analysis of the data that has been collected and relates it to the literature and the theories that have previously been presented. In chapter five a conclusion of the study is presented. Additionally, suggestions for further research and the limitations of the study are developed.

2. Literature review

This chapter discusses the main theories used for the theoretical approach to the research question regarding the creation of identity through images in social media. It initially presents previous research done within the area and later on includes a critical discussion regarding the different theories presented. The chapter looks into the concept of symbolic interactionism, social media, identity capital and destination image and ultimately leads to a conceptual framework instrumental in extending the academic understanding of the relationship between social media, identity and images.

2.1 Theoretical rationale

This section provides the rationale behind the choice for the theoretical frame that helps in conceptualizing the role of images in the use and appropriation of social media and Instagram.

2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that emphasizes how interactions between individuals help people create their own identity. A central idea in symbolic interactionism is the self (Charon, 2009). Interaction consists of both interaction with oneself, and social interaction (Charon, 2009). The human being must then be understood as a social person. It is an on-going constant lifelong social interaction, which leads people to do what they do.

Symbolic interactionism focuses on activities that take place among and between individuals. That is to say, when people interact with many others, they will have different perspectives, which in turn determine how a person interprets a situation, and eventually, how they act (Charon, 2009). Individuals present their identities to others in interactions and consequently label others in interaction. Herbert Blumer (1969:2) who did much to shape symbolic interactionism specified its three basic premises:

1. Humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them.
2. The meanings of things derive from social interaction.
3. These meanings are dependent on, and modified by an interpretive process of the people who interact with one another.

The focus here is on meaning, which is defined in terms of actions and their consequences. Along with interaction, symbol and meaning, the self is a basic concept (Blumer, 1969). The vital feature of the self is that it is a reflexive phenomenon. This reflexivity enables individuals to reflect on

themselves, evaluate themselves and to act towards themselves as objects. In addition, reflexivity allows individuals to see themselves from the perspective of another and thereby to conceptualize themselves: a self-concept.

Cooley (1956) presented the concept of the looking-glass self to describe how we imagine how we appear to others and how others think of that appearance, and then act in ways that are consistent with the imagined judgments.

The critical premise of this concept is that people see themselves through the eyes of others and form self-concepts through the reactions of others. Individuals are motivated to verify their sense of self in the eyes of others.

Symbolic interactionism sees human society as individuals engaged and dynamic in living, an on-going activity in which individuals are developing lines of action, different ways of behaving (Blumer, 1969).

This general process should be seen in the differentiated character which it necessarily has by virtue of the fact that people cluster in divergent groups, belong to different ties, and hold different positions. Individuals approach each other differently, live in different cultures, and guide themselves by different sets of meanings. Nevertheless, when dealing with social media and Instagram, one must see the activity of the collectively as being formed through a process of interpretation.

Solomon describes the idea of symbolic interactionism as a mediator of self-definition from the consumption of products to the consumer (Solomon, 1983). Products possess a social meaning, which are used to define social reality to both the consumer and its environment. Thus this is often more important than the actual functionality of the product (Solomon, 1983).

The idea of products containing a social meaning has been studied for a long time but the theory cannot only be applied to consumption of products. In social media, and especially Instagram, people share information regarding their lives and everything that goes on within it. Many of the things people share can be seen as having a social meaning rather than a functional one.

The basic premise of Instagram is that people share information with others, whether it regards a new product we have bought or an event we attended. This means that by definition, it is a social meaning, or at least that the one who shares the information believes that there is a social meaning, in the things he or she posts. So when a person posts a photo of a product she just bought, a party she just attended or a degree certificate she was just awarded, symbolic interactionism is taking place. As symbolic interactionism is part of building a person's identity this by consequence means that using social media is part of building a person's identity and the social meaning he or she conveys about him or herself to others. That is to say, meaning is dependent on the interactions

with others while sharing our symbolic interpretation; while passing through interpretive proofs are modified with the sequential process of firstly creating meaning internally, then checking it externally: the self-concept in all its complexity is developed while interacting with others. Furthermore, the social structures raise the nature of our social interactions. In other words, self-presentation is *collaborative*. Individuals work together to uphold preferred self-images of themselves and their conversation with others through strategies like collectively encouraging social norms, or negotiating power differences and disagreements.

Goffman (1959) maintained that this becomes a process of 'impression management', where individuals habitually monitor how people respond to them when presenting themselves. The individual is likely to present him or herself in a light that is favourable to him or her (1959: 7). He claims that humans create 'favourable' impressions at variance with the reality they purport to represent. Hence, living in a social world consisting of constant efforts to manage impressions. The fundamental idea is that impression management is essential for social interaction. That is to say, it is an appropriate lens to use regarding the creation of identity through images when using Instagram. Now that first impressions are often made through social media, not face-to-face, individuals are not only strategizing about how to virtually convey who they are, but also how to craft an Instagram version of themselves in order to appeal to multiple audiences.

2.1.2 Social media and Instagram

Social media is a rather new phenomenon and due to its fast spread and its importance on major subjects and events, it has attracted the attention of the research. Correa, T., Hinsley, W.A, & Gil de Zúñiga, H., (2009) defines social media as digital media, as opposed to traditional media, where people connect, communicate and interact with others (Correa et al, 2009). Another definition is a "group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010, p. 60). They also claim that the participation in social media is driven by a wish to create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010).

Instagram is a form of social media that also contains these elements with the only particularity that it is solely focused on image sharing, even though the photos shared can be "tagged", different words can be attached to the photos and identified with different words related to the image. Casual simplicity is Instagram's biggest attraction and when communicating through words is difficult, photos sometimes make the task easier. Instagram images tend toward abstraction and are more powerful to viewers because they have to work harder to interpret the images. And, as they do so,

viewers escape to whatever feelings, memories, and experiences the images evoke at that particular point in time. This is also an essential element of symbolic interactionism.

Social media and Instagram provide among other things an unparalleled platform for consumers to publicize their personal evaluations of purchased products or services and thus facilitate word-of-mouth communication. This on-going shift to social media means that user generated content is now making an unprecedented role in people's life. Individuals have a natural need for knowledge that drives them searching for content (Winston & Huaxia, 2010). Thus the more content available, the better such need is satisfied.

On the other hand, by using Instagram the attention from others might be valuable and it is likely that individuals get satisfaction from this peer recognition.

The imagined audience affects how people use Instagram. Following the paradigm of symbolic interactionism, identity on Instagram is constructed through this act of sharing images. Furthermore, consciousness implies an on-going front stage identity performance that balances the desire to maintain positive impressions with the need to seem true or authentic to others. Notions of identity hold a central place in an understanding of the role of social media in the everyday life of contemporary society.

As mentioned above Instagram is one form of social media but other significant social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, will not be disregarded. Thus, these are only three out of a wide range of similar platforms people use in an attempt to accentuate and convey a particular impression of themselves. That is to say, these are all elements that people use in order to build themselves, to be themselves, share what they are and what they are doing. Additionally, establishing social connections is positively linked with establishing a social identity. Since social media, in the sense that has previously been defined, is a relatively new phenomenon that has only existed for a few years there is still not much research carried out within this area. The research that has been done often focuses on marketing of brands and products in social media, social media as a way of breaking geographic barriers and social media as a contributor to democratic processes in certain societies. Social media as a means of identity creation has not been thoroughly studied.

2.1.3 Psychological self and Identity

Identity and the idea of a psychological "self" has been the subject of research for a long time and there are, because of this, many different definitions of what they actually are. According to Rosenberg (1979) the self is the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings that refers to him or herself as an object of thought. Leary and Tangney relate self to the behaviour of a person and describe the self as a unifying construct of self-esteem, self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-

evaluation and self-presentation among others (Leary & Tangney, 2003). Tesser on the other hand defines the self as a "collection of abilities, temperament, goals, values and preferences that distinguish one individual from another" (Tesser, 2002) while Wicklund and Eckert (1993, p. 21) simply defines it as a person's "behavioural potentials." The self is thus a word defined in many different ways. In this study the self is looked at as equal to the identity and the research is based on the definition made by Tesser. Studies of identity presentation on social media have demonstrated that profile owners are attentive to audience (Ellison et al., 2006).

In symbolic interactionism the self is defined as *"an object of the actor's own actions"* (Charon, 2009). The self is a dynamic process that is constantly defined and redefined (ibid). Thus, every individual is an actor that move toward internal environment; the self. Charon (2009) further asserts that the self is a social object, which arises from social interaction and to understand the meaning of self as an object he argues that one should consider emotions.

2.1.4 Postmodernism

When discussing symbolic interactionism, identity and psychological self it is important to notice it in the light of postmodernism as they are related to each other. One of the main ideas in postmodernism is the disbelief in absolute truth and it instead says that everything around us is constructed and that everything depends on its context (Featherstone, 2007). One central theory of postmodernism is fragmentation, which is applied to many different areas, one example being identity. The postmodernist view is that the world we live in today is media-centered and consumer-oriented and individuals because of this find it difficult to develop their "real" identity, and instead create an identity based on what they are told to be by society (Featherstone, 1995). Because of the lack of belief in absolute truth or a predestined future the people in a postmodern culture become more individualistic (Featherstone, 2007) and more eager to develop their own self and their own identity, since this can have an impact on their life in a way they did not think that it previously could have.

The postmodern human being more than before wants to develop her personal objectives and goals and this in turn affects how her identity is partly constructed. In a sense, the entire idea of social media, and especially the type of social media that Instagram is, a media where there is mainly a one way communication based on portraying the daily life of the user, could only exist in a postmodern society where the individual and her dreams and aspirations and way of coming across to others is in the center. This is also related to social interactionism. A central idea of postmodernism is the view of consumption as not only a way of benefitting from the actual

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qualities of the product or service but also to convey something of the consumer of it (Featherstone, 2007). Instagram and other social media today are focused on the lives, or potential lives, of the users, lives that to a large extent is based on consumption. This means that identity and in part also social interactionism is very much related to the postmodernist view of the world, and without it, social media and especially Instagram would most likely not have looked the way it does and people would not use it in the same way that it is used today. Indeed, the result is that social life has changed.

2.1.5 Identity Capital

As social life in the western world is changing, the identity capital model by Côté (1997) takes it base from the idea that social life in the western world is becoming increasingly problematic for the individual (Gergen, 1991), especially in terms of creating a stable and viable identity (Côte, 1996). The problem with creating an identity is seen by some as a rather modern problem due to our increased focus on the individual instead of focusing on the group. It could though be argued that the issue of creating an identity has always existed but the possibilities to do this, through for example social media, have dramatically increased during the last century as we have gained access to multiple different ways of communication that did not previously exist.

Côte explains it as if people today are expected to individualize their life projects by "embarking on self-styled career/lifestyle trajectories based on their own personal preferences and choices" (Côté, 1997, p. 579). Today the importance of standing out among the crowd that is the globalized world is more emphasized than ever. The search to develop an identity and a "self" has existed in humans for a long time but the need for it has increased dramatically during the last century due to the competition we face regarding most of our life choices. Wallace (1995) describes the evolution of societal transitions as increasingly prolonged, in terms of transitions from education to work, dating to mating and childhood to adulthood.

The problem of identity creation can therefore be seen in a postmodern perspective, Côté (1997) describes how the issues behind identity creation stems from a more chaotic environment, a prerequisite clearly related to a postmodern view of the world. Côté (ibid) describes how all individuals are in possession of their unique identity capital. This capital can be both tangible, as in financial assets and memberships, and intangible as in attitudes, knowledge or taste. More tangible assets tend, according to Côte (ibid); to be manifested in the behaviours of individuals while more intangible assets tends to be a part of the personality of a person.

Côté (ibid) explains how this model can be applied when looking at how, especially young people, create an image of themselves and how well they build up a status or negotiate for social memberships (Côté, 1997). This model can in this way be used when looking at how people create their identity online, through images, and how people use their identity capital to alter the projected image of themselves.

According to the identity capital model, there is a lack in the institutional and societal support for individual developmental transitions and many individuals are therefore left to their own devices when trying to succeed in the different developmental steps of their lives, for example career paths or social relationships. The model points out which assets, embedded in their identity, people then use to succeed in these developmental phases. One of the basic premises of the model is that humans, and in particular young people, are « more intent on pleasing and impressing others than on maintaining their own internal standards" (Côte, 1997, p. 578). This idea relates to the theory of symbolic interactionism. The things we do, whether it is which job we have or which kind of people we know or which products we consume, we do it often with the purpose of impressing others.

