

CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management



Diploma Thesis Title:

The effect of social group pressure on an individual's political consumption on Facebook

This Diploma Thesis has been written and defended at the Wageningen University in the Netherlands under the Double Degree Agreement between the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, and the Wageningen University. In accordance with the Double Degree Agreement, this Diploma Thesis is fully recognized as part of the MSc programme study at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.

Author: Bc. Petr Chán

Diploma Thesis Supervisors: dr. Stefan Wahlen, dr. Hester Moerbeek

Wageningen University 2013 ©

The effect of social group pressure on an individual's political consumption on Facebook

Author: Bc. Petr Chán
Student number: 890227156130
Thesis supervisors: dr. Stefan Wahlen, dr. Hester Moerbeek
Chair group: Sociology of Consumers and Households



WAGENINGEN UR

For quality of life

DECLARATION OF INTEGRITY

Herein I declare that I am the sole author of this Master thesis. Furthermore, I declare that all of the information sources used in this thesis are acknowledged and listed in the references at the end of the thesis.

Petr Chán

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the first place, I would like to thank to my thesis supervisors, dr. Stefan Wahlen and dr. Hester Moerbeek, for their professional and invaluable counsel during my working on the thesis. Then, I would like to thank to my good friend and fellow sociologist, David de Kruif, for being my personal inspiration and also for helping me with many personal shenanigans during my Master studies. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Wageningen University for providing excellent education and also, to Czech University of Life Sciences for providing the opportunity of studying a double degree program that I took use of. Last but not least, I would like to thank to my parents and family as a whole for their faith and financial and emotional investments in me during my Master studies abroad.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to understand the limits of the consumer as a rational decision maker on social networking websites in case of Facebook. Specifically, this thesis investigates the effect of the presence of social groups (so-called social group pressure) on Facebook on an individual's political consumption. This was examined by the principal component analysis with the sample of 174 Facebook users. Two potential effects of the social group pressure have been extracted; they account for *consumption-related sharing tactics* and construction of *independent ideal self* performed by the Facebook users. Social groups on Facebook were identified as brand communities as they differ in their consumption. The findings further suggest that also personal expressions are commoditized on Facebook due to burden of value consistency implicitly imposed on an individual on Facebook. Potentially socially desirable responses have been identified and discussed as well. In this thesis, Facebook is eventually labelled as an identity construction tool that may have further implications especially on consumer-related studies and human psychological and social development.

Key words:

social group, group pressure, individual choice, political consumption, Facebook

Lists of figures and tables

List of figures

Figure 2.1: Composition of the social group (p. 10)

Figure 2.2: Social group exerts pressure upon the individual (p. 14)

Figure 2.3: The whole process of the role of a social group in its influence upon an individual (p. 16)

Figure 2.4: The power of online identity (p. 26)

Figure 4.1 - Frequency distribution of age of the participants (p. 30)

Figure 4.2 - Boxplot of the number of Facebook friends of the participants (p. 31)

Figure 4.3 - Number of Facebook friends grouped according to gender (p. 32)

Figure 4.4 - Gender representation in Facebook app owners (p. 33)

Figure 4.5 - Scree plot of eigenvalues per extracted component (p. 35)

List of tables

Table 4.1 - Total variance explained by the extracted components before and after rotation (p. 35)

Table 4.2 - Summary of the PCA results for the effect of social group pressure on individual's political consumption on Facebook (N = 174) (p. 37)

Table 4.3 - Dependent t-tests on selected pairs of questionnaire variables with potentially socially desirable responses (p. 40)

Table 4.4 - Dependent t-tests on selected pairs of questionnaire variables with theoretically expected responses (p. 42)

Table of contents:

| | |
|---|----|
| DECLARATION OF INTEGRITY | 3 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 4 |
| ABSTRACT | 5 |
| Lists of figures and tables | 6 |
| List of figures | 6 |
| List of tables | 6 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 9 |
| 2. Theoretical background..... | 10 |
| 2.1. The social group formation | 10 |
| 2.1.1. Reference group | 11 |
| 2.1.2. Peer group | 12 |
| 2.1.3. Social norms | 13 |
| 2.1.4. Integration of theoretical concepts and the social group pressure | 14 |
| 2.2. Limited consumer rationality with respect to an individual consumer choice | 18 |
| 2.3. Facebook as a social networking website | 19 |
| 2.3.1. Offline and online opinion leadership | 21 |
| 2.4. Political consumption on Facebook | 23 |
| 2.4.1. Conspicuous consumption | 24 |
| 2.5. Identity shaping..... | 25 |
| 2.5.1. Online identity..... | 26 |
| 3. Research strategy and Methods..... | 29 |
| 3.1. Hypotheses..... | 29 |
| 3.2. Questionnaire construction..... | 29 |
| 3.3. Data collection and the sample..... | 30 |
| 3.4. Statistical techniques used..... | 30 |
| 4. Results | 31 |
| 4.1. General descriptive statistics | 31 |
| 4.1.1. Socio-demographic variables | 31 |
| 4.1.2. Facebook-use-related variables | 32 |
| 4.2. Principal component analysis..... | 35 |
| 4.2.1. Preliminary analysis..... | 35 |
| 4.2.2. Final analysis..... | 36 |
| 4.3. Additional relationships between variables..... | 39 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.3.1. Dependent <i>t</i> -tests..... | 39 |
| 4.3.2. Independent <i>t</i> -tests..... | 44 |
| 5. Discussion and Conclusions..... | 45 |
| 5.1. General research question..... | 45 |
| 5.2. Hypotheses..... | 47 |
| 5.3. Recommendations for further research..... | 47 |
| 5.4. Final concluding remarks..... | 48 |
| 6. References:..... | 50 |
| Appendix..... | 56 |
| Appendix 1 - Questionnaire..... | 56 |
| Appendix 2 - Overview of nationalities of the participants..... | 61 |
| Appendix 3 - Descriptive statistics of the answers per question..... | 62 |
| Appendix 4 - Communalities..... | 63 |
| Appendix 5 - Component matrix..... | 64 |
| Appendix 6 - Complete rotated component matrix..... | 65 |

1. Introduction

Contemporary sociology refers to people as social animals living in consumer society (e.g. Sassatelli, 2007). That is, people define their selves and unite together through their consumption. The assertion that people are *social* animals entails that people are not going through their lives alone; they always meet other people and have social relationships with them. According to these social relationships, one's social contacts may be divided into various social groups. These social groups come in various sizes and various importance for an individual. Furthermore, in the context of consumer society, these social groups also differ in their consumption practices.

As implicitly posed above, consumption has a social dimension, i.e. consumption may be referred to as a form of bonding between people. In this thesis, it is argued that the consumption practices of a particular social group may stimulate an individual to identify himself¹ with and eventually conform to that group. The reason for this scenario is based on the premise that a social group exerts particular influence on an individual, who wants to act as a member of that group. This influence, referred to as 'social group pressure', is based on the premise that a social group is comprised from the (interaction between) three key sociological phenomena - reference group, peer group and social norms - which are able to, due to their characteristics, affect one's identity shaping and behaviour in a social environment.

The concept of social group pressure is linked to a view of consumer as not fully rational actor on the market due to limits of his individual (or autonomous) choice (e.g. Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). That is, under the influence of the (neo)classical economic theory, consumer has been perceived as a rational, individual decision-maker (e.g. Brown, 2008). Nevertheless, in this thesis, it is shown that consumers do not always choose on the basis of their own preferences due to the social group pressure. Consumers under social group pressure has been identified as people who act on the basis of their social identity, have low to none power and limited knowledge. Social group pressure thus accounts for an external influence on one's individual choice and ranks among other such influences already identified in the research (e.g. marketing efforts of private companies).

Social group pressure in this thesis is specifically linked to the online environment. That is, at the present time, the internet may be viewed as a household tool as there are hundreds of millions users of it globally (e.g. Wong et al., 2011), especially in the developed world. Moreover, the use of the internet may account for particular social implications (e.g. Dutton & Blank, 2011). This thesis shows that social networking websites, which can be seen as new innovation with regards to a communication with one's social groups that has emerged on the internet especially in the last decade, might have accelerated such social implications. These websites account for ubiquity and fastness of connection between people and their social groups. Moreover, it is argued in this thesis that these websites have transformed the consumer behaviour of their users and also, the communication between the individual and his social groups. That is, with respect to the social group pressure, the visibility of one's consumption on social networking websites accounts for critical reflection on it from the perspective of one's social groups. One then exerts particular effort to retain a good reputation with the social groups he feels affiliated to and employs an impression management. Facebook has been chosen as a case of social networking websites in this thesis due to

¹ For the sake of better readability, general concepts of "an individual" and "a consumer" are always written as the third person masculine singular (i.e. "he"), although these concepts refer also to the third person feminine singular (i.e. "she") in reality.

its persistent (global) popularity. It should be obvious by far that a user of Facebook is viewed as a consumer in this thesis. Therefore, he is expected to be limited in his individual choice because of the influence of his social groups on Facebook. Social groups on Facebook appear in form of so-called Facebook friends.

The online, social environment of Facebook thus allows for public visibility of many aspects of individual (consumer) behaviour to his social groups. An individual behaviour may not necessarily be of consumer nature on the first sight, however, it is argued that also one's expressions are commoditized on social networking websites like Facebook. In a sense then, Facebook is an ideal environment for political consumption as it is defined in this thesis, i.e. it is such type of consumption through which the consumer implicitly or explicitly communicates particular message about his supposedly personal identity to his social groups via social networking website. In other words, an individual is expected to switch between his multiple selves on Facebook (as he has multiple social groups among his Facebook friends) to gain a good reputation within the social groups he feels affiliated to. More importantly though, with regards to commoditization of one's expressions, an individual is expected to be burdened with value consistency as also his expressions which are supposedly not related to his consumption will be compared to his actual consumption as posed by him on Facebook.

Thus, taking all into account, this thesis aims to understand the limits of a consumer as a rational decision maker on social networking websites in case of Facebook. More specifically, the objective of this thesis is to find out how does the presence of one's social groups, which are linked to one's Facebook user profile, influence one's individual choice with respect to his (political) consumption.

The general research question of this thesis is:

What is the effect of the presence of social groups on Facebook on an individual's political consumption?

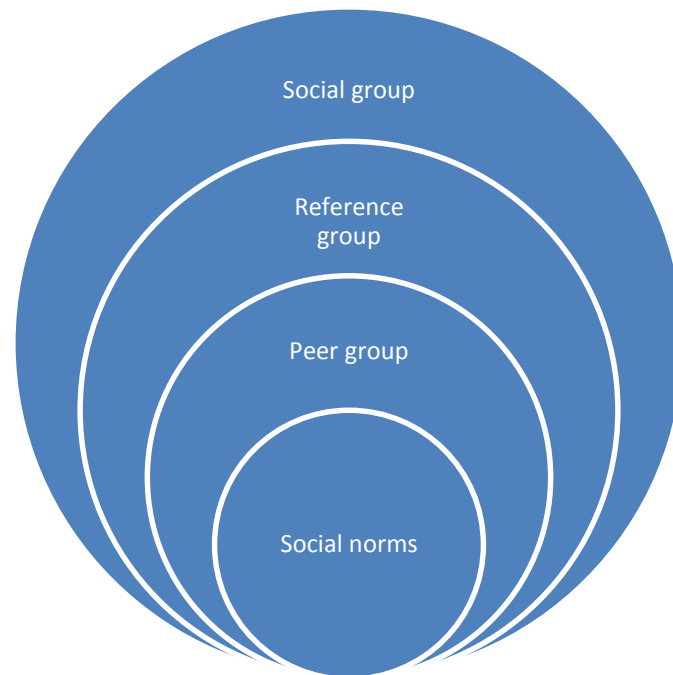
The overview of this thesis is as follows: in theoretical background, this thesis will attempt to enlighten how do social groups exert pressure on an individual/a consumer; how do social groups operate on social networking websites with respect to Facebook and how is the social group pressure linked to political consumption and identity construction. Then, the methods applied in this thesis will be described. Subsequently, the analysis and results of it will be provided. The thesis ends with final conclusions and discussion.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The social group formation

Social group may be viewed as "two or more individuals who are connected by and within social relationships" (Forsyth, 2009; p. 3). Though this definition of social group may seem plain enough, its underlying interaction of sociological concepts is rather complex. That is, in this thesis, it is argued that a social group is composed by the interaction of the three key sociological phenomena: reference group, peer group and social norms (see *Figure 2.1*). To understand this interaction, firstly, these three phenomena will be described separately and then, their integration to the one complex concept (i.e. the social group) will be justified.

Figure 2.1: Composition of the social group



2.1.1. Reference group

Reference groups may be referred to as psychologically important groups for one's attitudes and behaviour. In terms of consumer studies, reference groups exert influence on consumer judgement and choice (White & Dahl, 2006). Park & Lessig (1977) identified three basic forms of reference group influence on consumers: informational, utilitarian and value-expressive. More specifically, *informational reference group influence* accounts for consumer's reliance on his reference group as a source of knowledge; *utilitarian reference group influence* accounts for consumer's social utility from following the preferences of his reference group; and finally, *value-expressive reference group influence* accounts for consumer's pursuit of self-concept based on his identification with his reference group. This thesis may utilize also Kelley's (1952) normative and comparative distinction of influences of a reference group. *Normative reference group influence* shows how an individual adheres the rules set by his reference group whereas *comparative reference group influence* shows how an individual sets the reference group as a benchmark to compare himself to.

Nevertheless, consumption activities differ in susceptibility to reference group influence. For example, Ford & Ellis (1980, p. 125) hold that consumers will not take preferences of others into account when they buy those products that are "low in visibility, complexity and perceived risk and high in testability". Another study suggests, that there are only two dimensions of particular influence on the importance of reference groups, i.e. whether the goods are consumed publicly or privately and whether the goods are luxuries or necessities (Bearden & Etzel, 1982).

Also, it should not be omitted that the psychological significance, typical for an individual as regards his reference groups, may be either positive or negative. Therefore, reference groups of an individual may be divided on associative and dissociative (Solomon et al., 2010). Wilk (1997) postulates that the influence of dissociative reference groups on one's consumption should not be underestimated as the distastes and dislikes may hold the same or even bigger importance on one's personality and identity expression. Lastly, it should be noted here that also a single individual may wield the

influence of the whole reference group, especially on social networking websites like Facebook. These individuals are called *opinion leaders* (see section 2.3.1. below).

2.1.2. Peer group

The next phenomenon which is argued to be the part of the social group concept in this thesis is that of a peer group. Even though a peer group has much in common with a reference group and sometimes these two groups may overlap, there are some important differences among these concepts to be pointed out.

Peer group is basically a group of people, who (involuntarily) share similar characteristics. Such characteristics are of socio-demographical character, e.g. age or social class. Age is the main determinant as regards peer group (that is why *peer* group). Thus, here may be seen the first difference between peer group and reference group: peer group is always such group, in which the individuals/consumers are of the same cohort.

The second difference between peer group and reference group is also related to age. That is, as there is always a peer group for an individual, the peer group has an important effect on an individual's socialization since his early age. Furthermore, peer group continues to exert the influence on him as he is getting older and affects him also in his adulthood (Brown, 1990). During this ageing/developmental process people compare themselves to other peers, explore different norms and values and therefore, they co-construct their identities due to peer group influence (Pugh & Hart, 1999). In the same line of thought, it may be even argued that the peer group may affect one's reference group preference.

For children, peer group may be seen as a complement to parental supervision that includes the opportunity for children to form relationships on their own and also discussing their interests which adults may not share with them (e.g. Warr, 2005). Brown (1990) further links peer group influence to an independence and identity separation from the parents during one's adulthood. Thus, peer group may be viewed as an influence on an individual's social and psychological development. However, this influence is two sided as the peer group may account for positive, but also negative personal development. For example, the peer group contributes to the identity formation (e.g. Brown et al., 1986a) and it also serves as a source of information (Coie et al., 1990), however the effects of the peer group influence may result in peer pressure (Steinberg, 1987) or increased risk behaviour (Dielman et al., 1987).

Anyhow, especially two effects of the peer group influence - identity formation and peer pressure - stand out in relation to the postulated concept of the social group in this thesis. Identity formation may be viewed as a developmental process where an individual acquires a sense of self (Waterman, 1993). As described above, one's peers might have a crucial role in forming one's identity. Normative influence on an individual is exerted by his peer group in the same way as it is exerted by the reference group. This is where these two concepts overlap. However, it is the socio-demographical character of the peer group what makes the important difference with the reference group concept.

The peer pressure basically refers to the changing of one's attitudes or behaviour due to the normative influence exerted by the peer group upon an individual. As the paragraphs above suggest, peer pressure is strongly interlinked with one's identity formation; moreover, the peer pressure *may even account for* one's identity formation. Based on the premise that in consumer society people

have consumption-based identities (Sasatelli, 2007), it is argued that the peer pressure will most likely play a role in (political) consumption of an individual as well. Also, additional link between peer group influence and the consumer theory may be seen in the work of Lipscomb (1988), who observed that the tendency to talk about consumer products with one's peers increases with age. Brown et al. (1986b, p. 521) refer to this increased susceptibility to the peer pressure with one's age as "the one of the hallmarks of adolescent behaviour".

2.1.3. Social norms

The last phenomenon, which is argued to be part of the complex concept of social group are so-called social norms. Social norms are defined in this thesis as the standards of behaviour in a particular social situation that are (implicitly or explicitly) expected to be adhered by the social actors involved in that situation.

Social norms thus vary according to the social environment people/consumers find themselves in. This is where the difference between social norms and values may be found, i.e. level of specificity. For example, "honesty is a general value, but the rules defining what is honest behaviour in a particular situation are norms" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013). Amongst the other characteristics of social norms, many studies stress the importance of the role that social norms play in maintaining natural order and organization in a society (e.g. Huang & Wu, 1994). Finally and most importantly for the purpose of this thesis, social norms have the power to influence one's behaviour (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).

The power to influence one's behaviour may stem from social norms' inherited potential of social control as implicitly posed in the last paragraph. That is, through socialization, an individual becomes susceptible to the informal means of control, as he feels to be part of the social group psychologically. Fiske et al. (2010) claim that it is at this point where the social norms of the particular social group become relevant standards for individual's own behaviour.

Thus, the primary goal of the social control may be perceived as the compliance to the rules of a particular social group. To achieve this compliance, social groups employ various forms of reward systems and operant conditioning to control their members' behaviour (Hackman, 1992). However, an individual does not always comply to the social group's rules. This is the situation where social norms of the particular social group exert implicit pressure on an individual to conform. That is, nonconformity to the social group is often perceived as deviance (Lemert, 1972).

Many of the groundbreaking studies in the area of social norms were conducted by dr. Robert Cialdini. For example, in various settings he identified: a) the subdivision of the social norms on injunctive (what most others approve or disapprove) and descriptive (what most others do) (Cialdini et al., 1990); b) the role of the social norms in terms of effective behaviour, maintaining social relationships and managing of one's self-concept (Cialdini & Trost, 1998); c) the mixed success of persuasive appeals based on the social norms (Schultz et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, this thesis rather employs the perspective of Kendall (2011), as she divided social norms on formal and informal ones. Formal social norms are explicit, written rules of the individual's behaviour. The written form signifies their importance and, moreover they are reinforced with "penalties for inappropriate behaviour" (Kendall, 2011; p. 72). The informal social norms, on the other hand, are unwritten standards of behaviour. Nevertheless, its great importance for this thesis

lies in the fact that these unwritten standards of behaviour are "understood by people who share a common identity" (ibid; p.72).

2.1.4. Integration of theoretical concepts and the social group pressure

Reference group, peer group and social norms - in this thesis, all of these theoretical concepts are being argued that they together comprise another, more complex conception: the social group. It is because of the frequent overlapping of these concepts' characteristics, which causes an obscurity as regards to the specific influence that each of these concepts have upon the individual/consumer. That is, it is argued that all the reference group, peer group and social norms theoretical concepts are inevitably in a constant interaction with each other. To understand this interaction, their common as well as complementary characteristics are described at first. Then, the (social group) pressure, which these three concepts together exert upon the individual due to their identical characteristics will be enlightened.

Taking into account the theoretical accounts found on reference group, peer group and social norms in the previous subchapters, the three most important differences between these three concepts may be induced. Firstly, there is a voluntary choice for the reference group. The same option may not be found in peer group and social norms, as the individual is bound to the peer group since his childhood and bound by the social norms with respect to his membership in the given social group as well. Secondly, peer group is the most important concept as regards to an individual's development. According to the findings, it seems that it is the peer group, which introduces an individual to the reference groups on the basis of existing social norms. Moreover, peer group seems to account for implicit identity formation of the individual. Thirdly, social norms are not human beings as it is the case of the reference group and the peer group; yet, their potential to be followed by an individual is immense.

Nevertheless, they are rather the similarities of these three concepts which are of particular interest for the purposes of this thesis. The main ability of all the reference group, peer group and social norms is to influence or even control one's behaviour. Furthermore, these concepts seem to be responsible for shaping of one's identity. That is, one's identity is constantly affected on implicit, unaware basis by the peer group, whereas as regards one's reference group and adhered social norms, an individual seeks them on the basis of his self-concept. Taking all into account, it may be argued that it is the belonging to some particular social group, which limits one's ability to individual decision making as the one is influenced by that social group's members and rules. In addition, the identity is formed not only by positive affiliation with the social group, but also by negative affiliation with that group. Finally, the overlap between the reference group and the peer group may be so strong, that the peer group may become the reference group as well.

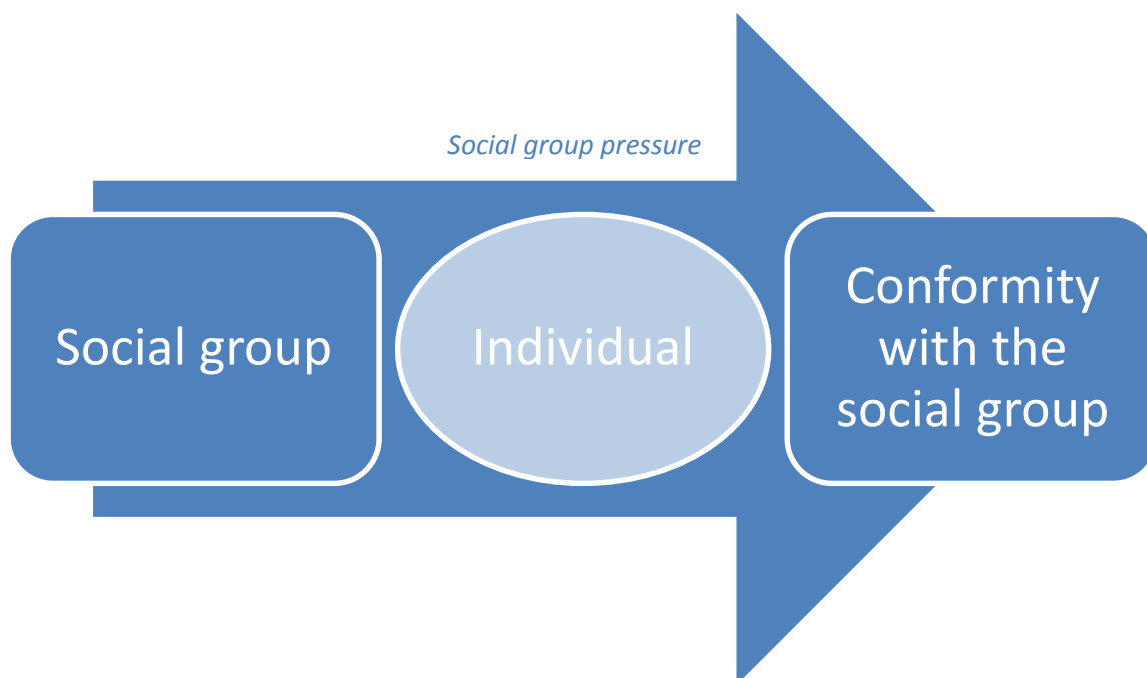
The concept of how the theoretical concept of social group is comprised by the reference group, the peer group and the social norms has been already briefly described in the beginning of this section (see *Figure 2.1*). More specifically; the reference group and the peer group (which may overlap) use the social norms² (and are already influenced by them) to forge the rules of that social group, so that

² To clarify this further, social norms create basis for the social group because of two main reasons. Firstly, they are already present when people are born and thus, social/reference/peer groups imitate and reproduce them at first and eventually re-forge them in time. Secondly, it is based on the power of social norms resulting in group conformity as posed by [Cialdini & Goldstein \(2004\)](#) in the last paragraph of this section.

the member of that social group may be identified among the other people. In other words, reference group, peer group and social norms are not mutually exclusive; there is never just the reference group or the peer group or the social norms only. Rather, there always exist a social group, which is the complex concept which consists of the reference group, the peer group and the social norms, as it is very often obscured which of these three concepts actually plays the role in influencing the individual. It is because of the similar characteristics and opaque differences of these three concepts.

Social group then exerts particular pressure on an individual to conform to its rules. Social conformity is described as "general readiness to conform to social (group) norms and values [which may eventually entail] authoritarian attitudes ... onto social issues of control, security and stability" (Jugert et al., 2009; p. 608). The way of how social group exerts the pressure upon an individual may be seen in *Figure 2.2*. The more detailed graphical explanation of the whole process of how the social group influences an individual as described in this section may be found in *Figure 2.3*. Thus, taking all into account, the social group pressure may be described as an external influence on an individual's behaviour and identity (implicitly or explicitly) exerted by the social group(s) he is part of, which is amplified by that individual's subjective perception of his membership in the social group(s), resulting in his potential conformity with the social group(s).

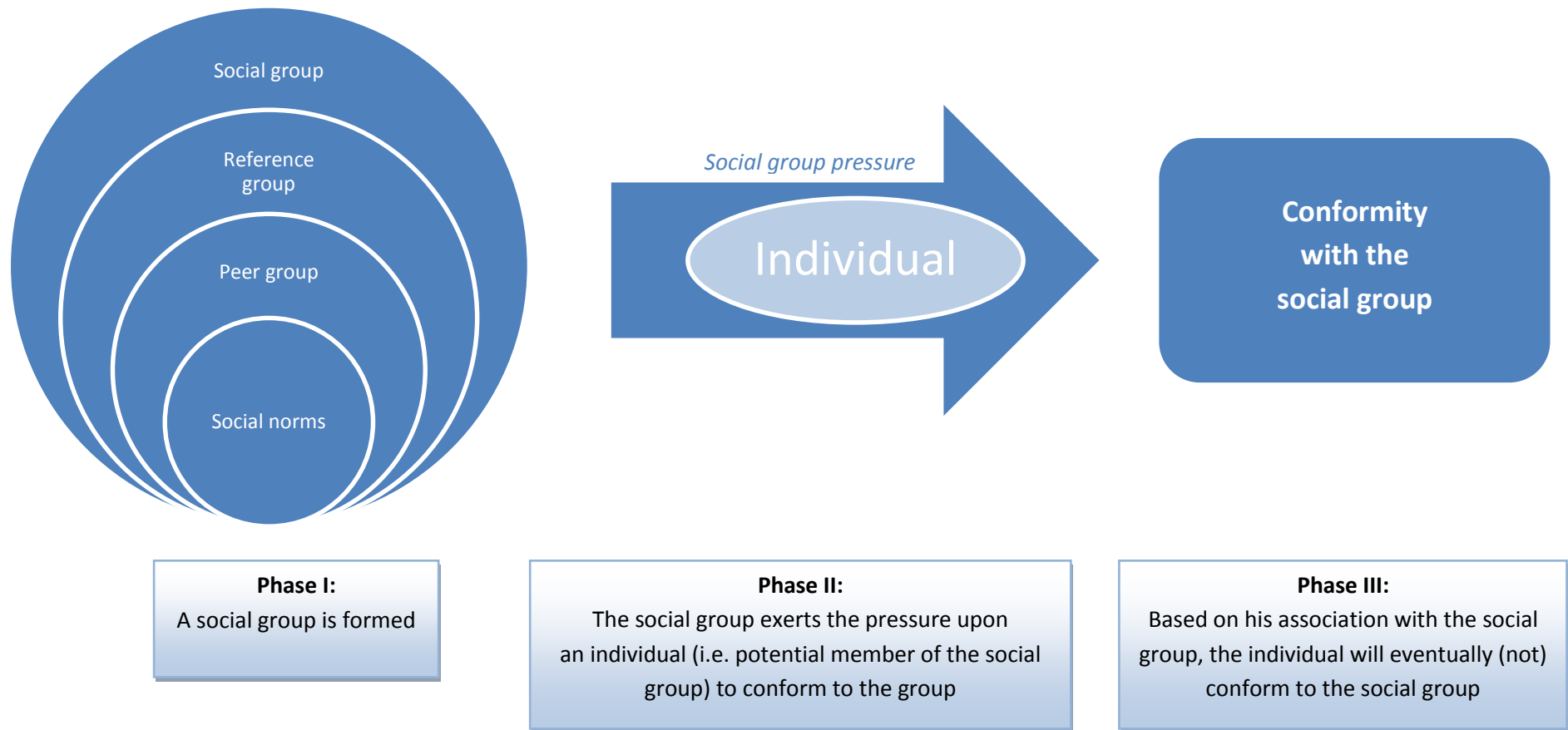
Figure 2.2: Social group exerts pressure upon the individual



As a groundbreaking research in the field of group pressure, it may be argued that they were [Asch's \(1951\)](#) experiments which have shown that the group pressure has indeed influence upon the modification and distortion of judgements of people. [Cialdini & Goldstein \(2004\)](#) claim that there are three central motivations for conforming behaviour: 1) a desire to be accurate by properly interpreting reality and behaving correctly, 2) to obtain social approval from others and 3) to

maintain a favourable self-concept. Also, even though people/consumers retain certain autonomy, "they are driven by powerful and opposing social motives for, on the one hand, differentiation and uniqueness, and on the other, inclusiveness and commonality" ([Brewer, 1993; pp. 1-16](#)).

Figure 2.3: The whole process of the role of a social group in its influence upon an individual



2.2. Limited consumer rationality with respect to an individual consumer choice

Individual (or autonomous) choice is being viewed as an integral part of the theoretical concept of sovereign consumer, which is ascribed to [Adam Smith \(1863\)](#). Though this concept of sovereign consumer (or *homo economicus*, i.e. *economic man*) is 150 years old, "his elite status within the field of economics endures" ([Brown, 2008; p. 41](#)). However, as [Sassatelli \(2007\)](#) claims, in order to be sovereigns of the market, consumers must be masters of their will (i.e. sovereigns of themselves) at first.

What can be considered as an individual consumer choice nowadays? Advertising in particular, as a form of marketing strategy of private companies, is often viewed as the most influential aspect in influencing of one's consumer choice, sometimes even considered manipulative (e.g. [Beauchamp et al., 1984](#)). [Tronto \(2013; p. 39\)](#) suggests that this manipulation of advertising stems from the assertion that consumption has become relational and therefore "the image of the autonomous chooser is ... a myth". For example, she holds that parents often take into account preferences of their children, who are more susceptible to the influence of advertising.³ A similar argument on the view of consumption as relational is held by [Allen & Sachs \(2007\)](#) as they hold that women who are responsible for food provision in their households (i.e. shopping) often take preferences of others into account in their consumer choices.⁴ Besides advertising, during actual shopping, the marketing strategy of the seller like simple shelf position of the product may affect consumer's choice as well ([Curhan, 1972](#)). Finally, it is argued in this thesis that consumer choices are limited because of the conformity with one's social environment, which is achieved through social group pressure.

The effect of conformity with one's social environment on one's consumer choice is less obvious to observe and its subtlety may be seen the best in socio-demographic factors like gender, class, religion or race. For example, [Ares & Gámbaro \(2007\)](#) identified the effect of socio-demographic factors on 'simple' food choices; they found that gender and age were the determinants of preference patterns for the functional food concept used in their study. It is argued that an individual will often refer to his consumer choice as his own, even though he made the choice under social group pressure. In other words, often neither a consumer himself is aware of the power that his social groups have upon him. As [Brown \(2008; p. 47\)](#) claims, "[systems of shared values and expectations may account for] ... a tendency toward the selection of buying routines that are generally viewed as appropriate to one's social group." Moreover, he adds that the spending routines of people are established based on spending routines of their peer group and "the resulting lifestyle comes to be regarded as normal" ([Brown, 2008; p. 51](#)).

In current (consumer) society, it is mainly consumption which accounts for one's identity formation ([Sassatelli, 2007](#)). With regards to the social group concept, one must be careful then what to consume if he is about to retain particular status in a particular social group. That is, social groups are

³ In his *The Edge of Agency: Routines, habits and volition*, [Wilk \(2009\)](#) gives a vital example of how his 12-year-old daughter persuaded him to purchase a puppy. More importantly though, he shows on this example the difficulty of how to distinguish between one's choice and habit. In a similar manner, [Brown \(2008; p. 40\)](#) holds that the term 'consumer preference' itself is misleading as he claims that "most of what people do, and most of what they think about what they do, is a function of habit."

⁴ [Sassatelli \(2007\)](#) claims that the problem of (neo)classical view on consumer is, that it treats consumer's preferences and choices as synonymous.

expected to differ in their ways of consumption. Micheletti (2003; p. 7) view "the use of market action as an arena for politics and consumer choice as a political tool." Moreover, the consumption serves as one of the tools to gain group acceptance (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999). Taking all into account, it may be seen that in current consumer society, an individual's consumption choice has broader social implications for an individual. One of the reasons for this to be happening, as posed in this thesis, is the ubiquitous visibility of one's consumption facilitated by social networking websites like Facebook.

Nevertheless, a consumer is able to lessen the impact of the social group influence upon his choice as well. Based on the *social identity theory*, it is assumed that the consumer who is acting more on the basis of his personal rather than social identity exerts more power as he should retain more individualism in his choices (Turner & Oakes, 1986). That is, consumer power in many studies is very often related to the terms like 'resistance', 'sovereignty' or 'agency' (e.g. Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). It may be argued then that the consumer acting on the basis of his personal identity is less susceptible to social group pressure and thus he is getting closer to the Smith's view of sovereign consumer as posed above. Denegri-Knott et al. (2006) divided consumer power into three broad domains: consumer sovereignty, cultural power and discursive power. These domains imply the extent of the disciplines the consumer power relates to, i.e. political, social, marketing and consumer literature (ibid, 2006).