By doing all these things, and developing the tangible and non-tangible assets we possess, we build an identity, and today, unlike ten years ago we can convey these assets and the identity they create much more easily through social media, and especially through images on Instagram. What people post on Instagram is thus a reflection of what they aspire to be and relates to their life objectives. But what people post and convey through this media is not only intended for others but also for the individual herself. The identity capital model identifies all the assets humans possess as the tools with which people take on the challenges that is part of a human's life. And in a modern setting we can see that this is much more easily done through social media, one reason being that it is selective, people choose which assets they want to show for others, and some assets might not even exist in real life. But the identity capital model also gives us a clue on how people look at themselves, Instagram is also a medium of auto-communication, where the sender is the same as the receiver (Duck & McMahan, 2011) in this case the user of Instagram.

When using Instagram people do not only tell others about which intangible and tangible assets they possess, but it is also a way of solidifying the identity for the person itself. The identity capital model thus tells us that the identity we convey through for example images might be directly beneficial in terms of societal memberships, career advancement relationships and so on but also indirectly in terms of developing the identity and the ideas that people have of themselves. This might in turn lead to a different level of self-confidence and might indirectly affect the social advancements and transitions just as much as they do directly.

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Thus, the idea of identity capital is essential when looking at how people create their identity through images, as this is what people enhance through this medium. As described, the identity capital is both tangible and intangible assets and thus includes everything that makes up the identity of a person, whether it is the products she owns, her refined taste in exclusive dining or any other asset she possesses.

2.1.6 Other approaches to image construction

Undoubtedly knowledge about the world is increasingly articulated visually. This has been studied in other fields such as that of tourism image. The visual has long been understood as fundamental to tourism. Therefore, it can be argued that in order to understand tourism, it is necessary to understand the role of the visual within it.

According to Gartner (1994), understanding the different methods utilized to form destination images are essential to developing an image consistent with what a destination has to offer. Fridgen (1987) defines image as "a mental representation of an object, person, place, or happening which is not physically in front of the observer" (p. 102). He differentiates between image and perception, both of which are part of environmental understanding and comprehension, by noticing the presence of environmental stimuli for justification of perception, whereas no such stimuli for image exist. This means image might or might not include perception (Fridgen, 1987).

The role of images is of great importance and the interactive nature of social media can add new dimensions to the possibilities of projecting images. As an elusive theory images are believed to have a rather strong effect on consumer behaviour and identity. Thus, the practice of photography and Instagram can be conceptualized. Different people have different understandings, which they bring to the viewing of an image. Symbols within them will mean different things to different people at different times. Words quite fail to convey the singular beauty of photography.
To photograph something is in some way to acquire and possess it, and images are, or at least seem to be, a means of transcribing reality. The power of image sharing enables the photographer to interpret the image captured there on and to tell stories about it. Hence, photography and image sharing is a ubiquitous phenomenon in society and a democratized practice.

According to Gartner (1994) photography gives shape to travel and helps determining which destinations we visit. This might in turn lead to tourists seeking to acquire images of the place they are visiting so that they can prove and show their identity to others that they have been there, tourism production or reproduction. In Roland Barthes's study of photography he observes that the most powerful or evocative aspects of some photographs can launch desire beyond what it permits us to see (Barthes 1981). In the case of Instagram the transparency of pictures launched another

kind of visual desire. At anytime, anywhere with or without a scenario, spontaneously we are recording the world when using Instagram. The elements of Instagram allow its users to construct an image or identity to communicate to the world. The situated, constitutive act of taking a photograph is still significant and Instagram is now even more important as a tool for circulation within social media.

2.1.7 Summary

Previous research in the field of social media has been centered on its potential as a communicating channel. The communication has been discussed in different forms, social media as a marketing channel, social media as communicating channel across geographical boundaries, social media as a means of expressing oneself and social media as the new way of human interaction. Even though there are studies on social media as a way of expressing oneself, it is still rather rare to have studies focused on the use of images given that social media is still a new phenomenon.

One of the main theories for this study is that of symbolic interactionism, which looks at how social interaction helps create a persons identity. This theory will serve as the main pillar in the analysis process of this study together with identity capital and destination image theory. The latter will be one of the main theories used during the image analysis. Articles found on this, these topics discuss how individuals label others through interaction, how the individual development is an ongoing activity based on communication, how individuals refer to themselves as objects of thought and the importance to stand out in a global, competitive world with the help of personal branding through identity creation.

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the chosen methodological approach and how the data was collected and analysed. It also includes how the sampling was done and how the interviews were carried out. It concludes with the possible limitations of the methodology and its trustworthiness.

3.1 Research approach and method

The intention of this thesis is to explore how users of Instagram develop and enhance their identity through images in this form of social media. To understand this, the primary source of data comes from qualitative interviews.

3.1.1 Qualitative approach

This study explains how individuals create and convey their personal identity through images in social media. The core of this study is thus to research a behaviour and a process in which this is done. In a qualitative research strategy the main focus during the collection of data and the analysis is on words rather than quantification (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Epistemology refers to what is regarded as accepted scientific knowledge (ibid). This thesis applies an interpretive epistemological approach. According to interpretivism it is of great importance to understand a social context in relation to how people within this environment interpret it (ibid). Since the purpose of this thesis is to understand how people create and alter their identity through images, an interpretive approach is most appropriate.

Ontology concerns the nature of what entities exist, or can be said to exist and whether these entities should be regarded as objective or constructed (ibid). The ontological position adopted in this thesis is constructionism. Constructivism is based on a view that social partakers construct and revise the social phenomenon through societal interaction (ibid). Furthermore, this study emphasizes a constructionist ontological approach since dealing with the complex identity creation and authenticity.

In general, a qualitative study is inductive, interpreting and constructionist (ibid). The inductive viewpoint means that the theory is generated by the data collected and the analysis that is performed in the study, and not vice versa, where the study is initially based on a theory and this is later tested. The interpretive part of the qualitative approach reflects how the study is based on an understanding of the social environment of how the participants in a certain setting interpret their reality (ibid). Finally, the constructionist view that is a central part of a qualitative research method

describes how social characteristics are the result of interaction between individuals and not by something "out there" (ibid).

3.1.2 Choice of research strategy

This study is about human behaviour, identity and interaction, and this is what is often researched through qualitative studies. Qualitative studies looks directly at human behaviour whether it is through interviews or field studies or any other form but they all have in common the human behaviour as their central pillar.

3.1.3 Induction

As the purpose of this study is to get an understanding for a certain human behaviour in terms of identity creation and interaction, an inductive view of the relation between theory and research practice will be applied. This study will in this way try to generate a theory or at least contribute to an understanding of the topic and it will not try to test an existing hypothesis deduced from an existing theory.

3.2 Interviews

Bryman and Bell (2005) describes semi-structured and unstructured interviews as the main forms of interviews in a qualitative research process. These are generally less structured than surveys, which is the most common form of interviews in a quantitative research approach (Bryman & Bell, 2005). In surveys the questions and interviewing process is structured to obtain a high reliability and a high validity. The researcher has a clear initial theory as their starting point and questions because of this become more apparent (ibid).

In a qualitative interview, whether it is semi-structured or unstructured, the answers are on the other hand much more focused on the interviewed persons perception and attitudes and this can not be answered fully if the object is not allowed to freely describe it (ibid). This can also be expressed as if the viewpoints of the interviewed person are the focus in a qualitative interview while the interest of the quantitative interview is based on the interests of the researcher (ibid). Another major difference between qualitative and quantitative interviews is that in a qualitative interview the researcher wants detailed and rich answers to fully understand the viewpoints of the object, in a quantitative interview on the other hand the researcher wants clear answers that can easily and quickly be coded and processed (ibid).

Based on the above semi-structured interviews is the chosen method in this study. The respondents are given open-ended questions and are free to elaborate their answers. To achieve a high level of understanding the interviews are in-depth. The study includes fifteen interviews that were all conducted in Swedish and then later on translated freely to English by the authors of the thesis. All the interviews were recorded by audio and then transcribed. The duration of the interviews were between 15 - 30 minutes. The main disadvantages with interviews are that the interviewers or social appeal may affect the respondents. However, the advantages with interviews are the flexibility and the possibility to adjust the questions to the respondents' answers (Neuman, 2000).

3.3 Sample

The respondents in this study have been chosen in a non-representative way. A representative sample, where participants for the study are randomly chosen from a large population to ensure a high reliability is commonly used in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Bryman and Bell (2005) describe the convenience sampling method as common in qualitative studies mainly because researchers will often have to take information from whatever resource that becomes available, meaning that the narrower the research topic is the harder it is to find respondents who will bring useful information to the study. A convenience sampling based on their commitment to social media and Instagram in particular chose the respondents in this study.

The initial respondents came through personal contacts and these in turn led to other respondents with the same interest and active use of Instagram. This type of sampling is referred to as snowballing (Bryman & Bell, 2005) and in this study it was chosen mainly due to a lack of resources but also because of its time efficiency. But when selecting the respondents it was of interest to find a rather heterogeneous group to find different viewpoints on the topic and to include different ways on how people use Instagram and how different background and identities are portrayed. Because of this most of the respondents only know not more than one other participant in the study and they therefore rarely belong to the same social group or share the exact same interests. Most of the respondents are young people living in the Stockholm area; one is living abroad in the UK. A majority of the respondents are women and the ages range from 22 to 35.

3.4. Method of analysis

There is according to Bryman and Bell (2005) no single structure of analysis of qualitative data that is universally accepted but the most common one is Grounded Theory. The other majorly applied method of analysis is analytical induction.

Analytical induction starts with a rough definition of a scientific question and then tries to find hypothetical explanations to this. It continues by collecting data but if there is a case or a fact that does not fit the hypothesis when collecting the data the hypothesis will be redefined (ibid). One drawback with this method of analysis and collection of data is that it fails to define any guidelines for how many cases that should be studied until the hypothesis can be validated, there is no set figure for how many cases conform to the hypothesis that should be studied until the hypothesis can be confirmed (ibid). This issue is not present in Grounded Theory.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define grounded theory as theory that has emerged from data that has been collected and analysed in a systematic way during the research process. In this method there is a close link between the data collection, analysis and the resulting theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The grounded theory method starts in a theoretical sample, which is contrary to a representative sample, and it is a collection of data with the purpose of generating theory where the researcher collects, codes and analyses data while deciding which information that should be collected and where it is to be found (Bryman & Bell, 2005). This is done in order to develop the final theory or theories during the entire research process when patterns start to be visible (ibid).

In this thesis, grounded theory as defined by Bryman and Bell (2005) serves as an inspiring method with some of its steps used when analysing the data but certain parts of analytical induction will also be applied, as they are iterative.

3.4.1 Analysis of images

The analysis for this study includes the scrutiny of a set of pictures that have been chosen by the research subjects. The respondents were each allowed to choose one photo, which they thought best represented them and their way of expressing their identity. Out of the fifteen photos that were offered the researchers of this thesis chose four in order to give a more detailed analysis of each photo rather than to give a more shallow analysis to all fifteen. These images were then analysed based on a two-level approach derived from an image analysis theory from Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). This two level approach regards structure and process where structure contains the conceptual view of images and the process part mainly contains the symbolic view of images. Denotation and connotation will further explain process and structure.

The analysis of pictures is used to give a more clear and detailed understanding of how people build and develop an identity through images and how this actually looks in practice.

3.4.2 Coding

Coding as a pillar of grounded theory is the process in which data is broken down to its core content and is classified (Neuman, 2000). Charmaz (2000) describes how the interpretations of data in grounded theory should form the codes that are developed. When coding data through the Grounded Theory method one of the most central parts is to process all the text, which in this case are the transcriptions of all interviews, and that a name or label is put on all parts that are of interest for the topic and has a theoretical significance (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Coding becomes in this way a simplified way of "labelling, differentiating, concluding and organizing data" (Charmaz, 1983). This is where coding differs in quantitative and Grounded Theory methods, when coding data in a quantitative study it is solely a means of handling the data, but in Grounded Theory the coding is part of the generation of the theory (Bryman & Bell, 2005).

Coding in this thesis therefore relies on the systematic procedures as outlined by Strauss and Corbin.

Open coding is a process with the objective to break down, study, compare, conceptualize and categorize data. This step is taken to get an understanding and an initial picture of the collected data.

Axial coding is a set of procedures where the data that has been openly coded is now put together again but in different ways than how it was initially set up (Neuman, 2000). This is done to try to see and create connections between different categories and themes and to begin to see a pattern within the collected data.

Selective coding means that the researcher in the final stage of the coding process selects a core category to see if it can be systematically related to other categories. Here the main themes are identified related to the research question and the themes compose the base of discussion in the analysis (ibid).

3.5 Limitations of Methodology

There are several possible drawbacks of qualitative analysis of data, much of which concerns Grounded Theory, which is the central form of analysis in this study. A central part of the critique is the potential lack of objectivity; some claim that researchers, and especially researchers within social sciences, cannot disregard their previous experiences and knowledge when working with generating theory through this method (Bryman & Bell, 2005). One idea of Grounded Theory is

that the theories generated in the research process should only come from the data collected, and if the researcher in any way has any previous knowledge in the area, which he or she undoubtedly has, this might affect the ideas and theories that are generated. There are also practical drawbacks of this form of methodology, Bryman and Bell (2005) describe how time consuming recording and transcribing interviews can be and that this in turn can affect the work with collecting the data and analysing it interchangeably, which is a central part of Grounded Theory.

In general, qualitative research is often questioned for not being applicable to a greater population due to the differing ways of sampling compared to quantitative research. This in turn leads to the relevance of the generated theory being questioned. It is therefore of importance to point out through the study that the results that are generated from this research are in no way intended to be applied to a greater population but instead to the specific theory that is created and this is only applicable to the studied subjects within this study.

3.6 Trustworthiness

To measure the quality of a study the reliability and the validity is often used as references in a quantitative study, but the relevance of these measures in a qualitative study has often been questioned (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Another main measure that instead is sometimes discussed is trustworthiness. This is in turn made up by four different factors, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Credibility is a measurement on how well the study actually depicts the social reality it studies (ibid). This includes following the general guidelines of how a scientific study should be conducted but also that the research subjects that is part of the study is allowed to verify the data and the conclusions to make sure that the researchers have understood the data from the subjects correctly (ibid).

In this study the subjects were both allowed to verify that the data collected from them were correctly interpreted and they were also allowed to see the progress within the study to be able to notify the researchers if something did not correspond to what they had expressed. Transferability measures how well the results are transferable to another setting. The key focus is to give rich and detailed descriptions of the different parts that make up the studied environment to make sure that others can decide how well the results are transferable (ibid). Dependability is the equivalence of reliability in quantitative research and this includes a detailed description of all the steps in the research process, including among others the research problem, sampling and decision of research method (ibid). This is done in order for others to be able to replicate the study.

Conformability means that the researcher to the highest possible extent can show that he or she acted objectively and was not influenced or let the research be influenced by personal beliefs (ibid). This measurement exists mainly due to the fact that one cannot achieve complete objectivity in research regarding social sciences (ibid). During the entire research process the researchers have in this study tried to be as neutral and objective regarding the data and other research material.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Science and social research requires ethical standards as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the conduct and publication of research. Ethical issues need to be taken into considerations (Bryman & Bell, 2005). These issues frequently revolve around four areas: interruption of privacy, lack of informed agreement, harm to participants, and whether deceit is involved (Ibid). The respondents received clear information about the purpose of this study and the role of the interviews. All respondents have willingly chosen to be part of this study and the interviews have taken place during a time preferable to the respondent. The respondents were also assured of anonymity and therefore their names are not revealed.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis that has been performed, discusses the findings of the research that has been carried out and relates these to the theoretical framework that has been previously detailed. The analysis takes on a two level approach, which was done both by coding the interviews and through visual analysis of a number of images. These images were given by the interview objects in order to get a better and more detailed understanding of the answer to the research question:

How do people create and alter their identity through images?

Initially different recurring or characteristic words or expressions were selected from the interviews. These words were then grouped together by similarity of the content and each group, a total of seventeen, were then given a heading, a summarising code in response to the research question. From these codes an ideograph, four themes, was deduced, depending on their relevance for the research question, the amount in which they were recurring and to what extent they could describe several different codes.

Information regarding the respondents can be found in table one in appendix 1.

The analysis concerning the photos began by choosing four photos out of fifteen. All respondents of the interviews provided one photo each. The respondents were told to choose a photo, which they thought best, represented an image where they conveyed or depicted their identity. Out of the fifteen photos that were received the researchers then chose four, the number of photos were limited to this number mainly because every analysis of each photo would not have been as detailed if all photos were to be analysed due to time and resource constraints. These four were chosen since they best answered to the prerequisite of the selection of the photo for the respondents. These photos were then analysed based on a two-level approach derived from an image analysis theory from Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). This two level approach regards structure and process where structure contains the conceptual view of images and the process part mainly contains the symbolic view of images. Denotation and connotation will further explain process and structure.

Photo 1

The following example illustrates reflexive social interaction from respondent seven. The photo frames the respondent with two friends. This moment is framed to share her current state of mind.

The symbolic process of an image is primarily achieved through highlighting or displaying particular elements in an image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). There is a referential symbolism in the photo. The symbolic meaning of this picture can be

Figure 2

several, and therefore symbols have different meaning in different contexts. Besides from seeing three people smiling, in which case the viewer is asked to enter into relation of social affinity with them, the picture also elicit emotions and closeness. The respondent lives a social and hectic life where clothes are of importance. To live in the present and enjoy every moment is how she portrays herself: expressive of the moment of fun and interactions. Moreover the symbolic meanings are several; togetherness, moment of happiness and social interaction dominates. She makes reflexive decisions over how she will be viewed through what she shares on Instagram. The denotation or the direct meaning of this image is three people, two women and one man standing next to each other. The respondent likes to convey her social identity. Objectively presented the image portrays their instant reaction when taking the picture. Framing describes the way the respondent visually conveys meaning.

Photo 2

This photo depicts how a user posts photos that generally reflect a rather nuanced image of herself. The poster of this photo is a person who describes herself as very career oriented and that is the image she wants to portray of herself on Instagram. The photo depicts her workplace as this respondent focus her Instagram photos much on her career. It shows two computers that she uses for work, portraying that she is working hard

Figure 3

and working with rather advanced matters. The conceptual view of an image includes among others class, structure, meaning and social/cultural concepts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The idea of two computers where the viewer sees tables and graphs is only understandable for those who have a social understanding of it. The respondent has herself said that she wants to reach out to potential employers and to peers as a way of market her career-focused identity. This is thus understandable to these people because her "target market" live in the same social culture that she does. If this image was to be shown for someone from a different cultural setting, for example a native-Indian in the Amazons, they would most likely not read out of this picture that she is a hard working career oriented person.

The connotations of this image are various, and they mainly depend on the social and cultural setting and background of the viewer. Apart from seeing someone working on two computers, it connotes someone leading a stressful and hectic life, especially in combination with the other photos this respondent generally posts. It can also refer to a certain level of power and social status. With this image the respondent has also tagged it with the words "working hard" so it's understood that it comes from a professional setting. A demanding work can often be associated with a certain social and hierarchical power and this is likely one of the connotations of this image.

Photo 3

This example illustrates imagification as a personal branding tool. The meaning comes out of an interaction between the messages and its audience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This also means that signs can work as the signifier of the meaning.

The photo frames the respondent's hand holding a newspaper. The paper is the focus in this picture. This image was uploaded on Instagram by one of the respondent who promotes his identity

Figure 4

through his work as a photographer. Furthermore, the picture where the respondent is holding a newspaper from Aruba is also a sign, which has connotations, such as intellectual, knowledge ability and well travelled. It also connotes warmth and someone always on the run, someone who is having fun while working. This can as well convey that the respondent wants to show a deeper level of expression with his work. The respondent has said that he wants to show pictures on

Instagram that have an emotional value and that are relevant to him. Putting it within the context of its surroundings maybe the respondent of this picture had other perspective selections that could have altered this statement.

Photo 4

In Kress & van Leeuwens (1996) theory regarding analysis of images they refer to one of the parts of the conceptual view of an image as the interpersonal metafunction. This metafunction refers to the action between the participants in the image and the viewer of the image. This image contains a person looking straight in the camera, this generally creates a strong viewer involvement, it makes the viewer feel obliged to look in the eyes of the person on the photo as this is something we are "hard-wired from infancy" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) to do. As the viewer can see the person from the waist up this
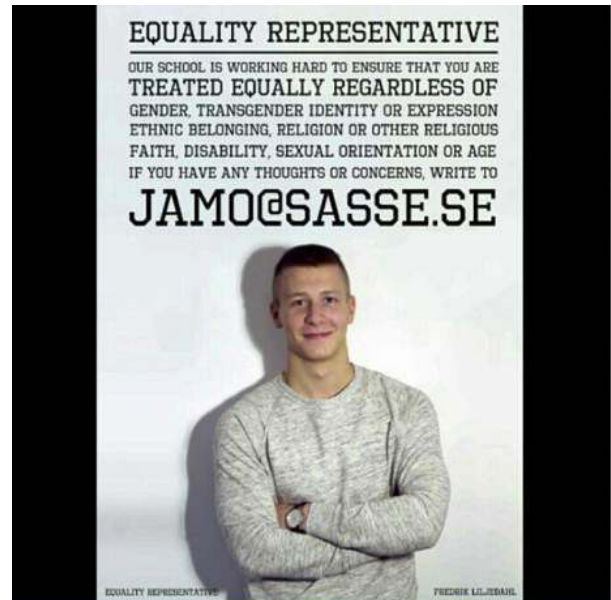

Figure 5

is classified as a "far personal distance"(Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), which still gives a rather personal feeling and a sort of closeness to the person in the image. The angle from which the photo is taken also impacts the level of which the viewer can relate to the person in the image. This image is taken from a straight angle, the person in the image is seen as being on the same level as the viewer, which gives a sense of equality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

This photo was posted by one of the respondents who generally likes to promote his identity as someone who is concerned with different political questions and as a person who cares for others. The image is initially a poster that promotes the respondent as the equality representative at his school. It also denotes the status of the person as he is linked with the message written above him. There is thus an association between the image projected and the semiotics in the message. It can also be seen that his body language might not fully correspond to the message of the poster. The viewer can perceive crossed arms as a status action or a sign of closeness, someone that is not inviting and open. The facial expression is also somewhat contradictory to the message of the text as it conveys a kind of arrogant and self-confident image. It can be noted that the contact address is highlighted more than the actual message of the poster as it is in a bigger font, an additional factor that seems rather contradictory to the message.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Society today
Personal
Instagram
Facebook
Twitter
Linkedin
Blog
Pinterest

CONNECTIVITY

Everyday
Always active
Weekends
Extraordinary happens
Obsessively active
Because of my work

INTENSITY

Upload everything on Instagram
Less active than on Facebook
Depends on what I'm doing
Look at others Instagram
Inspiring
Upload wisely

SOCIAL NETWORKING

More interesting than Facebook
Enjoyable with pictures
Peer impression
Good niche
Visual way
Show others who I am and what I do
Networking
Faster way of telling things
Like photography
Help my career

DIFFERENT

Commercial on Facebook
More personal than other
social media
Facebook is shallow
Image for oneself
Fulfill their functions
Easy access
If you like images

CONVEYING LIFE

Behind the scenes pictures from work
Something I want to share
Not to be like others
Everyday life
Food
Personal pictures
Emotional
Beautiful
Inspiring
Authentic
Serious

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON IDENTITY

Naked photos
Obscene things
Personal integrity
Mean things
Don't want to appear boring
Too private

REACH OUT TO THE MASS

Want more likes
Want more followers
Choose my words
Wider audience
Only because it is fun
Clearer picture, more understandable
Reach the target audience

NEW USERS

In the beginning probably
Two years
Before summer
Three months
2010
Not long at all

Figure 6: Process of Initial to Focused Coding

CONVEYING CENTRAL PARTS OF IDENTITY

Clothes
Politics
Me, myself and I
Fun times
Try to have versatility
Just life
From my journey

IDENTITY

Belong to something
External identity
Internal identity
Inherently who I am as a person
My actions
Personality
Where I come from
Self conscious
Know your flaws
Your identity can be identified in right situation

WANT TO BE SEEN

Friendship
Stressful society
Social media keeps me posted
Don't want to be prejudged
Inspire others
Center of attention
Identity is shown most through my everyday actions
Every picture on Instagram show who I am
An advantage if people know who I am
Recognition

THE POWER OF AN IMAGE

As efficient as your attributes
A picture says more than a thousand words
Make yourself known
If you use it correctly
Clarifying
Create your identity through social media
Realism
Simplify
Create meaning
Faster way than text
Stressful world
Interpret
Straightforward

BENEFITTING FROM OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Everything is marketing
Purpose is to catch your attention
Share on Facebook
Promoted or marketed on my homepage

RECOGNITION

Fun if many like my pictures
Psychological excitement
More followers is a proof that I live an exciting life
Want right people to follow me
Not significant with the numbers of followers
Important that those I want can follow me

CONVEYING IDENTITY

Talking to others
What I wear
Music
Unconscious
Show an honest picture of myself
Through Social media
Everything I do shows the identity
"You choose how you want to see me"
Instagram is an element for your identity

TRUE IDENTITY?