To address the point of consumer power further, Foucault's view on relationship between power and knowledge may be taken, which implies that power is used to control and define knowledge (Hall, 1997). In other words, the consumer high in power may thus influence his social environment. It is argued that due to Foucault's power/knowledge view this type of consumer may exert particular influence and authority. Furthermore, the consumer high in power may influence the others as he himself becomes the source of the pressure on the choices of other consumers in his social environment. These characteristics are typical to opinion leaders; especially on the social networking websites like Facebook the opinion leaders have the ground for amplifying their influence on the choices of others (see section 2.3.1. below).

Thus, taken all into account, it may be argued that consumers under the social group pressure are people who:

- 1) value their social identity more than their personal one
- 2) have low to none power
- 3) have limited knowledge.

2.3. Facebook as a social networking website

A social networking website (SNW) is defined in this thesis as a website where an individual creates an online user profile through which he is able to (1) privately and publicly communicate with his social groups he knows from the real world; (2) non-anonymously foster social relationships with these social groups and; (3) interact with other user profiles that are otherwise linked to his self-concept. It is argued in this thesis that the SNWs have revolutionized the way people communicate with each other in the 21st century. Also, as already mentioned in the definition above, SNWs have taken away the curtain of anonymity, which had been typical for internet users before the SNWs have firstly appeared.

Though the first major SNW, Six Degrees, was launched in 1997, technical and social difficulties were the main obstacle for the early SNWs to overcome. Launching of My Space in 2003 is perceived as the beginning of the modern era of SNWs as they are known these days (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Since that time, SNWs have "rocketed from a niche activity into a phenomenon that engages tens of millions of internet users" (Lenhart & Madden, 2007; p. 1). One of these SNWs is Facebook.

As already mentioned in the section 1., Facebook has been selected as a case of SNWs in this thesis due to its persistent popularity. In 2009, five years after it had been founded, Facebook was ranked as the most used social networking service, overtaking My Space for the first time by the number of monthly active users worldwide (Compete.com, 2009). Currently, in the first quarter of 2013, Facebook has reported 665 million daily active users with an increase of 26 % year-over-year and 1.11 billion monthly active users with an increase of 23% year-over-year (Facebook.com, 2013) and it is ranked as the most popular social networking website in the world (eBizMBA.com, 2013).

Facebook is an epitome of what a SNW means and represents. The user of Facebook creates a personal profile, where he connects himself with other people and they thus become so-called Facebook friends. Facebook then provides these Facebook friends with various social tools, such as commenting on each others' status, sending a private message, appreciate a user-generated content via 'like button', sharing various types of information between them and more⁵. However, the user of Facebook may also interact not just with the people he knows from the real life, but also with people he does not know or even celebrities and brands. Moreover, as a user of Facebook may decide what user profiles will be linked to his profile, he may also decide not to link particular profile to his own. In this sense, people use their Facebook profiles to form their identity (Pempek et al., 2009).⁶

Thus, in this thesis, it is argued that the online environment of Facebook creates the social group pressure. That is, every user of Facebook - as a human being - belongs to some particular social group. However, in contrast to the real, face-to-face social environment, it is argued that the online settings of one's user profile (i.e. self-presentation to one's social groups) on Facebook account for increased perception of the self in a social group due to the increased frequency of interaction between an individual and his social group(s) on Facebook; one is under constant watch on Facebook as his profile is accessible by his social groups 24/7. Facebook has especially big influence on the identity development and peer relations of adolescents. That is, Pempek et al. (2009) with their sample of 92 college students found that as these students use Facebook to facilitate social relationships, they gather feedback from their peers as well.⁷ Moreover, these students used Facebook to express their identities with respect to their world views (e.g. in the form of favourite music), which may be regarded as political consumption as posed in this thesis (see section 2.4.). Taking all into account, Facebook facilitates to show multiple identities of oneself. In this thesis, it is

⁵ For example, Facebook friends may play a game together or they may tag each other on a picture. The list of what may be perceived as a social tool on Facebook is quite broad, but generally it refers to an activity on Facebook with particular social implications for Facebook friends involved in that activity.

⁶ Constructing of one's identity on Facebook may not be the same as constructing of one's identity on other SNWs though. For example, on LinkedIn people try to frame themselves as professionals, whereas on Facebook people are rather concerned with leisure and informal social interactions with their friends. This difference between framing oneself in a particular way on different SNWs may be viewed as switching between one's multiple selves and it is further discussed in section 2.5.1. below.

⁷ The effect of peer group on one's identity formation can be observed here. Compare with section 2.1.2 above.

argued that multiple identities are present on Facebook as one has multiple social groups among his Facebook friends.

Based on the premise that a user of Facebook is inevitably also a consumer, a user of Facebook will be also susceptible to the limitations of his rational consumer behaviour (see section 2.2. above). These limitations stem from an interaction of a consumer with other consumers on Facebook, i.e. with consumer's social groups. Assumed that SNWs reduce social distance *inter alia*, one's social groups that are present on Facebook will account for particular pressure on a consumer to respect the social group's member rules, i.e. to conform to the group. In other words, it is argued that using of SNWs like Facebook exerts an external influence on individual's consumer choice in terms of his political consumption (see section 2.4. below) due to the presence of consumer's social groups on these SNWs.

Based on the posed assumptions then, one's reputation among the members of a social group seems to matter. In the context of consumer society, it is branding that gives "products and services an emotional dimension with which people can identify" (Van Ham, 2001; p. 2). In fact, brand and consumer identities are intertwined in consumer society (Csaba & Bengtsson, 2006). Consumer identity is bounded with the brands to such extent that the consumer even identifies himself with non-consumption of brands with undesired image for him (Hogg & Banister, 2001). Thus, mere liking of a particular brand on Facebook may be perceived as indirect form of consumption then; by liking a particular brand on Facebook, a consumer publicly shows which world views (brand messages) are close to his self-concept.

Taking into account the consumer-based identities of Facebook users, social groups themselves may be viewed as communities of consumers or rather brand communities (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Brand community is a set of consumers that are socially bounded with the particular brand and its other users (Solomon et al., 2010). In other words, in order to be member of such a brand community/social group, one has to consume the same brand(s) as that community to be recognized as its member. Brand communities also "further point to the significance of the image in contemporary consumer society" (Muniz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001; p. 423). Furthermore, it has been found that it is the image which further creates reputation (Anholt, 2009). In other words then, through consuming the particular brands (i.e. liking on Facebook), consumers inevitably 'feed' their reputation in their social groups.

2.3.1. Offline and online opinion leadership

Consumers may be divided on two types: opinion leaders and opinion seekers.⁸ Katz & Lazarsfeld (1970) identified opinion leader as a person who influence the opinions of other people in his social environment. Yale & Gilly (1995) identified opinion seeker (they use term 'information' or 'word-of-mouth' seeker) as a person who seek out information sources in other people, i.e. opinion leaders. It is argued that these two types of consumers differ in their social power. Social power in this thesis is defined as an ability of an individual to alter actions of the people of his social environment. According to French Jr. & Raven (1959) the social power may be further distinguished on the following types: referent power, expert power, reward power, coercive power and legitimate power. Solomon et al. (2010) hold that the social power of the opinion leader stems from his embodiment of the whole reference group for the opinion seeker (see section 2.1.1. above).

⁸ Note an analogy with other SNW, Twitter, with its users divided to 'followed' and 'following'.

The importance of opinion leaders stems from their ability to act as a source in regard to word-of-mouth⁹ (WOM) communication (Yale & Gilly, 1995). Together with media, it is the WOM of the opinion leader, which is responsible for informal, external influence on individual decision making (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1970). Furthermore, they claim that the role of advertising on consumer's purchasing decision is not so strong as it was expected. They suspect that advertising rather reinforces and maintains consumer preferences than creates new ones (ibid). It is argued, that WOM is very powerful and influential persuasion tool in consumer society, because much of the discussed topics is product-related and also, consumers decline in their faith in institutions (Solomon et al., 2010). So that, *friends* and family are perceived as more reliable sources of information than advertisements (ibid). Moreover, Arndt (1967) found that WOM exerts a particular influence in purchasing decisions of the consumers as favourable WOM led rather to (new) product acceptance and vice versa.

Thus, the role of opinion leader is very influential on the market as they may influence purchasing decisions of their social environment. Basically, through their social power, they may set the line of what is right and what is wrong to consume.¹⁰ Setting a line between the right and the wrong brand to consume may be a crucial aspect for the brand to survive in current competitive market. Especially negative WOM is very powerful persuasive tool. That is, in general, consumers are more likely to share a negative rather than positive consumer experience (e.g. Laczniak et al., 2001). Furthermore, according to Walker (1995), 90 per cent of not satisfied customers will not do business with a company again and in addition, every consumer who is not satisfied is likely to *share* the negative experience with at least 9 other people. Also, 13 per cent of consumers with negative experience will tell more than 20 people about it. Smith & Vogt (1995) identified the end outcomes of negative WOM as reducing of influence of company's advertising as well as the intention to buy the product at all.

Note the word *share* in the previous paragraph. Indeed, SNWs like Facebook are an ideal environment to share easily any information via (positive or negative) WOM about the brand. On Facebook, virtually every user is a member of some brand community. Thus, Facebook may be referred to as a virtual multi-brand community. There are two factors playing a key role in one's identification with a virtual brand community: similar self-concept of that community and a consumer with regards to consumption activities and the intensity of social relationships with the members of that community (Kozinets, 1999). In other words, the virtual brand community may be perceived as a social group as already argued above. In addition, even those Facebook users who may not like any brands on their profiles actually communicate their brand preferences to the others as well, because also brands people do not consume create their identity (Hogg & Banister, 2001).

It is argued that opinion leaders represent some particular social groups as well. Opinion leaders typically have broad social networks (Keller & Berry, 2003). Via broadcasting to these social networks then, opinion leaders create a large multiplier effect, i.e. expanding their influence beyond their own social groups (ibid). Solomon et al. (2013) claim that mainly social media account for this multiplier effect. However, Watts & Dodds (2007) hold that it is not an opinion leader who drives the social change, but rather easily influenced individuals (opinion seekers) who influence each other.

⁹ Word-of-mouth in online environment is often referred to as word-of-mouse as well.

¹⁰ See section 2.2. above for the relationship between power and knowledge.

2.4. Political consumption on Facebook

The term political consumption is often intertwined with ethical consumption. For example, [Micheletti \(2003; p. 14\)](#) defines political consumption as "consumer choice of producers and products made with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices ... based on attitudes and values regarding issues of justice, fairness or non-economic issues that concern personal and family well-being and ethical or political assessment of business and government practice." However, in this thesis, it is argued that the political consumption is not necessarily ethical. That is, as it will be described further in this section and section 2.5., as one's consumption gains meaning in the consumer society, this meaning is recognized and linked to particular world views by other consumers in the consumer society. Additionally, it is argued that in terms of Facebook (and SNWs in general), political consumption does not consider merely an actual consumption of particular products or services by an individual, but also his personal opinions expressed publicly on his Facebook profile. Thus, political consumption in this thesis is defined as such type of consumption through which a consumer implicitly or explicitly communicates particular message about his supposedly personal identity to his social groups via social networking website.

The word 'supposedly' is used intentionally in the definition. That is, as already posed in section 2.2. above, the behaviour of an individual may be driven by either his personal identity or his social identity. It is the social identity that is based on individual's affiliation to the group and that is argued to be driven by the social group pressure. In terms of consumer behaviour, as [Levy \(1999\)](#) claims, consumers often buy products not because of their use value, but because of their meaning. Thus, based on the context of the situation, a consumer may decide upon broader implications of his consumption choice and act upon his personal or social identity (i.e. he derives meaning from his consumption for him as an individual or as member of a social group). One of these situational contexts may be the online environment. The advantage of an online environment is that it allows for pursuit of ideal self (see section 2.5.1. below). Taking all into account, it is argued that one's public communication with his social groups on Facebook makes an individual inevitably a political consumer.

It is then necessary to ask 'How does consumer communicate his (political) consumption?'. As [Solomon et al. \(2010; p. 37\)](#) claim, "one of the most important ways in which meaning is created in consumer society is through the brand." The brand may be defined as a mix of meanings bounded with the company's product (service). The brand's meaning for the consumer should not be underestimated as it can elicit an emotional bond with him as he may perceive the brand as a part of his identity ([Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007](#)). Also, from the business perspective, the importance of the brand as an asset for the company should not be underestimated as well.¹¹

Political consumption with regards to social group pressure is then strongly influenced by branding. As already mentioned in section 2.3.1. above, according to [Katz & Lazarsfeld \(1970\)](#); albeit advertising exert particular influence upon consumer's decision making, their influence is not as strong as it was expected. The social group(s) of the consumer are argued to have more influence upon him due to WOM on Facebook. That is, on Facebook, the consumer is able not only to interact

¹¹ For example, Coca Cola, the best global brand of (not only) 2012 according to [Interbrand \(2013\)](#) ladder has in the time of writing this section of the thesis a value of \$ 77.8 billion, whereas Coca Cola's market capitalization value is \$ 170.1 billion. In other words, the brand alone is worth an incredible 45.7 per cent of the company's market value.

with brands themselves, but also the views of the social groups may potentially lead to certain brands. Social group pressure thus may influence one's political consumption; political consumption under social group pressure may be then regarded as a (non-)consumption of the brand(s), which the individual consumes on the basis of the brands' symbolic link towards his social group he feels (not) affiliated with. The purpose of this action is to communicate his (dis)affiliation with that social group to other people, mostly the members of the same social group to enhance his reputation within this group (see section 2.5.1.1. below). In this sense, consumption of brands may indeed be perceived as a social tool (Schembri et al., 2010).

However, it is postulated in this thesis that the concept of brand on SNWs like Facebook with respect to political consumption comes not only in terms of consuming products or services, but also in terms of expressing of (supposedly) personal opinions and beliefs of the individual. That is, it is argued that the social group - through its pressure - implicitly poses the burden of value consistency upon the individual with regards to relationship between his consumption and his personal expressions.¹² That is, values are "concepts or beliefs about desirable end states or behaviours that transcend specific situations, guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and are ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; pp. 550-562; italics added). For example, a neoclassical economist is implicitly expected to vote a right-wing candidate over a left-wing one in the elections due to a general affiliation of the right wing politics with neoclassical economics' beliefs. However, he finds the left-wing candidate more competent and decides to vote her instead (i.e. choosing the brand). Communication of this decision via Facebook to his social groups may affect his reputation amongst those social groups which value the neoclassical economics (i.e. consume the different brand) even though it is not the social group dealing explicitly with politics. In other words then, on SNWs like Facebook also public expressions of the individual may be commoditized and branded.

2.4.1. Conspicuous consumption

The element of *communication* included in the political consumption definition as described above is very essential in social group pressure on Facebook. That is, it is assumed that making one's consumption visible for other people/consumers accounts for implicit influence on these people. The visibility of one's consumption is linked to the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption. It was Veblen (2005; orig. 1899) who coined and described this phenomenon; in his view, conspicuous consumption refers to consumption of (luxury) goods that make one's (superior) social position visible to other people. It is argued that on Facebook, the underlying aspect of one's political consumption is just the conspicuous one.¹³

As Veblen (ibid) observed, the economic perspective is not exclusively employed in consumer behaviour. That is, as Sassatelli (2007, p. 66) wrote, Veblen "created the concept of conspicuous consumption to indicate those phenomena of consumption which escaped the logic of utility maximization at minimal cost." This argument may be seen as in line with section 2.2. above, i.e. limited consumer rationality with respect to individual consumer choice. Veblen described the ceremonial role that consumption represents in (consumer) societies and its contribution to one's

¹² cf. Diderot unity of McCracken (1990).

¹³ Deliberate conspicuous consumption may also be referred as invidious consumption. One's invidious consumption intends to provoke envy of other people in one's social environment. Brown (2008) claims that invidious consumption is facilitated by modern marketing via communications media.

social visibility (*ibid*). For this thesis however, three salient points of [Veblen's \(2005; orig. 1899\)](#) work are especially important; firstly, conspicuous consumption may be regarded as a technique of identity construction. Secondly, through conspicuous consumption, consumer gains a 'good repute' through the consumption of (luxury) goods. Finally, consumer makes himself socially visible (see also section 2.5.1.1. below) and thus gains 'pecuniary strength'.¹⁴

Even though [Veblen \(*ibid*\)](#) was referring to an effect of consumption of specifically luxury goods in his work, taking it all, there may be seen huge similarities with actual consumer behaviour on Facebook described so far. For example, instead of consumption of explicitly luxury goods, it is assumed that it is rather political consumption expressing the views of one's social group accounting for one's good reputation on Facebook. In a similar manner may be explained the relevance of [Veblen's \(*ibid*\)](#) concept of 'pecuniary strength' in political consumption concept posed in this thesis; on Facebook, one is assumed to be ascribed to wield this pecuniary strength merely on the basis of sharing of his particular achievement, which may not be linked explicitly to his financial situation. Political consumption on Facebook as *communicated* to others is then necessarily conspicuous consumption in many respects as well. Lastly, as [Brown \(2008\)](#) claims, the diffusion of a communication technology aids consumption to get a public character.