Feel insecure
It sounds good
Reality is not like that
Not promote yourself
"Show what I think and believe in"

Figure 7: Process of Initial to Focused Coding

SHOWING A NUANCED
IMAGE OF THEMSELVES

IMAGES AS A MEANS
OF CONVEYING IDENTITY
FOR RECOGNITION

REFLEXIVE SOCIAL
INTERACTION

IMAGIFICATION AS A
PERSONAL BRANDING TOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA

CONNECTIVITY

INTENSITY

SOCIAL NETWORKING

NEW USERS

CONVEYING LIFE

NEGATIVE IMPACT
ON IDENTITY

REACH OUT TO THE MASS

DIFFERENT

CONVEYING CENTRAL
PARTS OF IDENTITY

RECOGNITION

IDENTITY

BENEFITTING FROM
OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

WANT TO BE SEEN

CONVEYING IDENTITY

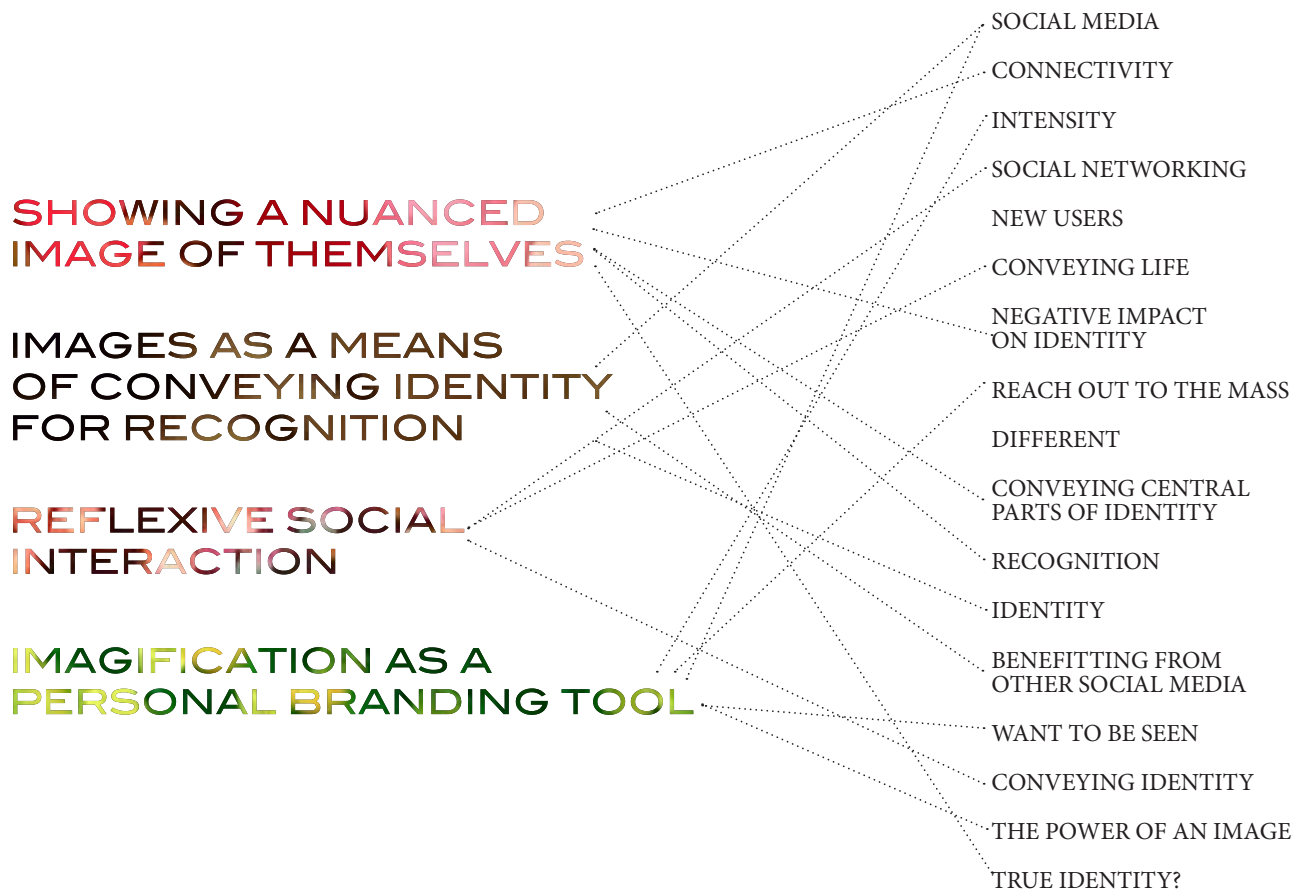THE POWER OF AN IMAGE

TRUE IDENTITY?

Figure 8: From focused Codes to Themes

4.2 Showing a nuanced image of themselves

A central idea that came through in most of the interviews that were performed was that what the respondents posted on Instagram was very much consciously chosen. A common response to the question " what do you show of yourself on Instagram" often included that the person mainly showed the positive sides of themselves, or that he or she only showed photos that would not have a negative impact on his or her identity. The negative sides were sometimes mentioned as "uninteresting" or boring for the people who followed him or her on Instagram but most often it was just taken for granted that a person obviously would not show any negative parts of themselves on Instagram, and they often did not feel like it had to be further developed. When asked what they post on Instagram these were some of the answers:

(R1) *"I post things that I want to help create a distinctive personal profile of myself both as a normal person but also as a professional"*

(R10) *"Sometimes when I have exceeded in something, like an exam for example (...) or if I have new clothes or if I am dressed up for a special occasion"" And I am posting photos where I show that I'm doing well.*

Just like in traditional marketing there is a focus mainly on the positive aspects of what is promoted, and this is seen many times throughout examples from these interviews. The respondent in general seems very aware of what they post and they take into consideration who will have access to these images. There seems to be widespread idea that what is posted on Instagram might end up in the hands of for example a future employer and because of this, some respondents say that they want to focus on the serious side of themselves.

The identity capital model introduced by Côté (1997) explains how individuals today, and in particular the younger generations, are facing difficulties in trying to establish a stable and viable identity for themselves due to several reasons (Côté 1996). One reason for this development is what Côté describes as an increased focus on the individual instead of the group. This in turn puts more pressure on the individual to succeed with his or her life goals and the individual is expected to focus on her career and self development (Côté, 1997). According to the theory all individuals

are in possession of an identity capital, a capital that is made up of both intangible and tangible assets and which individuals use to promote themselves today.

In the analysis it becomes clear that most of the people interviewed choose to highlight certain aspects of their lives, aspects that in the long run can serve them well when it comes to for example their career. Some of the respondents were very clear with this being the whole idea of using Instagram for them, like respondent fourteen who said that she wanted to show that she is focused on her career or at least that she is a serious person. Or respondent one who said that she is posting photos to "create a distinctive personal profile of myself both as a normal person but also as a professional". Others were not as open about the actual goal of their activity on Instagram and did not explicitly mention their career but indirectly referred to this.

Respondent eight for example referred to her Instagram activity as being focused on her writing since this is one of her professions in life. But the identity capital model is not only applied on career paths but also on social interaction and social relationships. Côté describes how also these have become more difficult to establish during recent years. Some of the respondents expressed how they posted many images where their social interactions were portrayed, when responding to what they posted on Facebook respondent nine and ten answered the following

> (R9) *"When I hang out with my friend or when I am travelling"*

> (R10) *"The places I go to and who I hang out with"*

There is thus an obvious focus for respondents on the social interactions in their lives in terms of what they post on Instagram. As respondent ten answered, "Who I hang out with" this could be interpreted as if the important thing is not the fact that she spends time with friends but which friends or other people she spends time with. The important factor could thus be the social status of the people she is associated with on her Instagram photos. Côté mentioned this as the intangible assets that we try to highlight in front of others, in this sense as a way of improving the personal brand. This can easily be related to traditional marketing as well where celebrities or other influential people are used in connection to a brand to create an association between the brand and the status of that person.

But the idea of only showing certain parts of the individuals' lives on Instagram, an obviously nuanced picture of themselves, were also criticized by some of the respondents. When asked what he posts on Instagram respondent five started talking about what he believes others post:

> (R5) "*I think that Instagram has been a lot like, there are a lot of people who are on maternal leave and they are home baking and then it ends up being photos only on people doing well... You get tired of it*"

Or respondent eleven who are asked what she would not post on Instagram

> (R11) "*I think it is so boring to look at people's Instagram when they only posts photos from the gym and how healthy they are eating, I mean it doesn't feel very genuine, it's so obvious that they're just doing it to show a certain part of their life*"

Or respondent twelve when asked if she sometimes does thing only to be able to tell others about it later on Instagram

> (R12) "*I mean maybe it's not really as if you really do things but it creates this sort of pressure to do things when you see others do it, because you might get the wrong idea of what others do, or how other people live their lives if you only see what they do on Instagram*"

Overall some respondents, as seen by respondent five and respondent eleven above, criticized this idea of only posting certain aspects, and generally positive ones, on Instagram. It was noted that it was often very obvious that what some people posted was only the good things that person does and it could come across as unreal. It could then be argued that when a person posts only positive photos of him or herself this could actually damage the personal brand or create a lack of interest for that person. As several respondent described this as pressure that was created this could mean that people associated with this pressure are perceived negatively.

4.3 Images as a means of conveying identity for recognition

One of the questions in the interviews was "why did you start using Instagram?" A common response to this question was that the respondent explained that he or she likes taking photos and that Instagram seemed fun. None of the respondents explicitly mentioned a need for recognition as the answer to this question, or that they wanted to convey their identity to a greater mass than what they could reach in their daily life. But the idea that some of the respondents still used Instagram for this purpose appeared in some of the other answers.

One subject that came across in many of the interviews was the importance of likes and followers, there seemed to be a sort of need for recognition, which was obtained by having many likes and many followers. All photos that are posted on Instagram can be "liked" by the viewer, which means that the viewer double taps the photo and this is then viewed by others. An Instagram account can also have followers, which means that other people can see when an account is updated with new photos. These are some of the responses where the respondents mention the importance of getting likes and having many followers when they answer the question whether they normally "tag" their pictures on Instagram. Tagging a photo means that the user attaches one or more words to a photo and people can then search for specific words and all photos tagged with this word will then appear.

(R6): "Yes I do because then you get more likes"

(R9): "Yes I usually do that, so that more people will be able to see them"

(R12): "Yes, If you have a lot of followers it means that you're doing something interesting, and hopefully the people following me thinks that what I'm doing is good"

Tagging their photos overall was common and the main reason given was that this leads to more viewers of the photos which in turn leads to more "likes" and more followers. One respondent saw a relationship between having many followers and doing interesting things. Having many followers is for her a confirmation, a proof that she is living an interesting life, that her identity is interesting for others. Some respondents also directly mentioned the importance of getting more followers when asked if this was an important factor.

(R4): "No but it becomes this type of psychological excitement in it if I start thinking about it. If I get stuck in it, about how many followers I have, then I start searching it"

Another respondent expressed his irritation over the fact that certain other people had many followers.

(R5): "I mean, you can get so irritated when you go in on some girl's Instagram who only cooks food that she made herself and then she has like 7000 followers. And you're just like, me I have 80, but it's not that big of a deal but it's something psychological like, damn, it's fun to have more than ten likes".

For this respondent, the amount of followers is obviously an important factor. Two respondents have thus mentioned the need for followers and likes as a kind of psychological excitement. They describe how they in a way can get stuck in this hunt, which means that it is obviously an important factor for why they post images of themselves at all. Respondent eight continues this idea when she talks about the need for likes as a problem when she discusses the situation of a friend of hers.