2.5. Identity shaping

A common theme underlying the theoretical concepts described in the previous sections may be observed; an individual's identity shaping. The theoretical concept of identity is rather not unanimous; the perceptions of how to grasp identity as a theoretical concept vary from complex, philosophical ones (e.g. [Perry, 2008](#)) to more specific-field-of-interest ones like sexual identity (e.g. [Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000](#)). Nevertheless, an identity in this thesis may be viewed as a psychological affiliation to a particular matter that stems from an individual's self-concept.

Identity shaping with respect to this thesis may be further divided into identity formation and identity construction. As already mentioned in section 2.1.2., identity formation may be viewed as a developmental process where an individual acquires a sense of self ([Waterman, 1993](#)). Individual's identity formation is expected to be influenced by external social actors (e.g. a peer group) unconsciously and also, it may be viewed as a part of human psychological and social development in general. On the other hand, identity construction may be viewed as a conscious self-presentation to a social environment that is performed by an individual. Identity construction is assumed to be also influenced by external social actors, nevertheless - contrary to identity formation - semi-consciously. That is, an individual may or may not be aware that his identity construction performance is based on his social identity, i.e. that he takes the preferences of his social group (rather than his own) into account when making his choices.

It is argued that a perception of a shared identity with a particular social group is likely to be a precondition for an individual to succumb to the social group pressure. This thesis also utilizes the specific *context* where the identity construction takes place, i.e. Facebook as a case of SNWs. Moreover, it is argued that an identity as a whole is comprised from multiple identities. Thus, taking all above into account, an online identity construction as described in the following subsection may be linked to the social group pressure as it is posed in this thesis.

¹⁴ [Veblen's \(2005; orig. 1899\)](#) pecuniary strength refers to comparison of one's wealth to that of his neighbors'.

2.5.1. Online identity

Online identity is described in this thesis as a social identity and presentation of oneself on the internet. It is argued that Facebook as a representative of *social* networking website is an ideal online environment for creating of one's online identity.

To understand the theoretical concept of online identity with respect to the social group pressure and one's (political) consumption, two main characteristics of this concept should be explained. Firstly, an individual's online identity is most likely different from his 'offline' identity. That is, even one's 'offline' identity is not constant every time when socializing with other people. Depending on one's social role, one is 'switching' between his multiple selves (e.g. father, friend, football player, etc.) to fulfil that role properly (Goffman, 1959). Thus, one's online identity may be regarded as one of an individual's multiple selves.

Secondly, online identity influence consumer behaviour as it utilizes so-called *online disinhibition effect*. It is a loosening of social restrictions otherwise presented in traditional, face-to-face social interaction (Suler, 2005). It is argued then, that through online disinhibition effect, online identity enhances consumer's self-esteem as his 'offline' identity is not visible. Moreover, consumer's self-esteem is influenced by his self-concept and further influences his actual and ideal selves (Solomon et al., 2010). Actual self refers to the real personality of the consumer whereas ideal self refers to the person the consumer wants to be. In terms of consumer behaviour, "we choose some products because we think they are consistent with our actual self, whereas we buy others to help us to reach more of an ideal standard" (Solomon et al., 2010; p. 145). Taking all into account then, online identity influences consumer behaviour through its ability to obscure consumer's actual offline behaviour. Moreover, an online identity allows a consumer to pursue his ideal self. In other words, it is argued that online identity accounts for one's impression management. All of these aspects of online identity may be seen in a bit exaggerated version in *Figure 2.4*.

Figure 2.4: The power of online identity



Source: Original drawing by Peter Steiner. Published in *The New Yorker*, 5th July 1993.

2.5.1.1. Online impression management and pursuit of good reputation

Impression management refers to "the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; p. 34). Impression management is often interchangeably used with self-presentation (ibid). Tufekci (2008) claims that one's self-presentation is particularly developed online in SNWs. It is assumed then that the impression management is exerted by a consumer because he matters what his social group(s) will think about him. Implicit social group pressure may be found then in Facebook public communication tools.¹⁵ In other words, it is assumed that a consumer maintains the impression management because he is concerned about his reputation in the given social group.

¹⁵ 'Facebook public communication tools' mainly refer to sharing, public commenting and liking, i.e. public activities on Facebook.

Thus, it seems that a consumer maintains his reputation through the brands he consumes not just offline, but also online. It is argued that on Facebook, the maintaining of one's positive reputation stems from one's implicit or explicit brand consumption, which is visible for his social group(s) (Facebook friends) via Facebook public communication tools. However, not only brand consumption, but also certain opinions matter for the consumer on Facebook as regards maintaining a good reputation with his social group(s) as it is described in section 2.4. above.

In a sense then, consumer becomes inevitably a prosumer on Facebook. As the term prosumer may have different meanings dependent on the context according to the literature, in this thesis prosumer refers to the producer and consumer roles simultaneously performed by the consumer when consuming particular brand. [Ritzer & Jurgenson \(2010\)](#) hold that especially because of the social changes connected to the advent of Web 2.0¹⁶ prosumer has become the force to be reckoned with. In this thesis, it is argued that one's pursuit of positive reputation (i.e. one's political consumption in line with that of one's social group) results in prosumerism. The typical prosumer will then not only accept the brand message, but also promote the brand, directly or indirectly on his Facebook profile, so that other members of his relevant social groups will see it and evaluate the user in terms of reputation.¹⁷

The actual promotion of the brand by a consumer may refer to his social visibility (see section 2.4.1. above). Social visibility refers to the recognition of an individual's position in the (social) group by its other members ([Clifford, 1963](#)). Thus, the higher the consumer's competencies are perceived, the higher is the social standing of him as a member of the social group. It is assumed in this thesis, that the higher social standing in one's social group influences one's reputation and vice versa. As [Bromley \(1993\)](#) claims, reputation penetrates self-esteem, social identity, personal freedom and social order. Presence of one's social groups online may then be a plausible explanation for the pursuit of good reputation performed by a consumer on Facebook and furthermore the answer on why he maintains online impression management at all.

¹⁶ Web 2.0 refers to the new era of innovations in the World Wide Web. This connotation is often used as a reference to the current state of the internet. When referring to Web 2.0, social media are implicitly included in this connotation.

¹⁷ Struggling for a good reputation within a group of many other consumers is not a concern of consumer exclusively on the market. That is, as already described, WOM is widely used by the consumers as a communication tool on Facebook when speaking about the brands and negative WOM may be very harmful for a company. Interestingly enough, online reputation management services (e.g. Reputation.com) have emerged and they offer monitoring of SNWs for the companies to protect the reputation of their brands.

3. Research strategy and Methods

3.1. Hypotheses

In order to construct the questionnaire and perform the analysis, several hypotheses had been made. They were based on the theoretical background (i.e. literature review of the social group concept and social, consumer-related behaviour translated into Facebook environment) and the general research question, i.e. 'What is the effect of the presence of social groups on Facebook on an individual's political consumption?'. These hypotheses were as follows:

User of Facebook

- H1.** does not make purely individual consumer decisions.
- H2.** influences his Facebook friends in their consumption.
- H3.** puts great importance to have a good reputation within his social group.
- H4.** does not trust to brands' advertisements.
- H5.** is pursuing the image of ideal self.
- H6.** is susceptible to the popular trends in his social group.
- H7.** is susceptible to the word-of-mouth.

These hypotheses may be structured into three categories; H1 may be viewed as an overarching hypothesis for the rest indicating *limits of individual choice*. Cluster of H3, H5 and H6 may be viewed as *the potential effects of the social group pressure*. Finally, cluster of H2, H4 and H7 may be referred to as *influence of word-of-mouth on Facebook*. There are two major underlying assumptions for these hypotheses so that they may be tested: 1) people have at least one social group among their friends on Facebook and 2) user of Facebook is regarded as a consumer.

3.2. Questionnaire construction

For the data collection purpose, a questionnaire had been constructed. The questionnaire items were based on the hypotheses mentioned above. The questionnaire was divided into the following three parts:

- 1) Socio-demographic variables
- 2) Specific variables on social and consumption-related Facebook behaviour (main part)
- 3) Facebook-use-related variables

In the first part on socio-demographic variables, a participant was asked about his age, gender, level of education and nationality. The main part of the questionnaire considered specific questions on participant's social and consumption-related Facebook behaviour. This consisted of 31 items which could be answered by selecting one option from the given 5-point scale each.¹⁸ Finally, in the part of Facebook-use-related variables the participants were asked about their frequency of Facebook use, number of Facebook friends, etc. The whole questionnaire may be found in *Appendix 1*.

¹⁸ These scales were not consistent per each item, nevertheless the majority of them accounted for the range *Never - Rarely - Sometimes - Often - All of the time*.

The questionnaire items in the main part were randomized with the fixed first item *In general, do messages of the profile pages that you like on Facebook actually reflect your world views in your real life?*. This was done in order to counterbalance the expected socially desirable responses on particular items and thus minimizing the measurement error, which could stem from the questionnaire with fixed order of questions asked. Nevertheless, it had been expected that the questionnaire may yield some sets of socially desirable responses anyway. For this reason, in the main part of the questionnaire there were included several items that allowed to check for socially desirable responses in the results (see section 3.4. below). Furthermore, to limit socially desirable responses, participants were allowed to see up to five items per page (questionnaire was distributed electronically) and they were not allowed to go back to the previous pages they had already filled in to possibly alter their answers.

3.3. Data collection and the sample

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Facebook sharing. The reason for such distribution was purposeful since this thesis consider only Facebook users. Thus, the sampling design was non-random as it implied the combination of snowball sampling and volunteer sampling methods of data collection.

In total, 257 individual responses¹⁹ were collected, yet for the analysis 174 individual responses have been retained after the scanning of the data. That is, 83 cases were excluded from the analysis due to their insufficient questionnaire response (less than 75 % of answered items). The general descriptives of the sample may be found in the results (section 4.1.).

3.4. Statistical techniques used

The main part of the results is consisted by the principal component analysis (PCA). The PCA had been selected for the analysis for the following reasons; firstly, it is an exploratory tool which can be used for theory testing, so that it is in line with the research design of this thesis (explanatory case study). Secondly, the constructed questionnaire might have contained items which do not correlate well with the scale. As this was the case indeed, the PCA implicitly suggests to drop such items and re-examine all the items in the questionnaire for the possible future reproduction of this study (e.g. case of other SNW). Thirdly, it may guide future hypotheses in similar research areas. Finally, the PCA is able to provide the answer on the posed general research question.

Although the PCA was useful in answering the general research question, a few more statistical techniques had been used in order to take more insight in the nature of the sample. More specifically, as mentioned above in section 3.2. above, items with potential of socially desirable responses had been tested with dependent *t*-tests as particular pairs of variables were selected for this purpose. Theoretically expected relationships between particular pairs of variables have been investigated by the same method as well. Then, selected categorical variables were used to group the questionnaire items of the main part to gain additional insights into the sample via independent *t*-tests. Lastly, besides some basic descriptive statistics, chi-square test statistic was performed with gender variable to the rest of categorical ones in order to investigate if the gender distribution affected the sample.

¹⁹ Individual responses have been secured since one questionnaire was allowed to be filled in per one IP address.

4. Results

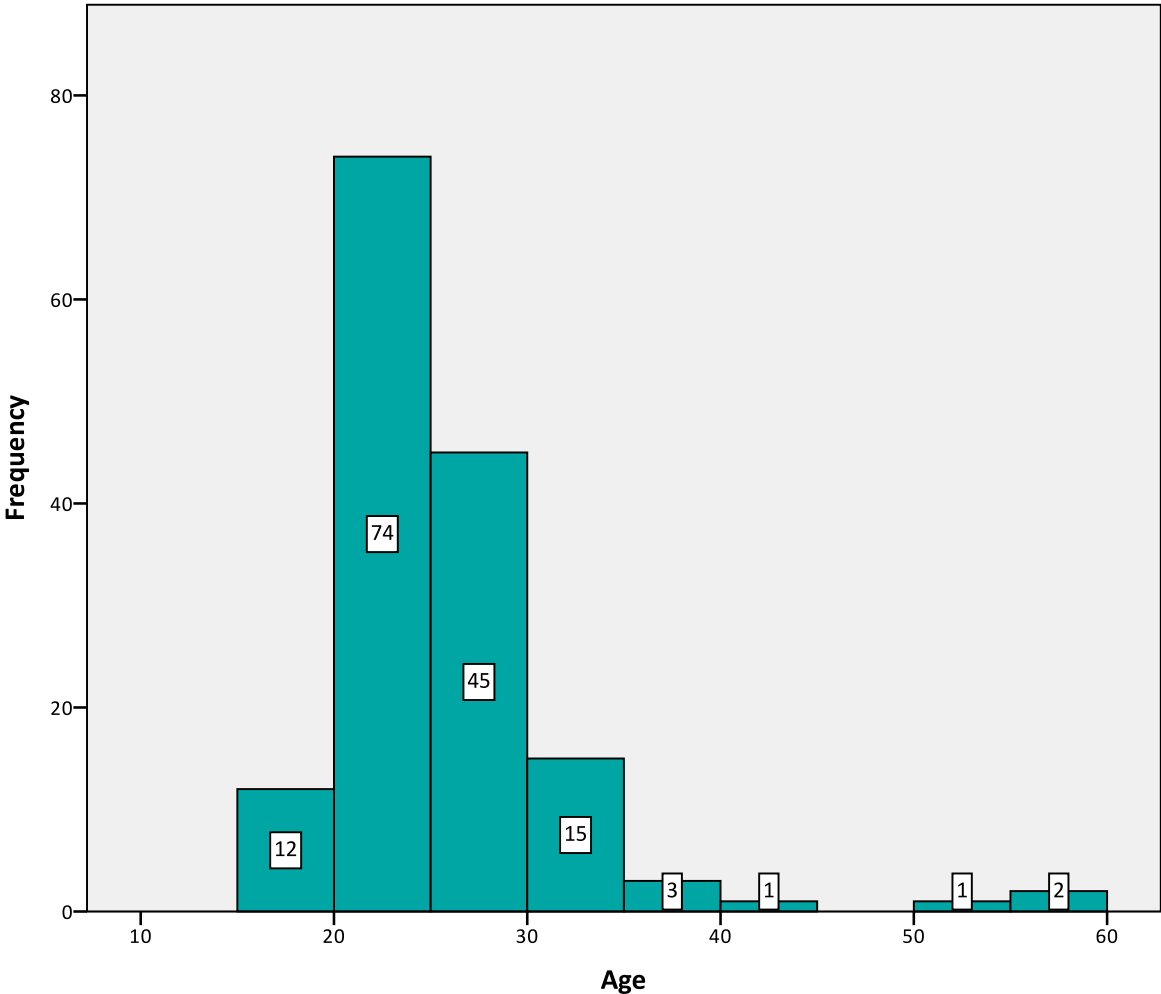
4.1. General descriptive statistics

4.1.1. Socio-demographic variables

AGE

Figure 4.1 shows the frequency distribution of the age of the participants. Age groups are clustered in intervals of five years. The youngest participant was 16 years old whereas the oldest one was 58. The mean age of participants is 25.19 and most of them are between 20 and 25 years old. 21 participants did not state their age.

Figure 4.1 - Frequency distribution of age of the participants



GENDER

The sample consists from 120 females and 54 males, thus female are overrepresented with 69 % of the whole sample.

NATIONALITY

The participants come from 39 nationalities in total. Five nationalities are represented with 5 % or more in the sample though and together, they make up over 50 % of the whole sample; Dutch (25.9 %), Czech (12.6 %), German (11.5 %), Finnish (6.3 %) and Greek (5.7 %). Two participants indicated they are of double nationality and eight participants have not filled in their nationality and they are set as Unknown. The table with frequencies of nationalities in the sample is to be found in *Appendix 2*.

EDUCATION LEVEL

The majority of participants (67.6 %) has academic level of education. Participants with secondary school level of education account for 31.2 % of the sample. Only two participants (1.2 %) indicated primary school as their highest level of education.