(R8): "She wakes up every morning and the first thing she does is to check her Instagram and Facebook. And I think I do that sometimes and she was always checking her amount of likes and comments. And it became less of an exciting and fun thing to do "why did I not get so many likes? Did my friends see it?" And it became part of her identity and that's one thing that if that ever happen to me, because I don't think I'd quit it completely because that's part of who I was. If twenty-five people liked it one day and only ten the other day and that makes me go into depression and that's when this comes to far."

Overall it can bee seen that getting "likes" and having followers are important for many of the respondents. Many of the interviewees say that what they show on Instagram is who they are and what they do, their identity. It can thus be argued that many of the respondents seem to want to get some type of recognition for their identity, they want it to be seen and verified by other users. This is also one of the strengths of Instagram, when it comes to personal branding, there is interactivity. In comparison to more traditional marketing channels there is here a chance to immediately see how well the messages sent out are received.

Additionally, the recognition has here been quantified, by getting "likes" and followers the level of recognition can me measured in numbers. Because of this, the identity that is conveyed can then be altered if the one who posts the images realizes that certain types of images or photos portraying certain types of activities are not well received. It leads to a kind socialization process where the people who post the photos "obey" to the wants of their viewers, they show what they know will get many "likes" and what will lead to them having many followers. Identity has previously been defined as a "collection of abilities, temperament, goals, values and preferences that distinguish one individual from another" (Tesser, 2002, p. 294). It can be argued that a part of the identity that is conveyed to others through social media, and in this case particularly through Instagram, is altered in a way so that it is convenient for what others expect or want from the identity of the person who posts the photos.

As most respondents claim that the number of likes and followers are important, and one even describing his frustration over the number of followers of a person he finds posting uninteresting things, a logical response to this would be to carefully choose what to post. One of the questions in the interview was whether the respondent usually did certain things just to be able to tell about these things later on Instagram, if they for example would attend a party they did not actually wanted to go to but they knew that it would "look good" on Instagram if they went. Most respondent responded no on this question, but in light of what have been discussed here this could be questioned. The question is thus what the respondents value the highest, to give an honest depiction of who they are and what they do or whether it is to have many "likes" and followers.

4.4 Imagification as personal branding tool

It was quite evident during the analysis that the use of Instagram and the act of framing effectively forces the photographer to consider and establish their own performance in the sharing process, evaluate what is ideal, what is relevant or irrelevant, and what it can mean. The need to construct "presence" motivates the respondents to an active and creative search for the shareable and photographable moments. The drive coincides with the consumer culture we live in today. The image the respondents share allows a deeper level of expression and a different kind of connection with the audience. The general opinion among the respondents seems to be that Instagram is an efficient way for creating a picture and opinion about oneself but also about other people. They all have an interest of imagification and most of the respondents expressed that images are an efficient way of conveying their identity. Furthermore Instagram appears to open up for a more expressive room for self reflexion. Image making itself is a form of communicative interaction. The following was said:

(R7): I actually think pictures say more than for example twitter. It feels that you express your thoughts and emotions with pictures. Comes from inside of you. Images say… People get a clear perception of you, but in a faster way when you upload pictures. Because then they have to think what am I doing here, what am I wearing and how am I. Where do I go out. Prejudices you know."

(R14): "Very effective. People get a perception about you through images that you find with words. Interpretation that you can't get with text. You can interpret so many different things due to who you are and what you see."

In accordance with Barthes (1981) study about photography, images and its most powerful aspects can launch desire beyond our notion. Images are believed to have a strong effect on identity and consumer behaviour. In the analysis it became clear that most of the respondents thought images and Instagram has efficiency when it comes to conveying their identity. On Instagram where anonymity is not so common and where visual expression dominates, it is inevitable not to position yourself. A visual dialogue aids to establish an impression of an individual. The image composed emerges from the photographer's own perspective and emotion, whatever may be desired to

highlight. Respondent four also mentioned that there is this directness when uploading pictures on Instagram. Respondent two expressed that pictures is worth more than a thousand words.

(R2): "You use to say that a picture is worth a thousand words. So very effective."

(R4): I think it is more efficient to look at pictures but also more complicated. You have this directness, which is easier with pictures. But then it is very few who interpret everything that the picture shows."

Clearly the power of image sharing is quickly becoming a significant source to communicate oneself. But people have different viewing of an image and this interaction between imaginative contentment and lived experience can provoke desire and jealousy.

Respondent eight also expressed her consciousness about how people alter their identity through images. Thus to the question "is it efficient to convey your identity through images" the reply was:

(R8): "I think it is.. It can be very efficient if you are very careful. In the same way it is totally to make yourself your identity known on Instagram. But I think the people really use it or the majority of people that use it incorrectly so that they want attention and want to be seen as this person. Where it is other people who really know who they are convey in a completely different way so they don't convey of shots of their bodies or shots of who they are they can be it through their photography, or art or writing etc. So then it is really efficient in the matter of using it correctly."

This relates to symbolic interactionism that interaction consist of both interaction with oneself, and with social entities (Charon, 2009). People interact with others and must then be understood as a social person with many different perspectives. Which in turn determines how a person interprets a situation, and in the end, how they act (Charon, 2009). That is to say that the individual is both an actor and an object of that action.

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Some of the respondents conveyed that being authentic and genuine is important on Instagram. Honesty and professionalism was also common properties mentioned. Consciousness implies an identity performance. This raises questions about what personal features are identifiable as authentic and genuine. Most of the respondents claimed that they consciously chose what they uploaded on Instagram. There seemed to be a desire to maintain positive and a notion that one should at least give the impression of being honest. Relating to Goffman (1959), the respondents appeared to be aware of how they present the self in a favourable way. The respondents realize how they appear to others and how others perceive their images on Instagram and meaning of actions.

Haenlein & Kaplan (2010) shed light on that participation in social media is driven by the urge to create an image that is in line with one's personal identity.

> *(R2): "I upload pictures that I think is beautiful, that inspire others, authentic pictures and of course things I want to share."*

> *(R7): "Maybe that you show a honest image of yourself."*

> *(R15): " I don't know. But I think it is efficient. I think pictures affect me more than text.*
> *I think it is more fun, lively and more genuine and real to look at someone's pictures. It is difficult to distort reality in a picture."*

The empirical findings show that the respondents think authenticity and coherency are important attributes necessary to increase trust when uploading pictures on Instagram. Having this in mind, the above mentioned is as a contradiction when the respondents consciously chose what they upload. Furthermore, this can affect your personal brand. Different respondents emphasized different attributes, which is in line with postmodernism where people are more individualistic and more eager to create their own self and identity (Featherstone, 2007).

4.5 Reflexive social interaction

The final theme that emerged during the analysis was that image making is communicative and a reflexive social interaction. It is impossible not to make some reflexive decisions over how one self will be viewed through what is shared. In accordance with symbolic interactionism; Cooley (1956) defined the self-concept as a reflexive mirror conveyed out of the interaction of the individual with

his or her relevant social situation. As such, the respondents develop an awareness of self and come to be both the knower and the object of knowledge (ibid).

It is important to remember that identity is a communicative practice. Most of the respondents expressed that social media and Instagram conveyed their social interaction. When asked to describe how they convey their identity to others the following was said:

> *(R9): "I don't know… Maybe through music, what I wear and friends that I hang out with. And that is shown on Instagram. So Instagram is a means for my identity."*

> *(R10): "By using social media. But also when I speak to people, what I wear, my occupation and what I study. However I am more active on Instagram and Facebook, so the clothes I wear only show some parts of me like where I come from and what conditions. But on Instagram I actively show what I am doing, who I am and what I believe in."*

> *(R11): "First I convey my identity through my interests and social media. In todays society that is the place to show yourself. I think that most of the things I upload on Instagram is a reflex of my self. I don't know any part of me that is not shown on Instagram."*

These quotes show the respondents' views on social media and Instagram as a performative image making implementation. Thus by using Instagram it appears that the respondents open up to a more expressive society where the use of Instagram is an efficient way of creating a picture of oneself. This freedom to convey oneself might be one of the answers to Instagram's success. Interestingly all of the respondents expressed that they convey their identity through social media and in this case Instagram but also some of the respondents mentioned that literally everything they do convey their identity.

(R8): "Probably in the way most people do I guess now you do it in social media in many ways. If people ask me what I do I say I am a writer and that probably says a lot about me nowadays. Probably what I wear as well. How you convey your identity could be however you want to. You choose."

(R15): "In today's contemporary society I would say through my clothes, my occupation, social status and social media. Actually everything I do show who I am. But more active choices like occupation and social media are more effective or strongest."

The respondents acknowledge the increased competition and a need to keep up with expectations from the society. More or less it forces the respondents to brand themselves. This relates to the idea that people are more eager to develop their own self and their own identity (Featherstone, 2007). Instagram is based on portraying the everyday of the user. By the interaction between individuals meaning is produced. Furthermore, the search for purpose and meaning is central to postmodernism. The construction of identity and meaning can also be related to symbolic interactionism. Since individuals interact with many others, they will have many different perspectives, which interpret how they act (Charon, 2009). Along with interaction and meaning, the self is a basic notion (Blumer, 1969). The essential attribute of the self is that it is a reflexive phenomenon. This reflexivity allows individuals to assess themselves and reflect on themselves.

Many of the respondents thought that it is important to let others know who they are. There was a consensus among the respondents that they have significant things to say. Respondent eight expressed that it is through how she acts and word she uses where her identity is shown and respondent twelve want to be seen and known.

(R8):"I think.. I think it is important for others to know whom I´m but it is not for me to shove that in their faces. I think it is through my everyday actions, the words I use, and how I treat others that are probably where my identity is shown most and that's important they see that. If there is a saying that if you tell someone you are classy you are not that says it all. I don't think you should tell someone who you are."

(R12):"I want others to know who I am. Because I think I have a lot of important things to say and show. I am passionate about many things. Everyone wants some kind of recognition. We want to be seen and to be popular. I want people to know who I am, mainly because I want to reach my goals and change things that are important to me."

The drive to be recognized coincides with a consumer culture that is more experimental and memorable, along with consumption of products. The ways, which the identity becomes more and more tied to possess things.

In line with symbolic interactionism and Goffman's claim (1959) the respondents appeared to be both passionate about and aware with how they present themselves. They want to show the best side of themselves and right now Instagram might be the tool.

(R4): " I think that you unconsciously aim to show the best side of you."

(R10):" Yes, I think I am an important person. Thus I think all humans are important but I feel that I have a lot to say."

When asked how this description of themselves is transferable to others, respondent seven answered:

(R7)" I think it is through social media. You show a picture of yourself and it is only the positive side you want to show, because you don't want to show your negative side."

This shows that the respondent upload pictures that benefit her and her personal brand. Additionally, image making and sharing pictures is inherently reflexive.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

In order to conclude, the initial research question is revisited and a framework is then proposed in order to answer the question and the sub-questions. Analysing the semi-structured interviews with the fifteen respondents has resulted in this framework. The conclusion relates to the empirical findings derived in the research process through coding based on grounded theory. The findings are then summarily discussed in relation to the research question

How do people create and alter their identity through images?

The following conclusion is then based on the four themes that resulted from the coding process. The first theme, *showing a nuanced image of themselves*, were common for most of the participants in this study, meaning that they show only a selected part of their identity on Instagram. Many of them focused on certain areas of their identity and their life when it came to what they would post, ranging from their professional career oriented self to their artistic identity to their outgoing, social self. In comparison to "real life", by which we mean the physical interaction in everyday life, social media and Instagram gives a greater freedom to express what people want to express as their identity and their self. If someone would in real life be limited by for example social status, money or time, social media contains a higher level of freedom when it comes to what can be posted.

As one of the respondents as an example wanted to highlight his identity as a caring, politically and socially responsible citizen, this would most likely be much more costly and time consuming if he would actually have to participate in demonstrations, conferences and fundraisers. Through Instagram he instead posts photos of Amnesty International campaigns and citations regarding gender equality. Instagram, and personal branding through photos, can in this way be seen as an efficient way of promoting one's identity, and in certain aspects more so than if this would have been done in real life. Partly creating and marketing one's identity through images can thus be more efficient than doing it in "real life".