4.1.2. Facebook-use-related variables

NUMBER OF FACEBOOK FRIENDS

Figure 4.2 - Boxplot of the number of Facebook friends of the participants

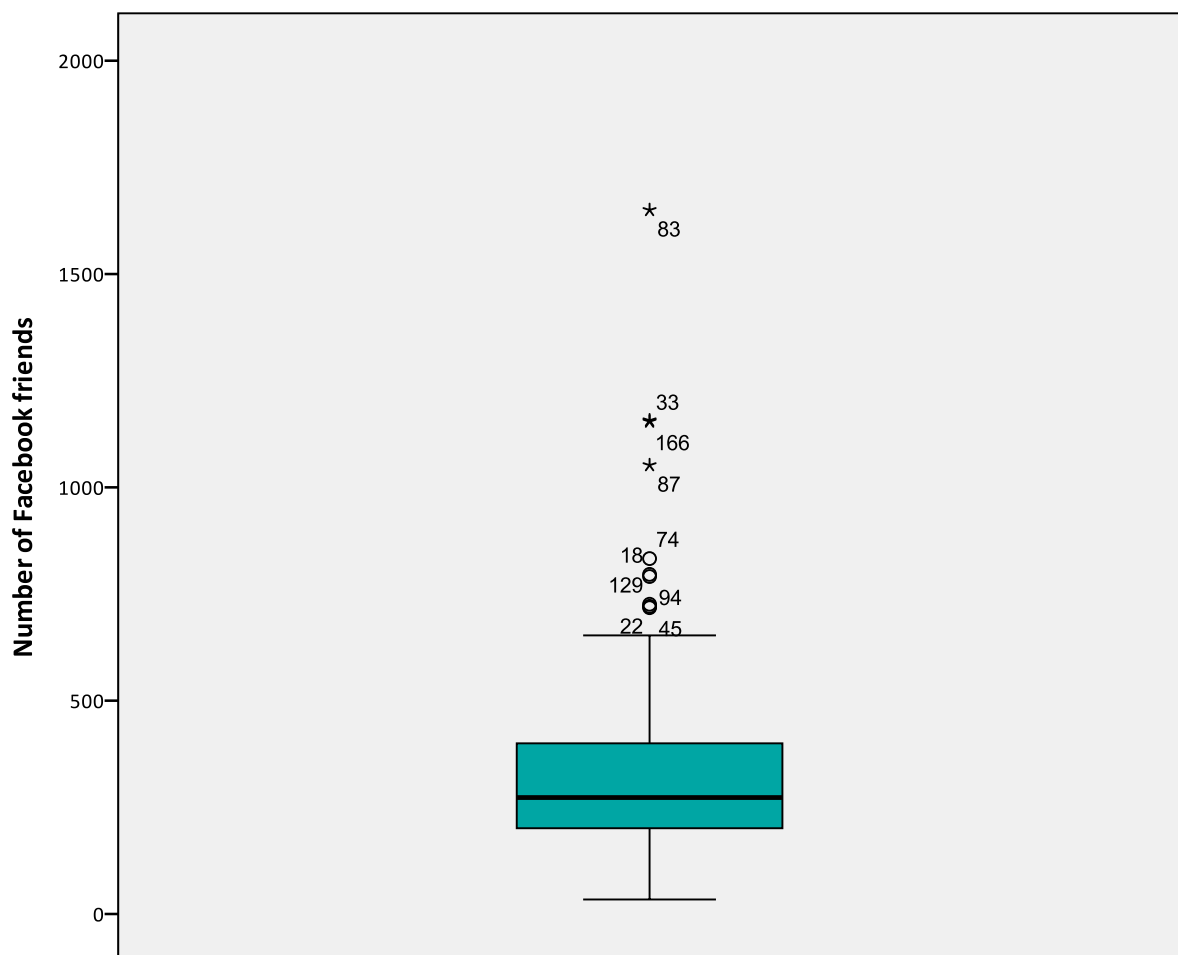
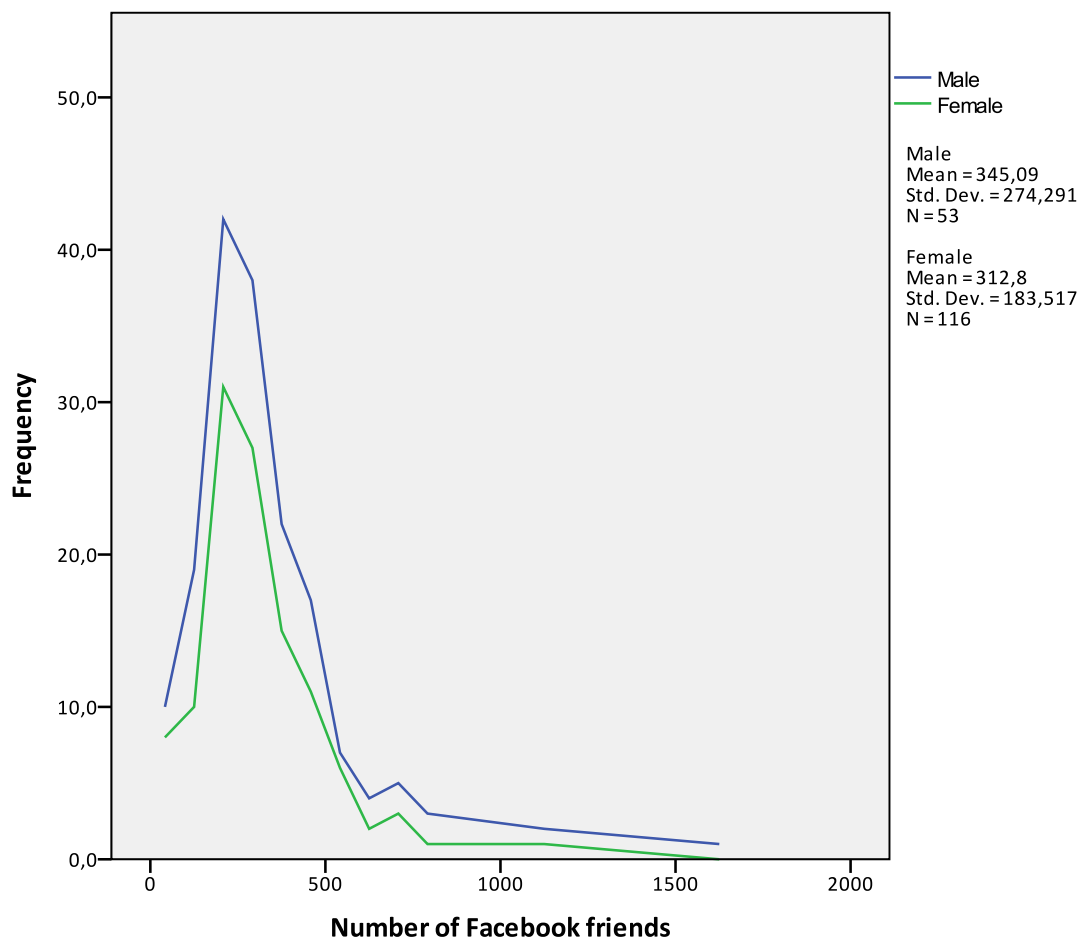


Figure 4.2 depicts a boxplot of the number of Facebook friends of the participants. The minimum amount of Facebook friends at participant is 34 and the maximum amount is 1650. Interquartile range, i.e. the range of the middle 50 % of the scores, is between 200.5 (lower quartile) and 400

(upper quartile) with median of 273. *Figure 4.2* indicates number of outliers, however, in case of Facebook friends variable, its values are sensibly expected to vary a lot and therefore, outliers are taken into account and are not being removed from the analysis. Nevertheless, such distribution is positively skewed. The same pattern may be observed in *Figure 4.3* below where the number of Facebook friends that is grouped according to gender may be observed. Despite their smaller number in the sample, on average males seem to have more Facebook friends than females. There are five missing values in this variable. Both males and females stated that they know 91 % of their Facebook friend base personally.²⁰

Figure 4.3 - Number of Facebook friends grouped according to gender



²⁰ With regards the missing values related to *What is the number of your Facebook friends?* and *How many of your Facebook friends do you know also personally?* variables, few missing values were present after the data collection. Other cases that were not specific (e.g. one participant indicated '300 something' Facebook friends) or not sensible (e.g. one participant indicated 90 % knowledge of Facebook friend base consisting of one Facebook friend) during the data scanning were replaced by missing values as well.

FREQUENCY OF FACEBOOK USAGE

94.8 % of participants use Facebook on daily basis.

FILTERING OF FACEBOOK FRIENDS INTO (SOCIAL) GROUPS

76.7 % of participants do not filter their Facebook friends into subgroups.

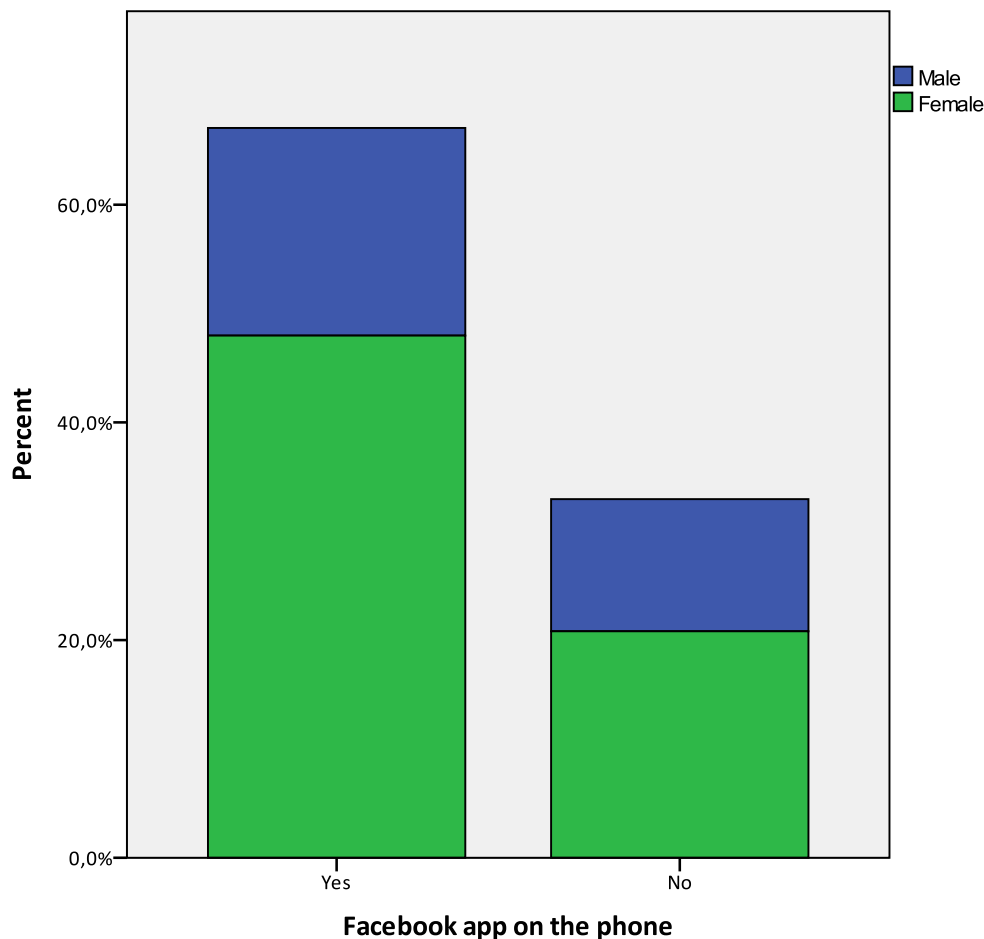
USING OF FACEBOOK ONLY OR MULTIPLE SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

The proportion of use of Facebook only to Facebook and multiple social networking websites amongst the participants is fairly equable, i.e. 50.7 % of participants use only Facebook and 49.3 % of them do use also other social networking websites.

FACEBOOK APP ON THE PHONE

66.7 % of the participants do have Facebook app on their phones. As can be seen in the *Figure 4.4* below, females account for approximately two thirds of Facebook phone app owners. Such distribution was not caused by higher number of females in the sample as the crosstab with gender and Facebook app owners was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.254, p = .263$).

Figure 4.4 - Gender representation in Facebook app owners



4.2. Principal component analysis

4.2.1. Preliminary analysis

The principal component analysis (PCA) has been rerun twice due to initial scanning of the data and subsequent dropping of variables which correlated insufficiently with the scale. The dropping of variables from PCA has been based on anti-image matrix and reliability analysis of the scale's components. Firstly, the following variables have been excluded from the PCA based on anti-image matrix:

Do you prefer to seek information about a service or product of your interest either at the Facebook page of that particular brand or at your Facebook friend who is already using that service or product?

Do you seek the information about your desired product/service also elsewhere than on Facebook?

In general, do messages of the profile pages that you like on Facebook actually reflect your world views in your real life?

Would you share a status on Facebook, even if you would know that the content of the status might damage your reputation with your closest Facebook friends?

More specifically, these variables have been excluded because their individual Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) values on the diagonal of anti-image matrix had been lower than 0.5, indicating poor adequacy of them for the PCA and negative effect on overall KMO of the scale. Secondly, the following variable

In general, when your Facebook friends are not satisfied with particular brands, do they share their dissatisfaction publicly?

has been excluded from the PCA after conducting of reliability analysis (using Cronbach's α) on extracted components based on *eigenvalue greater than 1* criterion. Reliability analysis has been performed on the extracted components separately.²¹ Anyhow, the above mentioned variable had been low in correlation with the rest of items in the initial *Component 1* as well as with the corrected total score of the scale ($r < .3$). Moreover, its deletion would increase the value of Cronbach's α of the initial *Component 1* and thus it was excluded from the PCA completely.

Taking all above into account, after initial data screening, 26 out of 31 original variables have been retained for the PCA. After the preliminary analysis then, the PCA eventually yields the following values; KMO = .697, which indicates a good sampling adequacy for conducting of the PCA. Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 (325) = 944.689, p < .001$ indicates that the correlations between items are sufficiently large (correlation matrix is not an identity matrix). In other words, PCA may be performed with this sample.

²¹ That is, according to Field (2009), Cronbach's α as a reliability analysis measure may be used to measure 'unidimensionality' of the scale if only one component is extracted. In case of two or more extracted components as in the case of this analysis, Cronbach's α should be rather performed on each component separately.

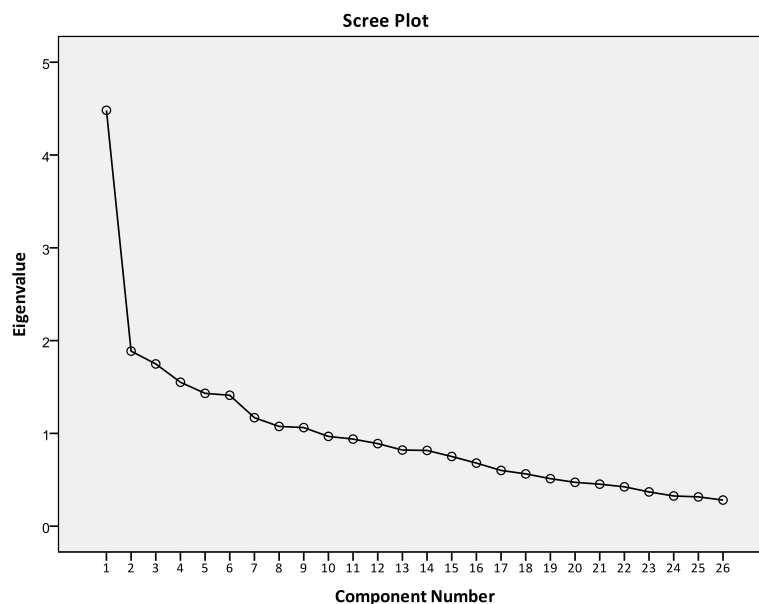
4.2.2. Final analysis

Component extraction has been based on *eigenvalue greater than 1 criterion* and subsequent comparison of extracted components based on this criterion to the scree plot. Nine components have been extracted with *eigenvalue greater than 1 criterion*. Without the rotation, *Component 1* accounts for the most per cent of explained total variance (17.24 %), making a 10 % difference with *Component 2* (7.26 %). Last extracted component, *Component 9*, accounts for 4.09 % of explained total variance without rotation. Together, the not rotated loadings of all nine extracted components accounts for 60.83 % of total explained variance. The total variance explained by each of the extracted components may be seen in *Table 4.1* below. The eigenvalues per extracted component may be also seen in the scree plot in *Figure 4.5*. The proportion of non-redundant residuals with absolute value greater than 0.05 is 42 %, which indicates rather good fit of the model when compared to observed data in the *R*-matrix.

Table 4.1 - Total variance explained by the extracted components before and after rotation

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.482 | 17.237 | 17.237 | 4.482 | 17.237 | 17.237 | 2.086 | 8.025 | 8.025 |
| 2 | 1.886 | 7.255 | 24.492 | 1.886 | 7.255 | 24.492 | 2.067 | 7.950 | 15.975 |
| 3 | 1.748 | 6.725 | 31.217 | 1.748 | 6.725 | 31.217 | 1.935 | 7.441 | 23.415 |
| 4 | 1.551 | 5.967 | 37.183 | 1.551 | 5.967 | 37.183 | 1.910 | 7.347 | 30.762 |
| 5 | 1.432 | 5.506 | 42.690 | 1.432 | 5.506 | 42.690 | 1.800 | 6.922 | 37.684 |
| 6 | 1.411 | 5.426 | 48.115 | 1.411 | 5.426 | 48.115 | 1.688 | 6.492 | 44.176 |
| 7 | 1.169 | 4.497 | 52.613 | 1.169 | 4.497 | 52.613 | 1.586 | 6.100 | 50.275 |
| 8 | 1.075 | 4.135 | 56.748 | 1.075 | 4.135 | 56.748 | 1.382 | 5.316 | 55.592 |
| 9 | 1.063 | 4.087 | 60.834 | 1.063 | 4.087 | 60.834 | 1.363 | 5.243 | 60.834 |

Figure 4.5 - Scree plot of eigenvalues per extracted component



Assuming the independence of the components before rotation, an orthogonal rotation (varimax) has been used to rotate the component axes for maximum loadings of variables per component. As already mentioned in previous paragraph and to be seen in *Table 4.1* above, nine components have been extracted. Nevertheless, out of these nine components, only *Component 1* and *Component 2* are reliable based on Cronbach's α . That is, both *Component 1* and *2* have relatively good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .683$ and $.648$ respectively), whereas other components have rather low to poor reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = < .574$).

Due to their good reliability (internal consistency), *Component 1* and *Component 2* are regarded as the only components out of all nine, that are relevant for this analysis after extraction. There are three more reasons to support the relevance of retaining these two components only. Firstly, the shape of scree plot may be seen as supportive for this assertion, even though *Component 2* may be viewed as the inflexion point. Secondly, both *Component 1* and *2* seem to be distinguished from the rest of the extracted factors due to their relatively high eigenvalues after rotation (both have eigenvalue greater than 2) - and thus the higher amount of explained total variance by them - compared to other components. Thirdly, it is assumed that nine components have been extracted from the PCA because of a relatively small sample size. In other words, with a bigger sample size, the amount of extracted factors would be expected to be lower, so that many of the current extracted components would not be considered and retained anyway. Anyhow, the clusters of questions/variables that have loaded on *Component 1* and *Component 2* after rotation are to be found below. Otherwise, component and rotated component matrices may be found in *Appendix 5* and *Appendix 6*.²² Additionally, Appendix also contains basic descriptive statistics of the participants' responses per variable (*Appendix 3*) and communalities (*Appendix 4*).

COMPONENT 1 - Consumption-related sharing tactics

- When you experience any situation that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends?
- When you are dissatisfied with a particular brand, do you share this dissatisfaction on Facebook?
- When you purchase any product that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends?

COMPONENT 2 - Independent ideal self

- Do you appreciate the presence of the brands that you like in your real life also on Facebook?
- Do you believe that advertisements in general provide truthful information about services or products?
- Do you buy a service or product that is popular among your Facebook friends?
- In general, are you prone to buy the same service or product your Facebook friends use?

Looking at the clusters of questions that load on *Component 1* and *Component 2*, common themes of both of these clusters may be derived. That is, *Component 1* may be referred to as *Consumption-related sharing tactics* and *Component 2* as *Independent ideal self*. Thus, taking into account the

²² The blank space in component columns of both matrices indicate suppressed loadings, i.e. loadings lower than 0.4, for the sake of easier interpretation.

general research question of this thesis, the PCA revealed that *Consumption-related sharing tactics* and *Independent ideal self* may be regarded as two effects of the presence of social groups on Facebook on an individual's political consumption. The summary of the results of the PCA is to be found at *Table 4.2* below.

Table 4.2 - Summary of the PCA results for the effect of social group pressure on individual's political consumption on Facebook (N = 174)

| Item | Rotated factor loadings | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| | <i>Consumption-related sharing tactics</i> | <i>Independent ideal self</i> |
| When you experience any situation that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends? | 0.77 | -0.01 |
| When you are dissatisfied with a particular brand, do you share this dissatisfaction on Facebook? | 0.72 | -0.05 |
| When you purchase any product that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends? | 0.72 | 0.16 |
| Do you appreciate the presence of the brands that you like in your real life also on Facebook? | -0.01 | 0.71 |
| Do you believe that advertisements in general provide truthful information about services or products? | 0.06 | 0.70 |
| Do you buy a service or product that is popular among your Facebook friends? | 0.05 | 0.62 |
| Have you ever regretted a purchase of a service or product that you bought because of its advertisement? | 0.09 | 0.18 |
| Do you appreciate likes on your statuses? | 0.22 | -0.14 |
| In general, are you prone to buy the same service or product your Facebook friends use? | 0.03 | 0.49 |
| Is it important for you that your closest group of Facebook friends is accepting you as a group member? | -0.04 | 0.10 |
| Do you think that some of your Facebook friends are experts in their fields? | 0.12 | -0.02 |
| Do you counsel your friends who are experts in their fields about your intended purchase? | 0.10 | 0.07 |
| Do your Facebook friends ask you for advice regarding their buying decisions? | -0.01 | 0.21 |
| Are you keeping yourself up-to-date with the most recent trends in your hobby via Facebook? | 0.14 | 0.08 |
| Would you say that you are familiar with the most popular trends in your hobby via Facebook? | 0.12 | 0.13 |
| How important are your Facebook friends who are not similar to you? | 0.12 | 0.11 |
| Do you prefer to have Facebook friends who are similar to you? | 0.09 | 0.18 |
| Do you think some of your Facebook friends imitate 'your style'? | 0.26 | -0.03 |

| | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| Would you say that most of your Facebook friends are the same type of personality like you? | 0.08 | -0.01 |
| Are you familiar with the (life)style of your Facebook friends? | -0.10 | 0.13 |
| Do you take some of your Facebook friends along when you are going shopping? | 0.18 | 0.10 |
| Do you believe that a brand can tell you something about a person? | -0.01 | -0.04 |
| Do you think you have an influence on certain purchasing decisions of some of your Facebook friends? | 0.29 | 0.35 |
| Do your favourite brands that you like on Facebook reflect the actual brands you purchase in real life? | 0.30 | 0.13 |
| When you buy a durable product for yourself, do you want to differ from your closest Facebook friends in terms of the brand of that product? | 0.14 | 0.24 |
| Do you feel influenced by your parents when buying certain products or services? | -0.08 | -0.13 |
| Eigenvalues | 2.09 | 2.07 |
| % of variance | 8.03 | 8 |
| Cronbach's α | .68 | .65 |

4.3. Additional relationships between variables

4.3.1. Dependent *t*-tests

As already indicated in section 3., during the construction of the questionnaire, it has been counted on the possibility that the participants will answer particular questions rather ideally (i.e. not truthfully). Such responses may be called socially desirable ones.

Dependent *t*-tests on the selected pairs of items from the main part of the questionnaire have been conducted in this subsection in order to investigate if the assumption about socially desirable answering of particular questions might be just. The selection of these pairs has been based on the theoretical background. Dependent *t*-tests eventually yielded four pairs of potentially socially desirable responses and two pairs for which socially desirable responses were not likely as it may be seen below in the following subsections.

4.3.1.1. Socially desirable responses

Table 4.3 below indicates statistics for the four pairs of variables which were marked as potentially answered in a socially desirable way. In other words, answer at one question basically contradicts with answer on the other question in the particular pair. On theoretical grounds though, these pairs of variables should yield the same result (i.e. means of these pairs should not be significantly different). Yet, all of the pairs in this subsection have significantly different means (i.e. $p < .001$ in three cases and $p < .01$ in one case). Each pair of variables is briefly described below.

PAIR 1

Participants framed themselves as rather not being dissatisfied on Facebook themselves when they indicated mostly *Never* and *Rarely* options from the scale; mean for *When you are dissatisfied with a particular brand, do you share this dissatisfaction on Facebook?* is 1.97. However, the participants rated their Facebook friends as being more dissatisfied with the mean of 2.86 for *In general, when your Facebook friends are not satisfied with particular brands, do they share their dissatisfaction publicly?*²³.

PAIR 2

Mean of *When you buy a durable product for yourself, do you want to differ from your closest Facebook friends in terms of the brand of that product?* is 3.8²⁴ whereas mean of *In general, are you prone to buy the same service or product your Facebook friends use?* is 1.98. In other words, participants indicate that they rather do not want to differ in their consumption from their Facebook friends in the former and the opposite in the latter.

PAIR 3

On average, participants do not believe that advertisements provide truthful information about services and products, yet they rather do believe that a brand can tell something about a person with $t(172) = -7.916, p < .001$.

PAIR 4

The difference between means at Pair 4 has been significant at $p < .05$. Participants indicate that they rather do appreciate likes on their statuses (mean = 4.1), yet they indicate (significantly) lower mean (3.79) for sharing of potentially reputation damaging status. Also, it may be noted here that the item *Would you share a status on Facebook, even if you would know that the content of the status might damage your reputation with your closest Facebook friends?* had to be deleted from the PCA in the preliminary analysis (see section 4.2.1.) due to its poor adequacy for the overall scale.

²³ As indicated in the beginning, this variable had to be removed after the preliminary PCA due to low reliability in the initial *Component 1* subscale. In fact, the distribution of responses for variables in this pair was not similar at all, which may be caused by socially desirable responses.

²⁴ Note that the 5-point scale of the answers for this variable has been inverted.

Table 4.3 - Dependent t-tests on selected pairs of questionnaire variables with potentially socially desirable responses

| Pair number | Names of paired variables | Paired differences | | | | | t | Degrees of freedom | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--|-------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | | Mean | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean | 95 % Confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| 1 | When you are dissatisfied with a particular brand, do you share this dissatisfaction on Facebook? <i>and</i> In general, when your Facebook friends are not satisfied with particular brands, do they share their dissatisfaction publicly? | -.897 | 1.217 | .092 | -1.079 | -.714 | -9.719 | 173 | .000 |
| 2 | When you buy a durable product for yourself, do you want to differ from your closest Facebook friends in terms of the brand of that product? ^a <i>and</i> In general, are you prone to buy the same service or product your Facebook friends use? | 1.821 | 1.397 | .106 | 1.611 | 2.030 | 17.149 | 172 | .000 |
| 3 | Do you believe that advertisements in general provide truthful information about services or products? <i>and</i> Do you believe that a brand can tell you something about a person? | -.988 | 1.642 | .125 | -1.235 | -.742 | -7.916 | 172 | .000 |
| 4 | Do you appreciate likes on your statuses? <i>and</i> Would you share a status on Facebook, even if you would know that the content of the status might damage your reputation with your closest Facebook friends? ^a | .312 | 1.485 | .113 | .089 | .535 | 2.765 | 172 | .006 |

^a Scales of these variables have been inverted.

4.3.1.2. Theoretically expected responses

As already indicated above, not all of the selected pairs of variables yielded potentially socially desirable responses. Two of the selected pairs have yielded theoretically expected responses actually. In *Table 4.4* below, the statistics for these two pairs may be found. Nevertheless as in case of the previous subsection, these two pairs will be briefly described below.

PAIR 5

The correlation between these variables is not as strong as it might be expected ($r = .409$). Special experiences, rather than material purchases are shared by the participants significantly more ($p < .001$). Note that these two variables are also both parts of the Component 1 extracted by the PCA (see section 4.2.2.).

PAIR 6

Not significant t-test ($p > .393$) in this pair indicate that the participants do feel influenced by both parents and subjectively perceived experts amongst their Facebook friends relatively equally in their purchasing decisions.

Table 4.4 - Dependent t-tests on selected pairs of questionnaire variables with theoretically expected responses

| Pair number | Names of paired variables | Paired differences | | | | | t | Degrees of freedom | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--|-------|---------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard error of the mean | 95 % Confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| 5 | When you purchase any product that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends? <i>and</i> When you experience any situation that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your friends on Facebook? | -1 | 1.084 | .082 | -1.163 | -.837 | -12.137 | 172 | .000 |
| 6 | Do you feel influenced by your parents when buying certain products or services? <i>and</i> Do you counsel your friends who are experts in their fields about your intended purchase? | -.092 | 1.419 | .108 | -.305 | .121 | -.857 | 172 | .393 |

4.3.2. Independent *t*-tests

In this subsection, independent *t*-tests on the main part of the questionnaire have been performed. The questionnaire items of its main part have been grouped according to the selected²⁵ categorical variables from it. Significant results per these selected categorical variables are described below. Equal variances are assumed at all of those cases.

GENDER²⁶

The first significant difference between males and females is, that females are more likely bring their Facebook friends with them when going shopping; $t(172) = -3.28, p = .001$. Females also indicate that they feel more influenced by their parents in their purchasing decisions; $t(171) = -3.49, p = .001$. On the other hand, males are more likely to counsel their Facebook friends who do they perceive as experts about their purchasing decision; $t(172) = 1.27, p < .05$.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Differences between level of education concerned those with secondary school level (SSL) and those with academic level (AL), i.e. two most represented groups of this variable. Participants with SSL of education think that they have influence on purchasing decision of their Facebook friends more than participants with AL of education; $t(169) = 2.338, p < .05$. On the other hand though, SSL participants are more likely to buy the same product/service that their Facebook friends already use; $t(169) = 2.18, p < .05$. AL participants are more consistent with what they buy in real life with their liked brands on Facebook; $t(168) = 2.47, p < .05$. They also appreciate likes on their statuses more than SSL participants; $t(168) = -1.99, p < .05$.

USE OF FACEBOOK ONLY VS. MULTIPLE SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Participants who use multiple social networking websites (MSNWs) do believe that advertisements provide truthful information about product/service than those participants who use Facebook only (FO); $t(171) = -2.97, p < .05$. MSNWs participants are also more prone to share purchases or experience they perceive as special; $t(171) = -2.45, p < .05$ for special purchases and $t(170) = -2.25, p < .05$. Finally, MSNWs participants share more dissatisfaction with the brands on Facebook than FO participants; $t(171) = -3.32, p = .001$.

²⁵ That is, *Filtering of Facebook friends into (social) groups* and *Facebook app on the phone* categorical variables have both been excluded from this section as their independent *t*-tests' scores are rather spurious. Further, *Nationality* has been excluded from this section due to small sample size that has been collected and therefore high potential for biased inferences. Finally, *Frequency of Facebook usage* has been excluded from this section due to rather one-sided representation of participants using Facebook daily.

²⁶ Although females are overrepresented in this sample, chi-square tests have been performed on all Facebook-use-related (categorical) variables with respect to gender. In each case, chi-square was not significant with $p > .1$, indicating that the gender distribution of the sample is likely not affecting the gathered data.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. General research question

In this thesis, the effect of the presence of social groups on Facebook on individual's political consumption has been investigated. The results from the analysed sample suggest that there may exist such effect indeed. More specifically, two of these potential effects have been identified; *Consumption-related sharing tactics* and *Independent ideal self*.

Consumption-related sharing tactics may refer to the ability of Facebook users to distinguish and to evaluate the consumption-related information for public sharing. The social group pressure manifesting in this effect may stem from the pursuit of desired social visibility and subsequent gain of 'pecuniary strength' as described in section 2.4.1.. This assertion may further be supported when looking at the underlying variables of this effect. That is, as regards *Consumption-related sharing tactics*, the participants in the sample share their experiential rather than their material purchases. It is in line with the study of [Van Boven \(2005; p. 137; italics added\)](#) as he found that there are three main reasons for superiority of experiential over material purchases, i.e. "first, experiences are more prone to positive reinterpretations; second, experiences suffer less from disadvantageous comparisons; and, third, experiences are more likely to *foster successful social relationships*". Furthermore, evaluation of what should and should not be shared publicly may refer to identity construction in online environment as described in section 2.5.; this effect is in line with the assumption that people may use Facebook (or SNWs in general) for online impression management. This assertion also implies that public brand identification that stems from *Consumption-related sharing tactics* may be linked to concerns about individual's reputation in a social group and prosumerism as a by-product of this activity.

As regards *Independent ideal self*, this 'effect' actually contradicts any effect of social group pressure upon an individual at all on the first sight, as the direction of responses on the questions that underlie this 'effect' is rather negative. That is, participants in the sample indicated that they do not appreciate the presence of the brands on Facebook; do not believe in advertisements' messages; are not susceptible to popular trends; and finally that they do not buy the same things as their Facebook friends *on average*. Nevertheless, it is suspected that this 'effect' reflects socially desirable responses. It is assumed that people do not want to be seen as dependent as it has generally rather negative social connotations. For example, such people were described in section 2.2. as having low power and knowledge. The denial of external influence upon individual decision making has been expected during the construction of the questionnaire though (see section 3.2.) and indeed, some pairs of variables with potentially socially desirable responses have been identified in the results. Moreover, interestingly enough, two out of four variables underlying *Independent ideal self* have been identified as these potentially socially desirable responses. Thus, taking all into account, we may refer to *Independent ideal self* as to real effect of the social group pressure on an individual's political consumption on Facebook in such a sense that the presence of social groups on Facebook accounts for framing oneself according to his ideal self. Nevertheless, such assertion is in contrary to the study of [Back et al. \(2010\)](#) as they claim that Facebook profiles reflect actual selves.

The shared characteristics of both *Consumption-related sharing tactics* and *Independent ideal self* contain the following; firstly, they refer to consumer awareness of meaning of consumption, i.e. awareness of political consumption as defined in this thesis. Secondly, they both imply a use of an

online environment to construct an ideal self. Thirdly, they indicate an effect of an external influence upon an individual with respect to his political consumption, which is argued to be the effect of social group pressure.

As already mentioned, socially desirable responses were expected to be found at certain variables. Dependent *t*-tests have been run in order to investigate the potentially socially desirable responses. Indeed, four of such responses have been found. Firstly, the participants framed themselves as less prone to share dissatisfaction than their Facebook friends. This may be linked to subjective translation of 'dissatisfaction' for 'complaining' in the eyes of the participants, which has rather negative social connotations (e.g. Kowalski, 1996). It was assumed that one is not likely to frame himself negatively even anonymously, however it is easier to frame negatively the other people anonymously. Secondly, the participants indicated that they rather do not want to differ as regards the brand of the product from their Facebook friends, yet they indicated that they rather prefer not to buy the same things as their Facebook friends in another variable, which indicates the opposite. Such finding basically makes no sense, although it can be viewed in terms of desire of people to be unique (i.e. differ from the others) and simultaneously, to be similar to the others as already mentioned in section 2.1.4.. Thirdly, the participants indicated that they rather do not believe that advertising provides truthful, consumer-related information, yet they do believe that brand can tell something about the person. This may again reflect the socially desirable response with regards to truthfulness of advertising as the participants are expected not to believe advertisements to indicate their rationality and independence. Furthermore, this generally might support the success of advertising in promotion of a brand and subsequent unconscious belief of consumers in its message, i.e. commodity fetishism (Marx, 1887). Finally, the participants indicate that even though they appreciate likes on their statuses, they are also relatively likely to share a reputation damaging status as well, which is rather contradictory. Again, such response may be viewed as socially desirable to designate participants' independence. On the other hand though, in reality, such response may also indicate an attention seeking that is based on purposeful 'shocking' of Facebook friends with an unexpected public expression of oneself.