But during the research process a contradiction appeared which was manifested in the second theme; *Images as a means of conveying identity for recognition*. Several respondents claimed that they focused on certain aspects of their identity in terms of what they conveyed on Instagram, aspects which most often would be described as positive. But several respondents also showed a frustration and irritation since they felt that others mostly posted positive content about themselves. There was an irritation over people being too "good" or only posting images of themselves when they performed well. This according to some was easily identifiable and it could thus have a negative effect instead of the desired positive one considering what they wanted to highlight with their identity. Additionally, images can be technically altered which in turn can affect the level of credibility of them. The conclusion of this is thus that there has to be an understanding that this awareness exists among many viewers and that consideration has to be taken to this, otherwise, the desired positive impact on the personal brand can end up being negative.

The idea of images also plays an important role when this is compared to text, seen primarily in the third theme; *Imagification as personal branding tool*. Many of the respondents noted that images were more effective than text when it came to conveying a message mainly because this is more expressive and eye catching than text. Several respondents claimed the old saying; "a picture says more than a thousand words", illustrating this. Images were also felt to be more artistically expressive than words. Several respondents described how their interest in photography or the arts were a major reason for why they had started using Instagram. It can thus be seen that whether the identity of the person is an artistic one or not, conveying one's identity through images are most likely more expressively free then through words.

The fourth and final theme, *Reflexive social interaction*, contributed to a more general conclusion that evolved throughout the research process. Conveying one's identity through images can in the long run lead to a more expressive society. Several respondents mentioned how they saw Instagram as being very free, there are very few limits to what can be posted, and this could potentially lead to an impact on our culture as being more open and liberal regarding identity expression. It could although be argued that Instagram and other social media is a global forum, and that easier access to other cultures and the differences in identity and cultural expression could lead to a homogenization. Humans are generally considered as social beings who want to fit in with other humans and the increased awareness of others "selves" could lead to people imitating other people, and especially people outside of their own social sphere, to a greater extent than what has previously been done.

5.2 Limitation of the thesis

It is important to acknowledge that given the study is based on a qualitative approach it therefore relies on the researchers' interpretations of the gathered data. The possibility of bias can occur, even though the researchers' aim was to remain neutral. Qualitative methods are frequently criticized for being too interpretative, but then harder to replicate (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Moreover, three steps of coding are used and should thus be replicable.

The generalization of the result can be limited due to that the fifteen interviews were conducted in Stockholm, Sweden. The sample group was homogeneous in terms of age, gender, situation and how they were consciously chosen.

5.3 Significance of the thesis

This thesis has aimed to increase the understanding for how individuals create and alter their identity through images in social media. The use of social media, both among individuals and organizations has dramatically increased during the past years, and as such it can be argued that this could be of interest both in the private life of individuals but also for professionals and organizations, especially regarding personal branding. The findings of this study suggests that images are an effective means of communicating identity, as they can both be altered and have a high level of attention power. Identities can also be expressed freely with images, as individuals are not restrained in the same way by time or capital as images can be taken from anywhere. As social media is a rather new topic this could suggest for further research in this area.

The findings of this study could be of interest for people active in personal branding, whether this regards a young graduate who wants to increase his employability or a singer wanting to alter the identity she is conveying in order to increase the awareness and popularity about her. Additionally marketers may benefit from these aspects in different areas of marketing where images are used as a means of communication, not solely marketing an identity or personality.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

As proposal for further research, these findings could be expanded towards a quantitative testing to further investigate the relation between identity creation and Instagram. But it would also be interesting to enquire into another social media platform. It may also be applicable to add a gender

perspective in this study in order to see and investigate possible differences on Instagram among female and male users.

However, Instagram create openings for further visual research. Instagram is also an important platform for enabling interaction, so therefore it would be compelling to conduct a more extensive study with more respondents and images. There is some great affection for creating and designing our own lives. The app Instagram allows one to be a photographer so it might be interesting to make enquires about the self-indulgence.

Thus, politicians, entertainers, government officials as well as Obama increasingly integrate Instagram in everyday life, it will only become more important as a marketing channel tool. So furthermore, it may also be relevant to see how businesses are integrating Instagram into their digital marketing strategy. This data might provide key insight for brands looking to learn more about their business in this contemporary society.

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Appendix 1: Table of Respondents

Nr	Gender	Age	Occupation	Education	Residence Area	Family status
1	Woman	54	Production leader at clothing company	Education in advertising	Stockholm	In a relationship
2	Woman	32	Web editor at clothing company	Marketing and Communications	Stockholm	In a relationship
3	Woman	24	Student	Bachelor in Business Administration	Stockholm	In a relationship
4	Man	25	Photographer	Photography at a communal college	Stockholm	Single
5	Man	23	Photographer	Photography	Uppsala	In a relationship
6	Woman	27	Kindergarten employee	Courses in political science and law	Stockholm	In a relationship
7	Woman	21	Blogger	High school	Stockholm	In a relationship
8	Woman	29	PR and writer	Post graduate degree in PR	Stockholm	Single
9	Woman	21	Student	Bachelor in Political Science	Stockholm	Single
10	Man	22	Student and Accounting clerk	Bachelor in Business administration	Stockholm	Single
11	Woman	23	Media	Bachelor	London	Single
12	Woman	23	Student and politician	Master in Political Science	Uppsala	Single
13	Woman	23	Student	Bachelor in film studies	Stockholm	In a relationship
14	Woman	22	Student and Marketing	Bachelor in Business administration	Stockholm	Single
15	Woman	29	Communications	Bachelor in French	Stockholm and Paris	In a relationship

Appendix 2: Interview questions

Background
- Name
- Age
- Occupation
- Education
- Marital status

Instagram
- Do you use any social media?
- How active are you on social media?
- How active are you on Instagram
- Why did you start using Instagram?
- How long have you been using Instagram?
- How would you compare Instagram with other social media like twitter and Facebook?
- What do you publish on Instagram?
- Is there anything you wouldn't publish on Instagram? Why?
- Is there any special aspect of you life that you publish regularly on Instagram?
- Do you hashtag your pictures on Instagram and why?
- How important is the number of followers you have on Instagram for you?
- Who gets access to your Instagram page?
- Who do you want to be able to see your Instagram?
- Do you market your Instagram page?
- Why do you market your Instagram?

Identity
- How would you describe yourself?
- How is this description of yourself transferable to others?
- Do you think it is important for you to let others know about who you are? Why? Why not?
- What is identity for you? Who do you think you are? How do you define yourself?
- Is it important for you to convey your identity to others?
- How do you convey (about who you are) your identity to others? Clothes/music/work…
- How important is it for you to highlight your identity to others? For example, is it important for you to let others know which job you have or which party you attended last week?
- How efficient do you think it is to convey your identity through images?
- How much influence do you think Instagram has on your actions so that you can then tell others?
- Do you feel that Instagram can be an advantage in your social and professional life? If yes/no, why? How?

Appendix 3: Interview respondent 3

Out of the fifteen interviews only five are shown due to space restraints.

Använder du någon social media?
Det gör jag absolut.

Hur aktiv är du i social media?
Jätte aktiv haha

Hur aktiv är du på Instagram?
Mindre aktiv än vad jag är på Facebook och Twitter. Men jag har inte haft det så länge heller så kanske inte har kommit in i det än..

Varför började du använda Instagram?
Man följer vågen..

Hur länge har du använt Instagram?
Runt jul började jag

Hur skulle du jämföra Instagram med andra sociala medier som Twitter och Facebook?
Jag tycker det är enklare att uttrycka sig med text än med bilder så då känner jag att jag får ut mer när jag skriver på Facebook och när folk gillar det och kan dela det. Så när man lägger ut på Instagram så är det bara där folk kan inte dela det. Så man bli inte bekräftad på samma sätt. Jag kan bli lite så här ibland ska jag verkligen lägga ut detta på Instagram det är enklare att tänka så här ska jag ska jag skriva på Twitter än att lägga ut något på Instagram.

Vad lägger du upp på Instagram?
Allt möjligt! Jag skäms lite när jag lägger upp bilder på mat för det gör alla…haha! Jag lägger inte ut så mycket bilder på mig själv det finns ju vissa som bara lägger ut bilder på sig själv ego pics liksom. Jag lägger inte heller ut bilder på mins syskon barn utan jag försöker liksom på mitt egna liv. Men tänker liksom ibland att typ i början jag hade Instagram kollade jag på alla bilder jag lagt upp vad säger det här om mig egentligen jag kanske borde lägga upp andra typer av bilder så bara nää det får va vad som helst.

Är det något du inte skulle visa på Instagram och varför?
Jag skulle inte lägga upp någonting som är elakt mot någon annan och jag skulle inte hänga ut något. Jag försöker ha en viss komik i det jag lägger ut.

Är det någon speciell aspekt ur ditt liv som du visar mer regelbundet på Instagram?
Mycket politik eftersom det är ett roligt sätt att komma ut det blir inte sådär tråkigt man lägga ut en bild göra den lite snygg och skriva något kul budskap. Försöka använda det som det är.

Hashtagar du dina bilder på Instagram och varför?
Aa jag brukar det kanske för att det ska sprida sig så att människor som man inte känner ska gilla den. Många är så här att de vill vara privata så att andra inte ska kunna se dem men jag tycker bara det är kul. Däremot jag har en kompis… Fast vissa hashtagar ju alla ord. Jag försöker välja mina ord och vissa skriver på engelska för att få så många likes men det gör inte jag.

Hur viktigt är antalet följare för dig på Instagram?
Nä inte så viktig men det kul om många gillar en bild. Det är inte så många som har Instagram tycker jag. Men många har det fast man inte vet om det för de heter något annat. Men det är kul att följa kändisar.

Vem har access till din Instagram sida?
Har en öppen profil

Vem vill du skall kunna se din Instagram?
Har inte tänkt på det. Men jag tycker inte det är jobbigt att folk jag inte känner kan se min profil. Men samtidigt är jag väldigt selektiv då i vilka typer av bilder jag lägger upp då jag inte vill att vems som helst ska se vissa saker.

Marknadsför du din Instagram?
Nä det gör jag inte. Eller hur gör man om man marknadsför? Men ibland kan jag tänka mig att jag lägger upp en bild på Instagram som jag delar på Facebook så då är det en typ av marknadsföring men jag gör då inte för att marknadsföra min Instagram utan för att det är smidigt att lägga in på Instagram och den dela det på andra ställen.

Varför marknadsför du din Instagram?
Gör det inte för att marknadsföra min Instagram.

Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv?
Oj… Aaa det vanliga är liksom jag är ung, jag är tjej och jag är välutbildad typ. Men sen skulle jag kunna beskriva mig själv på andra sätt liksom.

Hur är denna beskrivning av dig själv överförbar till andra?
Just det är ändå saker folk kan se när de kollar på mig. Så hon är en ugn tjej uppenbarligen pluggar så. Men det finns en annan typ av identitet som kanske inte så synlig utåt som jag kanske då försöker uttrycka genom Instagram. Försöker vara lite roligt och sådär. Politisk engagerad.

Är det viktig att andra vet men du är?
Ja.. Och kanske att man inte vill att andra ska ha förutfattade meningar om en. Utan de kan tänka så här men lilla gumman du vet inte så mycket om det här och då är det kul att motbevisa en liksom bara för att jag är tjej och ung så kan jag en del.

Vad är identitet för dig?
Klurigt! Men det finns så här väl liksom den externa identiteten som man visar utåt och den interna identiteten som kanske mer präglar vilka val jag gör, liksom vad jag konsumerar och vad jag engagerar mig i. Jag tror inte den externa och den interna behöver vara samma kanske.

Är det viktigt för dig att "visa" din identitet för andra?
Nä men jag tror inte jag har det där bekräftelse behovet kanske. Det är inte så här att jag lägger ut mycket bilder på mig själv för jag vill inte att folk ska säga så där- åh gud vad du är snygg. Jag är inte riktig ute efter det. Det är jätte svårt för att det känns att allt jag liksom lägger upp måste va på mig och visa min identitet men liksom inte medvetet. Det är liksom bara är det. Det är väl det som är grejen med identitet att det inte är medvetet.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att "higlighta" din identitet? Till exempel är det viktigt för dig att låta andra veta vad du gör?

Nä inte så..

Hur effektivt tror du det är att visa sin identitet genom bilder?

Det är kanske enklare på något sätt för när man skriver så kan folk läser det på fel sätt liskom de uppfattar inte ironin och de fattar inte vad man vill komma ut med. Man kan verkligen bokstavstolka vissa saker medan en bild visar på ett annat sätt.