Nevertheless, two cases of the selected pairs of variables for investigation of the socially desirable responses yielded rather credible results. That is, the parental influence yielded similar response as the influence from Facebook friends perceived as experts. Nevertheless, the main source of (social-group-based) external influence upon an individual's purchasing decisions differs by gender in the sample; parental influence was higher in female participants and influence from Facebook friends subjectively denoted by the participants as experts was higher in male ones. Lastly, as already described above in this subsection, on a theoretical level, it has been assumed that experiential purchases will have more social value (i.e. they will be shared more) than material purchases. The results indeed supported this premise.

Based on the results from independent *t*-tests, some categorical variables indicate significant differences in responses in particular questions. These are gender, level of education and using of Facebook only or multiple social media. Groupings of questionnaire items according to use of the Facebook app in the phone and filtering Facebook friends into (social) groups have not yielded convincing results, i.e. results that are based on the groupings according to these two variables are rather spurious. As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, gender differences were visible in the susceptibility to an expert power of a particular social group; taking into account indicated

parental influence on them, women are potentially more prone to be externally influenced in their consumption than men as they bring around their Facebook friends significantly more when going shopping as well. In other words, this may indicate that women who use Facebook are more likely to use their social groups as a benchmark to compare themselves with, i.e. comparative reference group influence (see section 2.1.1.). Level of education considered difference between participants with secondary school level of education and those with academic level of education. The main difference between these two groups of participants may be seen in less potential of socially desirable answers in the group of participants with academic level of education. Lastly, those participants who use multiple social networking websites are likely to share more information publicly and also, they do believe information from advertisements more.

5.2. Hypotheses

Taking all the information above into account, it is argued that some of the hypotheses which guided the analysis may be correct. That is, Facebook users are unlikely to make purely individual consumer decisions as they evaluate the information of what to share publicly; they are aware of potential implications of their self-presentation on their reputation among their social groups on Facebook. Moreover, Facebook users are well-aware about the (life)style of their Facebook friends; they may choose if, when and how do they want to distinguish from them in order to gain social visibility. Facebook users also use the online environment of Facebook to sustain their ideal self. Mere liking of Facebook pages may be perceived as a substitute for real consumption with respect to an identification with a brand message. The justification of individual pursuit of an ideal self is based on the (potentially) socially desirable responses of the participants in particular variables. Lastly, the participants are likely to be susceptible to the word-of-mouth. For example, they are rather well-aware of whom to trust with regards to counsel about their purchasing decision and refer to them as experts.

Nevertheless, for two hypotheses, compelling results were not found. More specifically, it has been expected that a Facebook user will also frame himself as influencing consumption of his Facebook friends. This has been shown only for participants with secondary school level of education when compared to those with academic level of education. It is assumed though that this influence is happening, although rather unconsciously. Also, related to the former hypothesis, participants were not susceptible to the popular trends in their social groups soundly according to the results. Again, in this case it might be happening rather unconsciously, but, additionally, the participants are likely not to admit the external influence upon them. This might have been seen in the results of dependent *t*-tests. Thus, it is argued that particularly questions in the questionnaire related to influence explicitly might have triggered the socially desirable responses. That is, Facebook users do not want to be perceived as being influenced and on the other hand, rather avoid to frame themselves as influential for their Facebook friends as well.

5.3. Recommendations for further research

With respect to this thesis, the biggest challenge for one investigating the social group pressure on Facebook (and likely in general as well) was to construct a reliable questionnaire that is also able to identify potentially socially desirable responses of the participants which might have affected the results of the analysis. Although a relatively good reliability of the questionnaire with respect to the collected sample has been achieved and variables for identification of socially desirable variables have been included in the questionnaire, the following shortcomings of the applied measurement

tool were observed and are suggested to be taken into account when reproducing this thesis; firstly, the questionnaire contained several variables which did not correlate well with the rest of the scale and they should be removed completely as it was the case in initial principal component analysis. Secondly, the specifically influence-related questions should be revised. That is, as already indicated in the previous subsection, they are suspected to trigger socially desirable responses. Finally, a bigger sample size is recommended so that the PCA may extract more precise components and also, to increase the reliability of the survey/research.

With respect to the kindred field of research with this thesis, the following recommendations for further research may be suggested; firstly, the effect of social group pressure on an individual's political consumption may be investigated on a different case of SNW. Similarities as well as specific differences between different cases of SNWs after comparison are expected to be found since each SNW provide its users with different self-presentation possibilities as already implied in section 2.3.. Comparisons between these SNWs are argued to be potentially interesting from a sociological perspective as it might provide interesting insight into identity construction of people in the 21st century. Secondly, there is a potential to research the political consumption on the specific age group of Facebook users. Moreover, by aiming at a specific age group of Facebook users, the focus of social group pressure may be narrowed down to peer pressure specifically. Besides focusing on specific age groups of participants, also comparison of specific groups of participants that are based on their level of education or gender may yield additional insights into manifestation of social group pressure on Facebook. Thirdly, in which way is ideal self constructed on Facebook with respect to political consumption might be a way of how to construct a better questionnaire for investigating social group pressure on Facebook. Fourthly, a thorough research investigating the distinction between social group and other external influences (e.g. advertisement, company image) in Facebook environment might refine the effects of social group pressure as well. Finally, susceptibility to the social group pressure on an individual's political consumption may be investigated between those individuals who use Facebook (or other social networking website) and those who do not use social networking websites at all. This may reveal the systematic variation of an online environment with regards to communication between an individual and his social groups.

5.4. Final concluding remarks

It has been shown in this thesis that Facebook users are likely to succumb to the external influence of their social groups, that they have linked to their personal Facebook profiles, as regards their political consumption. This influence has been supported by the results, namely the following effects: *Consumption-related sharing tactics* and *Independent ideal self*. Overarching aspect of both of these effects may be viewed as follows; Facebook is used as an identity construction tool by its users (Zhao et al., 2008). In other words, one's Facebook profile may be regarded as one's identity which is revolving around one's public consumption and vice versa; Facebook users identify publicly with brands and also align their expressions (i.e. acting politically) according to their consumption patterns to indicate their affiliation with a particular social group. Social groups on Facebook may be also referred to as virtual brand communities as well, as they also may be distinguished by their consumption patterns. Thus, public consumption visibility and actual private consumption obscurity may be perceived as a hallmark of an (ideal) identity construction on Facebook.

Based on the results in this thesis, it is argued that maintaining a virtual identity with respect to the social group pressure fosters prosumerism on Facebook. Prosumerism has been indeed identified as

amplified by the use of social media (Buzzetto-More, 2013). Through the public visibility of his consumption, Facebook user as a prosumer virtually advertises a brand for free and potentially influence his Facebook friends in their brand consumption and vice versa. Prosumerism on Facebook thus has a potential to replace advertisement then (see also 2.3.1.). Ironically, prosumerism on Facebook (and rather in general) itself entails a paradox in this thesis; Facebook users frame themselves as not trustful towards advertisements, yet they act as one themselves.

Nevertheless, prosumerism is likely to be affected by another aspect of Facebook, word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth may be viewed as a reliance on the opinions of one's social contacts regarded as trustworthy (see sections 2.1.1. and 2.3.1.). That is, Li & Bernoff (2011) claim that people use social media to get things from each other as their trust towards traditional institutions falter. This may be supported by the results of this thesis since the participants seem trust more to their Facebook friends than to advertisements. Reliance on word-of-mouth on Facebook may be further explained by the anticipated regret from one's choice that is indirectly fostered by an abundance of possible consumer choices on the market (Schwartz, 2009).

Another implication of the effect of the social group pressure on an individual's political consumption on Facebook may be viewed from the point of view of human psychological and social development. This assertion concerns mainly children. That is, first generations are being born and raised with their personal Facebook profile since their childhood. Assuming that the results of this thesis are valid, using of Facebook since one's childhood may have potentially detrimental consequences on one's identity formation due to a constant ubiquity of external influences on an individual. Thus, Facebook (and SNWs in general) has a potential to become a *part of identity formation of individuals* in the future. Also, interestingly enough, Cheung et al. (2011) indicate that the very using of Facebook might be perceived as an effect of the social group pressure (specifically the peer pressure) by itself. Peer influence as regards to student Facebook-related behaviour is also emphasized by Pempek et al. (2009). More specifically, they showed that students indeed use Facebook to construct their identities, compare with others and express their ideology. Additionally, they show that higher trust towards their Facebook friends stem from their already pre-established relationships in real world; this may be also viewed as a justification of the power of word-of-mouth on Facebook.

Finally, the results suggest that the theoretical concept of social group as posed in this thesis, i.e. its composition out of an integration of all a reference group, a peer group and social norms theoretical concepts may be justified. More specifically, reference group influence on an individual's political consumption on Facebook may be observed at designation of particular Facebook friends as experts (see sections 2.1.1. and 2.3.1.). Peer group influence on an individual's political consumption on Facebook is already described in the previous paragraph. Lastly, influence of social norms on an individual's political consumption may be observed especially in one's construction of ideal self on Facebook. Social group pressure may eventually lead to a regression towards an ideal type/role model of a social group member. In other words, individuals on Facebook may think that they construct their identity on their own, however, they rather form it according to the others. This assertion may be linked to an individual's avoiding of deviance as already mentioned in section 2.1.3.. Taking all into account, the effect of social group pressure individual's political consumption on Facebook may be also viewed as a loss of individual uniqueness.

6. References:

Allen, P., & Sachs, C. (2007). *Women and food chains: The gendered politics of food*. International Journal of Sociology of Food and Agriculture, 15(1), pp. 1-23.

Anholt, S. (2009). *Places: Identity, image and reputation*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ares, G., & Gámbaro, A. (2007). *Influence of gender, age and motives underlying food choice on perceived healthiness and willingness to try functional foods*. Appetite, 49(1), pp. 148-158.

Arndt, J. (1967). *Role of product-related conversations in the diffusion of a new product*. Journal of marketing Research, pp. 291-295.

Asch, S. E. (1951). *Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments*. Groups, Leadership, and Men.

Back, M. D., Stopfer, J. M., Vazire, S., Gaddis, S., Schmukle, S. C., Egloff, B., & Gosling, S. D. (2010). *Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization*. Psychological Science, 21(3), pp. 372-374.

Bearden, W. O., & Etzel, M. J. (1982). *Reference group influence on product and brand purchase decisions*. Journal of consumer research, pp. 183-194.

Beauchamp, T. L., Hare, R. M., & Biederman, B. (1984). *Manipulative Advertising [with Commentaries]*. Business & Professional Ethics Journal, 3(3/4), pp. 1-30.

boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). *Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship*. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), article 11.

Brewer, M. B. (1993). *The role of distinctiveness in social identity and group behaviour*. Group motivation: Social psychological perspectives, pp. 1-16.

Bromley, D. B. (1993). *Reputation, image and impression management*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brown, B. B., Eicher, S. A. & Petrie, S. (1986a). *The importance of peer group ("crowd") affiliation in adolescence*. Journal of adolescence, 9(1), pp. 73-96.

Brown, B. B., Clasen, D. R., & Eicher, S. A. (1986b). *Perceptions of peer pressure, peer conformity dispositions, and self-reported behavior among adolescents*. Developmental Psychology, 22(4), p. 521.

Brown, B. B. (1990). *Peer groups and peer cultures*. US: Harvard University Press.

Brown, C. (2008). *Inequality, consumer credit and the saving puzzle*. Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 39-62.

Buzzetto-More, N. A. (2013). *Social Media and Prosumerism*. Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology.

Cheung, C. M., Chiu, P. Y., & Lee, M. K. (2011). *Online social networks: Why do students use facebook?*. Computers in Human Behavior, 27(4), 1337-1343.

Cialdini, R. B., Reno, R. R., & Kallgren, C. A. (1990). *A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places*. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 58(6).

Cialdini, R. B., & Trost, M. R. (1998). *Social influence: Social norms, conformity and compliance*.

Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). *Social influence: Compliance and conformity*. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 55, pp. 591-621.

Clifford, E. (1963). *Social visibility*. *Child Development*, 34(3), pp. 799-808.

Coie, J. D., Dodge, K. A., & Kupersmidt, J. B. (1990). *Peer group behavior and social status*. Peer rejection in childhood. CUP Archive.

Compete.com (2009). *Social Networks: Facebook Takes Over Top Spot, Twitter Climbs*. Retrieved on 5th July 2013, from <https://blog.compete.com/2009/02/09/facebook-myspace-twitter-social-network/>.

Curhan, R. C. (1972). *The relationship between shelf space and unit sales in supermarkets*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, pp. 406-412.

Csaba, F. F., & Bengtsson, A. (2006). *Rethinking identity in brand management*. *Brand culture*, pp. 118-32.

Dielman, T. E., Campanelli, P. C., Shope, J. T., & Butchart, A. T. (1987). *Susceptibility to peer pressure, self-esteem, and health locus of control as correlates of adolescent substance abuse*. *Health Education & Behavior*, 14(2), pp. 207-221.

Denegri-Knott, J., Zwick, D., & Schroeder, J. E. (2006). *Mapping consumer power: an integrative framework for marketing and consumer research*. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(9/10), pp. 950-971.

Dutton, W., & Blank, G. (2011). *Next generation users: the internet in Britain*.

eBizMBA.com (2013). *Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites*. Retrieved on 5th July 2013, from <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-networking-websites>.

Encyclopædia Britannica (2013). *norm (society)*. Retrieved on 19th August 2013, from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/418203/norm>.

Facebook (2013). *Facebook Reports First Quarter 2013 Results*. Retrieved on 5th July 2013, from <http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=761090>.

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Sage publications.

Fiske, S. T., Gilbert, D. T., & Lindzey, G. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 2). John Wiley & Sons.

Ford, J. D. & Ellis, E. A. (1980). *A reexamination of group influence on member brand preference*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 17, pp. 125-132.

- Forsyth, D. R. (2009). *Group dynamics*. Cengage Learning. pp. 1-31.
- French Jr., J. R., & Raven, B. (1959). *The bases of social power*. Studies in social power.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hackman, J. R. (1992). *Group influences on individuals in organizations*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.
- Hogg, M. K., & Banister, E. N. (2001). *Dislikes, distastes and the undesired self: conceptualising and exploring the role of the undesired end state in consumer experience*. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17(1-2), pp. 73-104.
- Huang, P. H., & Wu, H. M. (1994). *More order without more law: A theory of social norms and organizational cultures*. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 390-406.
- Interbrand (2013). *Best Global Brands 2012*. Retrieved on 26th August 2013, from <http://www.interbrand.com/en/best-global-brands/2012/Best-Global-Brands-2012-Brand-View.aspx>.
- Jugert, P., Cohrs, J. C., & Duckitt, J. (2009). *Inter-and intrapersonal processes underlying authoritarianism: The role of social conformity and personal need for structure*. *European Journal of Personality*, 23(7), pp. 607-621.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). *Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk*. *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, 263-291.
- Katz, E., & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1970). *Personal Influence, The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Transaction Publishers.
- Keller, E., & Berry, J. (2003). *The influentials: One American in ten tells the other nine how to vote, where to eat, and what to buy*. Simon and Schuster.
- Kelley, H. H. (1952). *Two functions of reference groups*. *Readings in social psychology*, pp. 410-414.
- Kendall, D. (2011). *Sociology in our times*. Cengage Learning. p. 72.
- Kozinets, R. V. (1999). *E-tribalized marketing?: The strategic implications of virtual communities of consumption*. *European Management Journal*, 17(3), pp. 252-264.
- Kozinets, R. V., & Handelman, J. M. (2004). *Adversaries of consumption: Consumer movements, activism, and ideology*. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(3), pp. 691-704.
- Kowalski, R. M. (1996). *Complaints and complaining: functions, antecedents, and consequences*. *Psychological bulletin*, 119(2), 179.
- Laczniak, R. N., DeCarlo, T. E., & Ramaswami, S. N. (2001). *Consumers' responses to negative word-of-mouth communication: An attribution theory perspective*. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 11(1), 57-73.