Tror du Instagram har någon påverkan på hur du agerar så du sen kan berätta för andra?

Jag vet inte faktiskt. Det som är gemensamt för alla typer av social medier är väl att man liksom vill vara bättre än alla andra. Ibland när man göra något vill man bara- kolla på mitt perfekta liv och kanske att man blir lite så här att vissa människors konton mår man lite dåligt av att följa. Men det kanske är mer influerat att man inte vill vara sån utan snarare att man blir inspirerad att så här ska jag göra också så blir man lite mer så här nej en sådan här person vill jag inte bli.

Känner du att Instagram kan vara en fördel i ditt sociala och professionella liv?

Kanske inte i mitt professionella liv men kanske mer för att jag inte är så professionell på mina bilder. Men jag tror det kan visa en helt annan bild av en person det tror jag.

Appendix 4: Interview respondent 4

Använder du någon social media?
Ja det gör jag.

Hur aktiv är du i social media?
Jag är mera aktiv runt helger, veckoslut.. det beror på om jag gör någonting extra ordinärt som skiljer sig från vardagen.

Hur aktiv är du på Instagram?
Jag skulle vilja säga att jag tillhör dem som är mindre aktiva. Jag kanske lägger upp två till tre bilder i veckan.

Varför började du använda Instagram?
Ny social media med bilder bra till mitt jobb…

Hur länge har du använt Instagram?
Jag har använt Instagram i cirka tre månader innan årsskiftet där.

Hur skulle du jämföra Instagram med andra sociala medier som Twitter och Facebook?
Instagram rider lite på den vågen som Facebook hade när den kom. Asså det är fortfarande nytt, folk känner sig.. Limiterad skara som använder det fortfarande. Att man känner sig trygg inom den gruppen som Facebook var förut. Nä jag använder inte Twitter.

Vad lägger du upp på Instagram?
Ofta kanske behind the scene bilder från jobb som jag gör eller om jag. Det kan också så va att det blir en del bilder på min hund. Personliga saker, jobb och när jag hittar situationer som jag tycker är känslomässigt laddade att det kan berätta någonting i bild mer än vad dagens outfit eller. Jag tror det är en grej som kommer vattna ur på Facebook och Instagram de som skriver bara hur de mår idag och bara emplify det positiva gör att folk kommer tröttna på det tillslut. Det finns ju kanske kommersiella drivkrafter som göra samma sak och de hatar man ju. Man köper det inte.

Är det något du inte skulle visa på Instagram och varför?
Om jag hittar min mamma ledsen så lägger jag inte upp det på Instagram. Personliga saker.. Min personliga integritet.

Är det någon speciell aspekt ur ditt liv som du visar mer regelbundet på Instagram?
Ja jobb relaterade saker och det är också där större delen av mitt liv lever jag på jobbet.

Hashtagar du dina bilder på Instagram och varför?
Ytterst sällan. Jag tycker det finns som uppdelat där jag hade den här diskussionen med någon i förrgår varför hon hashtaggar alla sina bilder väldigt mycket. Och hennes förklaring var att hon vill nå ut med sina bilder och om hon är i Kalifornien och åker.. surfar så ska man kunna se hennes bild. Jag känner inte att.. Social media har jag för mina kompisar jag behöver inte hashtaga för att få extra likes eller kickar genom det.

Hur viktigt är antalet följare för dig på Instagram?
Nä men det blir något slag psykologiskt spänning i det om jag börjar tänka på det. Gräver jag ner mig i det om jag har si eller så många följare då börjar jag söka det liksom. Det är ju.

Vem har access till din Instagram sida?
Ja har öppen profil så alla har tillgång till den som har Instagram.

Vem vill du skall kunna se din Instagram?
Det hänge lite ihop med jobbet liksom att jag vill att bilden, de bilderna som jag lägger upp på Instagram och varför den är öppen är ju för att jag i mig själv och företaget vill vara och kunna vara öppen. Att vem som helst ska kunna snacka med mig. Går man in på min Instagram och då ser att jag inte har 50 hashtagar på en bild på en hund så kanske man förstår att jag inte behöver det känner jag.

Marknadsför du din Instagram?
På min hemsida

Varför marknadsför du din Instagram?
Då för mitt jobb.

Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv?
Jag skulle beskriva mig själv som… 25 årig kille som bor i storstad. Står i valet och kvalet om jag ska göra mitt liv i stan som jag har växt upp och kan allting om eller om jag borde pröva lyckan någon annanstans.

Hur är denna beskrivning av dig själv överförbar till andra?
Bara genom att de ser mig kanske..

Är det viktig att andra vet men du är?
Ja om de vet varför.. det beror på varför om de vet att jag är jag. Självklart är det en fördel för mig att folk vet vem jag är och vad jag gör. Och om de respekterar det så är det ännu bättre.

Vad är identitet för dig?
Min identitet skulle nog definiera liksom mina av dem handlingarna som jag i verkligheten gör.

Är det viktigt för dig att "visa" din identitet för andra?
Undermedvetet så tror jag att man strävar efter att få fram sin rätta bild hos dem jag känner.

Hur visar du din identitet?
Ja men så måste det va. Jag la upp en bild på mina skor som jag putsade nu senast för jag tycker dem skorna är väldig.. jag tycker om det och den charmen som kommer med att man putsar skor på en lördag.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att "higlighta" din identitet? Till exempel är det viktigt för dig att låta andra veta vad du gör?
Nä jag ser det mer som en charm genom att träffar man en person som inte vet vem man är så kan man alltid dyka upp lite underifrån från radarn om det inte är professionella arbetskamrater, blivande kunder liksom då har jag ett annat tillvägagångsätt. Men gemene man, kompisar då tror jag bara på långsiktighet jag behöver inte flagga -fan det går bra nu. Det kommer verka som att det går ännu bättre om en kompis säger det efteråt vet du vem du snackade med och jag tror det är trevligare så.

Hur effektivt tror du det är att visa sin identitet genom bilder?

Jag tycker det är mycket mer effektivt att kolla på bilder också mer komplicerat samtidigt. Du får en direkthet som är mycket enklare med bilder. Sen är det ytterst få som bryter ner och läser ut allt som bilden kan säga.

Tror du Instagram har någon påverkan på hur du agerar så du sen kan berätta för andra?

För mig påverkar det inte så mycket.

Känner du att Instagram kan vara en fördel i ditt sociala och professionella liv?

Nä.. därför just nu riktar jag mig till mina kompisar och kommer det in någon affärskontakt då fine då kanske det kan bli någon word of mouth på den vägen. Men jag är som vem som helst på Instagram. Jag sticker inte ut på något sätt.

Appendix 5: Interview respondent 5

Använder du någon social media?
Ja det är väl Instagram och Facebook.

Hur aktiv är du i social media?
Facebook har jag använt ut helt och Instagram en del.

Hur aktiv är du på Instagram?
Någon bild i veckan.

Varför började du använda Instagram?
För att Instagram var det som allt som inte Facebook var så man ville ha. Man vara nära och ville kolla bilder och det berättades så mycket mer snabbt på något sätt.

Hur skulle du jämföra Instagram med andra sociala medier som Twitter och Facebook?
Jag vet inte det känns som Facebook där försvann någons slags personlighet i det hela där är det antingen reklam eller typ det är fest på fredag vi ska dit. Instagram är mer det vardagliga livet hos ens vänner det är lätt tillgängligt.

Vad lägger du upp på Instagram?
Shit.. jag tycker väl Instagram har varit mycket att det är många som är så här mamma lediga och är hemma och bakar och då är det bara bilder på duktiga.. Det tröttnar man på. Jag känner att nu när man har en fotograf utbildning har man mina vänner vill man ge någonting inte så här- Nu jävlar det snöar ute det ser ju vem som helst. Jag såg ett norrsken igår och tog ett kort. Utanför Stockholm och nu håller det på att tickar på och det är lite skoj. Det är väl så här att man vill väl ge någonting känns det som det är klart ibland så är man som alla andra och det är väl lite jobbigt. Så länge det känns givande.

Är det något du inte skulle visa på Instagram och varför?
Det är typ "jag har gjort frukost till flickvännen på sängen" det skulle jag aldrig. Det är det är när man visar hur duktig man är i sitt vardagsliv mot andra som det blir så himla fel.

Är det någon speciell aspekt ur ditt liv som du visar mer regelbundet på Instagram?
Det är väl för att yrket kan på så sätt vara ganska exotiskt man resor kanske upp till Norrland, reser runt och kanske träffar intressanta människor. Eller man kanske plåtar Charlotte Perelli en dag och då kanske det är kul att lägga upp något från det då det kan vara rätt spännande. Och det är väl då det händer.

Hashtagar du dina bilder på Instagram och varför?
Nä men en vän kan jag tagga om han är med på bild.

Hur viktigt är antalet följare för dig på Instagram?
Asså man kan ju bli så himla irriterad när man går in på en tjej som bara typ lagar mat som hon gjort hemma och hon har typ 7000 följare. Man bara så här en annan har 80 men det gör inte så mycket heller men det något psykologiskt att tusan det är väl kul att få över tio likes.

Vem har access till din Instagram sida?
Den är stängd.

Vem vill du skall kunna se din Instagram?
Kompisar som ser den.

Marknadsför du din Instagram?
I början kopplade jag Instagram till Facebook men inte längre det blev fel forum tyckte jag.

Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv?
23 ganska ugn och ganska oerfaren på jobblivet. Jävligt sugen på att göra något bra med min utbildning.

Hur är denna beskrivning av dig själv överförbar till andra?
Folk tolkar ju en när man ser en.

Är det viktig att andra vet men du är?
Mot kompisar och vänner så tycker jag det är viktigt att visa att man är framåt och på väg någonstans genom att man inte sitter hemma framför datorn och slappar och att man brinner för det man gör och trivs med det man gör och det på sin tur kan inspirera andra då känns det viktigt.

Vad är identitet för dig?
Svårt… Jag tror jag vill jäkligt mycket. Ambitiöst. Det känns svårt att definiera identitet. Jag följer ut det på något sätt.

Är det viktigt för dig att "visa" din identitet för andra?
Visa vem man är? För vänner känns det inte som det krävs för man har vänner för att man är som man är. Men för andra är det mer jobb sammanhang och då vill man visa sig ambitiös.

Hur visar du din identitet?
Det där känns som det sitter lite ihop också man vill så att det går att lita på en på något sätt och att man alltid man vill det bästa.. Man tackar inte ja till något man inte vill göra.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att "higlighta" din identitet? Till exempel är det viktigt för dig att låta andra veta vad du gör?
Nä det är inte så viktigt på något sätt. För att det i viss mån kan kännas att man framhäver fotograf yrket som väldigt glamoröst när det är vissa fall är ett jäkla slit göra och det är klart att man kanske träffat någon känd och man gjort något kul jobb. Man kan berätta lite om det men det inte känns viktigt att jag har det jäkligt bra hela tiden. För det är kanske inte så verkligheten ser ut just nu.

Hur effektivt tror du det är att visa sin identitet genom bilder?
Typ då genom Instagram..? Jag tycker väl att i dem projekten det finns det här kommersiella som man måste göra för att får in pengarna och så finns det här privata projekten man jobbar med och där känns det som man står helt naken mer eller mindre. Det känns som man slänger ut med sitt bildspråk och vad man fotar. Och då känns det verkligen som att då är det verkligen en själv och det är kanske inte de bilderna man jämt visar upp heller.

Tror du Instagram har någon påverkan på hur du agerar så du sen kan berätta för andra?
Hur mycket påverkan..? Jag vet faktiskt inte.

Känner du att Instagram kan vara en fördel i ditt sociala och professionella liv?

I det sociala tror jag det men i mitt professionella så ger det ingenting jag skyltar inte med det jag har inte det på min hemsida inte än.

Appendix 6: Interview respondent 6

Använder du någon social media?
Ja jag använder Intagram och Facebook.

Hur aktiv är du i social media?
På Facebook är jag inte speciellt aktiv. Kollar mest vad alla andra gör man jag lägger inte upp bilder själv eller status uppdaterar inte heller. Men däremot på Instagram så lägger jag väl, snittar jag väl på någon per dag. Ibland kan det vara ingen men vissa dagar kan det vara fyra.

Varför började du använda Instagram?
För att jag gillar att foto och det känns liksom så här att status uppdatering är roligt men en bild är så mycket roligare.

Hur länge har du använt Instagram?
Kanske i två år.