- Lascu, D. N., & Zinkhan, G. (1999). *Consumer conformity: review and applications for marketing theory and practice*. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, pp. 1-12.
- Li, C., & Bernoff, J. (2011). *Groundswell: Winning in a world transformed by social technologies*. Harvard Business Press.
- Lemert, E. M. (1972). *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Lenhart, A., & Madden, M. (2007). *Social networking websites and teens: An Overview*. Pew/Internet Project Data Memo. pp. 1-10
- Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). *Impression management: A literature review and two-component model*. Psychological bulletin, 107(1). p. 34.
- Levy, S. J. (1999). *Symbols for sale*. reprinted in: Brands, Consumers, Symbols & Research, pp. 203-212.
- Lipscomb, T. J. (1988). *Indicators of materialism in children's free speech: Age and gender comparisons*. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 5(4), pp. 41-46.
- Marx, C. (1887). Capital vol I.
- Micheletti, M. (2003). *Political Virtue and Shopping: Individuals, Consumerism, and Collective Action*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 1-36.
- McCracken, G. D. (1990). *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities*. Indiana University Press.
- Muniz Jr., A. M., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). *Brand community*. Journal of consumer research, 27(4), p. 423.
- Park, C. W. & Lessig V. P. (1977). *Students and housewives: Differences in susceptibility to reference group influence*. Journal of Consumer Research, pp. 102-110.
- Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). *College students' social networking experiences on Facebook*. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 30(3), pp. 227-238.
- Perry, J. (Ed.). (2008). *Personal identity* (Vol. 2). University of California Pr.
- Pichler, E. A., & Hemetsberger, A. (2007). *"Hopelessly Devoted to You" - Towards an Extended Conceptualization of Consumer Devotion*. Advances in Consumer Research.
- Pugh, M. J. V., & Hart, D. (1999). *Identity development and peer group participation*. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 1999(84), pp. 55-70.
- Ritzer, G., & Jurgenson, N. (2010). *Production, Consumption, Prosumption The nature of capitalism in the age of the digital 'prosumer'*. Journal of Consumer Culture, 10(1), pp. 13-36.
- Sassatelli, R. (2007). *Consumer culture: History, theory and politics*. Sage. pp. 1-237
- Savin-Williams, R. C., & Diamond, L. M. (2000). *Sexual identity trajectories among sexual-minority youths: Gender comparisons*. Archives of sexual behavior, 29(6), 607-627.

- Schembri, S., Merrilees, B., & Kristiansen, S. (2010). *Brand consumption and narrative of the self*. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(6), pp. 623-637.
- Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). *The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms*. *Psychological science*, 18(5).
- Schwartz, S. H., & Bilsky, W. (1987). *Toward a universal psychological structure of human values*. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 53(3), pp. 550-562.
- Schwartz, B. (2009). *The paradox of choice*. HarperCollins.
- Smith, A. (1863). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. A. and C. Black.
- Smith, R. E., & Vogt, C. A. (1995). *The effects of integrating advertising and negative word-of-mouth communications on message processing and response*. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 4(2), pp. 133-151.
- Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K. (2010). *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective. Fourth edition*. Pearson Education. 700 pp.
- Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K. (2013). *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective. Fifth edition*. Pearson Education. 672 pp.
- Steinberg, L. (1987). *Single parents, stepparents, and the susceptibility of adolescents to antisocial peer pressure*. *Child development*, pp. 269-275.
- Steiner, P. (1993). *On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog*. *The New Yorker*.
- Suler, J. (2005). *The online disinhibition effect*. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 2(2), pp. 184-188.
- Tronto, J. C. (2013). *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. NYU Press. p. 39.
- Tufekci, Z. (2008). *Can you see me now? Audience and disclosure regulation in online social network sites*. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 28(1), pp. 20-36.
- Turner, J. C., & Oakes, P. J. (1986). *The significance of the social identity concept for social psychology with reference to individualism, interactionism and social influence*. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 25(3), pp. 237-252.
- Van Boven, L. (2005). *Experientialism, materialism, and the pursuit of happiness*. *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), pp. 132-142.
- Van Ham, P. (2001). *The rise of the brand state: the postmodern politics of image and reputation*. *Foreign Affairs*, p. 2.
- Veblen, T. (2005; orig. 1899). *The theory of the leisure class; an economic study of institutions*. Aakar Books.
- Walker, C. (1995). *Word of mouth*. *American Demographics*. pp. 38-44

- Warr, M. (2005). *Making delinquent friends: Adult supervision and children's affiliations*. *Criminology*, 43(1), 77-106.
- Waterman, A. S. (1993). *Developmental perspectives on identity formation: From adolescence to adulthood*. In *Ego identity* (pp. 42-68). Springer New York.
- Watts, D. J., & Dodds, P. S. (2007). *Influentials, networks, and public opinion formation*. *Journal of consumer research*, 34(4), pp. 441-458.
- White, K., & Dahl, D. W. (2006). *To be or not be? The influence of dissociative reference groups on consumer preferences*. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16(4), pp. 404-414.
- Wilk, R. R. (1997). *A critique of desire: distaste and dislike in consumer behavior*. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 1(2), pp. 175-196.
- Wilk, R. (2009). *The edge of agency: Routines, habits and volition*. *Time, consumption and everyday life: Practice, materiality and culture*, pp. 143-156.
- Wong, S., Altman, E., & Rojas-Mora, J. (2011). *Internet access: Where law, economy, culture and technology meet*. *Computer Networks*, 55(2), 470-479.
- Yale, L. J., & Gilly, M. C. (1995). *Dyadic perceptions in personal source information search*. *Journal of Business Research*, 32(3), pp. 225-237.
- Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S., & Martin, J. (2008). *Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships*. *Computers in human behavior*, 24(5), pp. 1816-1836.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

PART I - Socio-demographic variables:

Q 2: How old are you?

Q 3: What is your gender?

Q 4: What is your highest level of education that you have completed up to this day?

none / primary school level / secondary school level / academic level

Q 5: What is your nationality:

PART II (main part) - Specific variables on social and consumption-related Facebook behaviour:

Q 24 In general, do messages of the profile pages that you like on Facebook actually reflect your world views in your real life?

(Example: You like dogs, but your crush likes fluffy cats. So that, you decide to like the Facebook page about fluffy cats to impress your crush. Therefore, the page about fluffy cats does not reflect your world views in your real life.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 6 Do your Facebook friends ask you for advice regarding their buying decisions?

(Example: You are a guitar player. You have a friend who is going to buy his first guitar and wants to hear your opinion.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 7 Do you think you have an influence on certain purchasing decisions of some of your Facebook friends?

(Example: You advised your friend to buy acoustic guitar and not the electric one, which your friend desired. Your friend then purchased acoustic one indeed, because he trusted your counsel.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 8 Do you think that some of your Facebook friends imitate 'your style'?

(By 'your style' is meant anything: clothing, the way of commenting, music sharing, etc.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 9 Do you bring some of your Facebook friends along when you are going shopping?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 10 Do you believe that advertisements in general provide truthful information about services or products?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 11 Do you prefer to seek information about a service or product of your interest either at the Facebook page of that particular brand or at your Facebook friend who is already using that service or product?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = at the profile page of the brand only, 2 = rather at the profile page of the brand, 3 = both, 4 = rather at your Facebook friend, 5 = at the Facebook friend only)

Q 12 Have you ever regretted a purchase of a service or a product that you bought because of its advertisement?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 13 Is it important for you that your closest group of Facebook friends is accepting you as a group member?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't care, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 14 Do you feel influenced by your parents when buying certain products or services?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 15 Are you familiar with the (life)style of your Facebook friends?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't care, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 16 When you buy a durable product for yourself, do you want to differ from your closest Facebook friends in terms of the brand of that product?

(Durable product is such a product which is able to stay functional over long period of time, i.e. months or even years. Typical examples of these products are: cars, phones, furniture, clothes, etc.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 17 Would you say that the most of your Facebook friends are the same type of personality like you?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 18 Do you prefer to have Facebook friends who are similar to you?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't care, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 19 How important are those Facebook friends of yours who are not so much similar to you for you?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = completely unimportant, 2 = not much important, 3 = I don't know, 4 = important, 5 = very important)

Q 20 Do you think that you have some experts in their fields on your Facebook?

(e.g. Your computer had been inflicted by a virus, but you are just a humble musician and you are not capable to fix the computer as you don't have the skills to do it. However, one of your Facebook friends, John, is in your eyes computer genius, so you decide to call him to take a look on your computer and fix it.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 21 Do you counsel your friends who are experts in their fields about your intended purchase?

(Example: You are a musician. You need to buy a new computer, but you don't know which one. However, instead of seeking the information about computers on your own, you rather decide to consult your Facebook friend John about your computer purchase. John is your personal 'computer expert' then.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 22 Do you seek the information about your desired product/service also elsewhere than on Facebook?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 23 Do your favourite brands that you like on Facebook reflect your actual brand preference in your real life?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 25 Do you appreciate likes on your statuses?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't care, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 26 When you purchase any product that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends?

(An example of special product purchase may be: a new car, a piece of furniture, a new phone, etc.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 27 When you experience any situation that you perceive as special, do you share this information with your Facebook friends?

(An example of special experience may be: going to a concert of your favourite band, eating in a restaurant, meeting your favourite celebrity, etc.)

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 28 Are you keeping yourself up-to-date with the most recent trends in your hobby via Facebook?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 29 Would you say that you are familiar with the most popular trends in your hobby via Facebook?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 30 Do you buy a service or product that is popular among your Facebook friends?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 31 In general, are you prone to buy the same service or product your Facebook friends use?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 32 When you are dissatisfied with a particular brand, do you share this dissatisfaction on Facebook?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time)

Q 33 In general, when your Facebook friends are not satisfied with particular brands, do they share their dissatisfaction publicly?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 34 Do you appreciate the presence of the brands that you like in your real life also on Facebook?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't care, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 35 Do you believe that a brand can tell you something about a person?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

Q 36 Would you share a status on Facebook, even if you would know that the content of the status might damage your reputation with your closest Facebook friends?

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (1 = no, 2 = rather not, 3 = I don't know, 4 = rather yes, 5 = yes)

PART III - Facebook-use-related variables:

Q 38 What is the number of your Facebook friends?

Q 39 How many of your Facebook friends do you also know personally? (in percentages)

(e.g. 80 %, 25 %, 100 %, etc. The percentages may be approximated.)

Q 40 Are you filtering your Facebook friends according to the particular group they belong to?

(Example: You are the country guitarist. You filter your friends into the following groups: musicians, fans, schoolmates, family, other. When you will send your status, you will decide which group will see it and which one will not.)

yes/no

Q 41 Do you use only Facebook or multiple social networking websites:

Facebook only / multiple social networking websites (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.)

Q 42 Do you have a Facebook app on your phone:

yes / no

Q43 What is the frequency of your Facebook usage:

daily / once per few days / weekly / monthly

Appendix 2 - Overview of nationalities of the participants

| Nationality | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| American | 1 | .6 | .6 |
| Armenian | 2 | 1.1 | 1.7 |
| Austrian | 2 | 1.1 | 2.9 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 | .6 | 3.4 |
| Belgian | 1 | .6 | 4.0 |
| Brazilian | 3 | 1.7 | 5.7 |
| Bulgarian | 2 | 1.1 | 6.9 |
| Canadian | 2 | 1.1 | 8.0 |
| Cypriot | 1 | .6 | 8.6 |
| Czech | 22 | 12.6 | 21.3 |
| Dutch | 45 | 25.9 | 47.1 |
| Dutch/American | 1 | .6 | 47.7 |
| Dutch/Irish | 1 | .6 | 48.3 |
| Ecuadorian | 1 | .6 | 48.9 |
| Finnish | 11 | 6.3 | 55.2 |
| French | 6 | 3.4 | 58.6 |
| German | 20 | 11.5 | 70.1 |
| Greek | 10 | 5.7 | 75.9 |
| Hungarian | 2 | 1.1 | 77.0 |
| Chilean | 1 | .6 | 77.6 |
| Chinese | 1 | .6 | 78.2 |
| Iranian | 1 | .6 | 78.7 |
| Italian | 3 | 1.7 | 80.5 |
| Lithuanian | 1 | .6 | 81.0 |
| Luxembourger | 1 | .6 | 81.6 |
| Macedonian | 1 | .6 | 82.2 |
| Malaysian | 2 | 1.1 | 83.3 |
| Mexican | 1 | .6 | 83.9 |
| New Zealander | 1 | .6 | 84.5 |
| Norwegian | 2 | 1.1 | 85.6 |
| Peruvian | 1 | .6 | 86.2 |
| Polish | 2 | 1.1 | 87.4 |
| Romanian | 3 | 1.7 | 89.1 |
| Spanish | 4 | 2.3 | 91.4 |
| Swiss | 2 | 1.1 | 92.5 |
| Taiwanese | 1 | .6 | 93.1 |
| Turkish | 2 | 1.1 | 94.3 |
| Unknown | 8 | 4.6 | 98.9 |
| Uzbek | 1 | .6 | 99.4 |
| Vietnamese | 1 | .6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 174 | 100.0 | |

Appendix 3 - Descriptive statistics of the answers per question

Descriptive Statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation ^a | Analysis N ^a | Missing N |
|------|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Q 6 | 2.39 | .910 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 7 | 2.21 | .871 | 174 | 0 |
| Q8 | 1.75 | .756 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 9 | 2.47 | .983 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 10 | 2.21 | 1.050 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 12 | 2.16 | .898 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 13 | 3.46 | 1.151 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 14 | 2.89 | 1.261 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 15 | 3.49 | .942 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 16 | 2.20 | .995 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 17 | 2.29 | 1.102 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 18 | 3.17 | .907 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 19 | 2.99 | .988 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 20 | 3.89 | .985 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 21 | 2.98 | 1.028 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 23 | 3.17 | 1.076 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 25 | 4.10 | .917 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 26 | 1.98 | 1.003 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 27 | 2.97 | .988 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 28 | 2.14 | 1.271 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 29 | 2.21 | 1.194 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 30 | 1.83 | .761 | 174 | 1 |
| Q 31 | 1.98 | .804 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 32 | 1.97 | .892 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 34 | 2.64 | 1.217 | 174 | 0 |
| Q 35 | 3.20 | 1.267 | 174 | 1 |

a. For each variable, missing values are replaced with the variable mean.

Appendix 4 - Communalities

Communalities

| | Initial | Extraction |
|------|---------|------------|
| Q 6 | 1.000 | .721 |
| Q 7 | 1.000 | .669 |
| Q8 | 1.000 | .551 |
| Q 9 | 1.000 | .445 |
| Q 10 | 1.000 | .547 |
| Q 12 | 1.000 | .523 |
| Q 13 | 1.000 | .449 |
| Q 14 | 1.000 | .574 |
| Q 15 | 1.000 | .531 |
| Q 16 | 1.000 | .735 |
| Q 17 | 1.000 | .584 |
| Q 18 | 1.000 | .632 |
| Q 19 | 1.000 | .596 |
| Q 20 | 1.000 | .701 |
| Q 21 | 1.000 | .616 |
| Q 23 | 1.000 | .540 |
| Q 25 | 1.000 | .545 |
| Q 26 | 1.000 | .599 |
| Q 27 | 1.000 | .696 |
| Q 28 | 1.000 | .736 |
| Q 29 | 1.000 | .746 |
| Q 30 | 1.000 | .611 |
| Q 31 | 1.000 | .601 |
| Q 32 | 1.000 | .663 |
| Q 34 | 1.000 | .613 |
| Q 35 | 1.000 | .592 |

Appendix 5 - Component matrix

Component Matrix

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Q 31 | .628 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 30 | .615 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 7 | .558 | | | | | | | | -.425 |
| Q 21 | .519 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 29 | .507 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 8 | .489 | | | | -.437 | | | | |
| Q 26 | .479 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 28 | .471 | | | | .409 | | | | |
| Q 13 | .440 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 6 | .425 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| Q 19 | | .554 | | | | | | | |
| Q 20 | | .514 | .448 | | | | | | |
| Q 18 | | -.500 | | | | | | | |
| Q 15 | | | | | | | | | |
| Q 32 | .415 | | .600 | | | | | | |
| Q 27 | .443 | | .482 | | | | | | |
| Q 34 | .427 | | -.451 | | | | | | |
| Q 17 | | | | .525 | | | | | |
| Q 25 | .439 | | | .487 | | | | | |
| Q 24 | | | | | | .515 | | | |
| Q 12 | .413 | | | | | | -.499 | | |
| Q 35 | | | | | | | | -.597 | |
| Q 10 | | | | | | | | .430 | |
| Q 16 | .410 | | | | | | | | .573 |
| Q 14 | | | | | | | | | .419 |

Appendix 6 - Complete rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Q 27 | .767 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 32 | .721 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 26 | .719 | | | | | | | | |
| Q 34 | | .707 | | | | | | | |
| Q 35 | | .695 | | | | | | | |
| Q 30 | | .625 | | | | | | | |
| Q 12 | | | .660 | | | | | | |
| Q 25 | | | .622 | | | | | | |
| Q 31 | | .491 | .517 | | | | | | |
| Q 13 | | | .514 | | | | | | |
| Q 20 | | | | .731 | | | | | |
| Q 21 | | | | .716 | | | | | |
| Q 6 | | | | .627 | | | | .420 | |
| Q 28 | | | | | .829 | | | | |
| Q 29 | | | | | .822 | | | | |
| Q 19 | | | | | | -.723 | | | |
| Q 18 | | | | | | .712 | | | |
| Q 8 | | | | | | .482 | | | |
| Q 17 | | | | | | | .693 | | |
| Q 15 | | | | | | | .616 | | |
| Q 9 | | | | | | | .472 | | |
| Q 35 | | | | | | | | .703 | |
| Q 7 | | | | | | | | .469 | |
| Q 23 | | | | | | | | .437 | |
| Q 16 | | | | | | | | | .775 |
| Q 14 | | | | | | | | | .538 |