Hur skulle du jämföra Instagram med andra sociala medier som Twitter och Facebook?
Jag vet inte jag använder inte Twitter jag har Twitter konto men jag har inte förstått. Det blir väl lite vilken person man är gillar man att skriva och göra fräckisar typ då gillar man Twitter men gillar man att fota och typ skriva något kul då gillar man Instagram.

Vad lägger du upp på Instagram?
Mycket mat, frukost bilder och mycket ego bilder på mig själv. Då kan det vara så att man har skrivit en liten kommentar men typ dagen har varit bra och så här och så här har hänt. Då är det inte så mycket sånt här mig som är fokus på utan då är det som en liten dagboks anteckning. Sen är det kanske det kan också vara en sådan här knäpp bild det här var tokigt liksom.

Är det något du inte skulle visa på Instagram och varför?
Jag skulle inte väl lägga upp något naket på mig själv. Jag skulle heller inte lägga upp något som kan förnedra någon annan där den är ful. Jag skulle heller inte lägga upp någon bild som inte något har accepterat för det tycker jag också känns som en inskränkning på någon annans integritet men jag har inte tänkt på det så mycket. Men det är väl liksom naket och där någon inte okejat bilden.

Är det någon speciell aspekt ur ditt liv som du visar mer regelbundet på Instagram?
Livet så här man äter mycket och sen kan det vara mycket jag är på väg hit. Men vardags bilder. Jag är inte den som har vissa har ju konton för att naila en sak där de bara lägger upp väskor till exempel eller bara upp jag lägger upp livet bilder.

Hashtagar du dina bilder på Instagram och varför?
Ja för att då får man mer likes.

Hur viktigt är antalet följare för dig på Instagram?

Just följare tycker jag inte är så viktigt eller jag är ingen känd person jag är en vanlig person. Men jag har rätt många följare.. jag har typ 280 någonting. Nu ska vi se jag har 289 följare.

Vem har access till din Instagram sida?

Jag har öppen profil

Vem vill du skall kunna se din Instagram?

Då är det verkligen så här.. Ja för jag skulle inte lägga upp något som jag inte tyckte var okej. Men juste jag tycker också när man får likes jag tycker inte det säger någonting för jag har 289 följare men på en bild som jag tycker är sjukt roligt den kanske jag får 10 likes på sen när det är typ en dålig bild på mig så typ 39 likes man bara fast..

Marknadsför du din Instagram?

Jag hade den kopplad till Facebook innan men jag hade typ inte ställt in det själv. Det tyckte jag nästan blev lite pinsamt. För då blev det nästan så här hej jag är liksom överallt. För jag har en blogg också. Så jag har Instagram, jag har en blogg och jag har Facebook så jag har en pod det blev bara himla för mycket.

Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv?

Hm.. Hur skriver jag mitt Cv nä jag skoja. Men jag skulle väl beskriva mig som väldigt energisk, glad lite överspelad. Men så här glad för det mesta positiv sen har jag också att jag. Jag skulle inte vilja säga att jag är rak och ärlig för det är jag inte för jag har väldigt svårt att säga vad jag tycker när det väl gäller. Men jag tror många uppfattar mig som rak och ärlig för jag kan vara så här - men skoja du har du köpt den där fula tröjan. Jag kan överdriva saker som egentligen inte betyder någonting. Jag tycker inte jag är det men jag kan uppfattas som det.

Hur är denna beskrivning av dig själv överförbar till andra?

Hur jag förmedlar det till andra? Det vet jag inte, när man håller på med marknadsföring så tror jag man tänker på det så mycket med men jag skulle aldrig tänka på det för att det är bara så jag är. Jag har verkligen försökt många gånger att tona ner mig. "Men Emma du behöver inte alltid ta centrum i rummet hela tiden" så jag har försökt hålla det. Som vi pratade om innan man kan känna sig väldigt uttömd. Och jag känner mig ofta väldigt uttömd för jag ger min tid alldeles för mycket. Men på någonstans där så ser jag mig själv stå där alltid mitt i rummet och apar mig. Jag tänker inte på det för det är så jag är. Jag måste förmedla vissa saker.

Är det viktig att andra vet men du är?

Ja men jag tror nog det. Ja det är nog därför jag hamnar där i centrum för jag kan inte liksom hålla mig. Det är inte så här att jag måste visa upp den här sidan för att man ska tycka om mig. Men det kanske är det också. Visar jag en annan personlighet där jag sitter tyst i en soffa det är liksom inte jag så jo.

Vad är identitet för dig?

Jag vet inte identitet nä men det är personlighet men identitet är något helt annat också tycker jag. Varifrån jag kommer. Jag är smålänning liksom. Jag tror att jag kan göra vissa saker för att jag är smålänning. Att jag är så här snackar skit om vissa grupper för jag är i den gruppen så här jäkla bönder men jag är en bonde själv så jag får säga det. Men också så här min personlighet har ju formats från vart jag kommer ifrån och vilken familj jag till hör. Så är det nog för alla och jag har alltid fått ta stor plats i min både i min familj och i klassrummet. Det är ingen som har hämmat den saken.

Är det viktigt för dig att "visa" din identitet för andra?

Musik har varit väldigt viktigt för mig. Jag tror det var där när jag var 13-14 då först var man som alla andra du vet vad jag menar. Man ville va så mycket som alla andra men när jag blev tror det var nästa 14 då ville jag inte vara som alla andra. Då ville jag försöka bli mig själv och jag försökte hitta. Då tror jag det var mycket musik att jag försökte visa genom det att lyssna det på inte radio musik. Kent, Lars Winnerbäck och försökte vara lite mer alternativ på det sättet. Sen har väl det också.. Då visade jag mycket tydligare i mina kläder vem jag var nu tror jag att jag har en mycket mer vanlig stil. Men jag har ju försökt att inte klä mig så mycket i färg för att jag tycker jag är en färgstark person oh då behöver jag inte det kanske skulle vara för mycket. Men nu har jag börjat köpa färg på kläder så nu får jag se om folk börjar hata mig.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att "higlighta" din identitet? Till exempel är det viktigt för dig att låta andra veta vad du gör?

Ibland tycker jag det. Men det är väl stunder man känner sig osäker. Stunder då man känner sig osäker är det väl jätte skönt att säga ja men jag pluggar juridik för det låter bra i andras öron. Det vet man och då kan man lite lägga sig på det. Men om jag känner mig verkligen tillfreds med situationen då bryr jag mig verkligen inte. Jag hoppas människor tycker om varandra för personligheten och inte va man har på sig och vad man gör. Men i olika situationer tycker jag att man vill det.

Hur effektivt tror du det är att visa sin identitet genom bilder?

På Instagram till exempel..? Jag tycker det är så roligt verkligen bara för typ vilket filter kan jag tycka är så här. "Aha använder hon det där filtret." Nä men verkligen det gäller lite vad man väljer att ta på, tjejer som är så här som liksom plutar med läpparna har stora bröst, det är mycket naket men då vet man att hon är den där tjejen som hänger på de där ställena. Jag vet inte jag har väldigt svårt att säga vad mina egna bilder säger men jag tror nog att de inte förmedlar att jag är en sådan här party brutta som är singel.

Tror du Instagram har någon påverkan på hur du agerar så du sen kan berätta för andra?

Vad jag gör i livet. Faktiskt ingenting.

Känner du att Instagram kan vara en fördel i ditt sociala och professionella liv?

Nej snarare tvärtom att för det första nu har jag inte fotat vår fika jätte konstigt att jag inte gjorde det men det är liksom alltid att man måste "ursäkta vänta lite paus" Jag ska fota här. Men folk bara vad gör du. Men också eftersom jag har en offentlig sida nu har jag inte bilder som jag tycker inte är stötande det skulle vara lite jobbigt om jag var på en intervju och de kollade liksom hela mitt liv och fick tillgång till det.

Appendix 7: Interview respondent 7

Använder du någon social media?
Ja Facebook och Instagram det är typ det.

Hur aktiv är du i social media?
Jag är ganska aktiv. Jag är dagligt aktiv. Dagligen är jag inne och håller på.

Hur aktiv är du på Instagram?
Dagligen jag lägger upp bilder varje dag.

Varför började du använda Instagram?
För mina kompisar tjatade jag visste inte ens vad det var i början.

Hur länge har du använt Instagram?
Sen i somras, sen i juli augusti där någonstans.

Hur skulle du jämföra Instagram med andra sociala medier som Twitter och Facebook?
Jag tycker alla uppfyller sina funktioner. Twitter är som en mikroblog där skriver du grejer medan Instagram där förmedlar du själva bilden. Jag föredrar att lägga ut bilder.

Vad lägger du upp på Instagram?
Allt som man inte får lägga upp för dem på Instagram.

Är det något du inte skulle visa på Instagram och varför?
Jag skulle inte lägga upp naken bilder och typ bilder som har med droger att göra eller så här eller grejer som är abusing för andra. Grejer som inte är okej.

Är det någon speciell aspekt ur ditt liv som du visar mer regelbundet på Instagram?
Jag är nog ganska allmänt det är mycket kläder och sånt. Det här har jag på mig idag och nu sitter jag och käkar det här eller dricker det här.

Hashtagar du dina bilder på Instagram och varför?
Jag brukar hashtaga bilderna för att få så många likes jag kan.

Hur viktigt är antalet följare för dig på Instagram?
Nä inte så viktigt men det är alltid kul med fler följare.

Vem har access till din Instagram sida?
Öppen profil

Vem vill du skall kunna se din Instagram?
Det handlar inte om att alla ska se men alla får ju se.

Marknadsför du din Instagram?
Nä ibland kopplar jag den till Facebook om typ mina kompisar tycker det är något grymt roligt.

Hur skulle du beskriva dig själv?

Ja hur..? Glad tjej i sina bästa år. Nä men väldigt kläd- och mode intresserad och jag tycker om att leva för nuet.

Hur är denna beskrivning av dig själv överförbar till andra?
Det tror jag det kanske är genom att just sociala medier. För man visar ända en bild av sig själv och det är nog den positiva bilden jag visar för man vill inte visa en negativ sida av sig själv.

Är det viktig att andra vet men du är?
Nä faktiskt inte. Grejen är att jag tror att folk vill göra sin egen uppfattning om vad jag är för människa sen är det ju upp till mig om jag vill visa mitt riktiga jag eller inte. För vissa är det så här fine de får tycka vad de vill för det är ingen som jag ska umgås med. Så det är lite vem det är.

Vad är identitet för dig?
Nä men identitet för mig är att man först och främst att man själv är medvetet om sin egen identitet. Vem man är och hur man är. Och är medveten om sina brister men även fördelar. Din identitet kan identifiera sig i rätt situation. Att du vet hur du ska hantera din identitet i kanske i en mer klyschad situation det kanske också är en grej som du kanske måste balansera upp dig själv. Kanske i ett politiskt sammanhang eller med dina vänner eller vad det nu är. Så man måste kunna identifiera sina brister, men om du är blyg ibland så gör jag det här men även kunna hantera den sidan.

Är det viktigt för dig att "visa" din identitet för andra?
Nä tycker jag inte alls.

Hur visar du din identitet?
Jag visar mig genom att vara mig själv mest och sen så tror ju folk att de vet så mycket om en och att de kan identifiera en på grund av en grej men det behöver inte vara sant.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att "higlighta" din identitet? Till exempel är det viktigt för dig att låta andra veta vad du gör?
Nä det tycker jag inte är viktigt egentligen att göra det men kanske att man ger en ärlig bild av sig själv iallafall.

Hur effektivt tror du det är att visa sin identitet genom bilder?
Jag tror faktiskt bilder säger mer än vad Twitter skulle föra . För att det känns som man mer säger sina tankar där och kommer inne från. Bilder säger.. folk får ju en snabbare uppfattning av dig om du lägger upp en bild eller vad du skriver på Twitter till exempel. För då måste man tänka vad hon gör, hur är hon, har hon de här kläderna och hänger här. Fördomar och sånt.

Tror du Instagram har någon påverkan på hur du agerar så du sen kan berätta för andra?
Jag tror inte alls det har något inflytande.

Känner du att Instagram kan vara en fördel i ditt sociala och professionella liv?
Kanske i mitt sociala liv med vänner för det är liksom det blir ändå en grej att man kommunicerar genom Instagram man skriver en grej.. skämtar. Man kan även förmedla ett visst budskap till sina vänner sådana grejer.

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