Searching Anthropology and Twitter

*Do “new” fields require new tools?*

Erlend J. Tollaas
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Summary

This thesis is focused on the role of social media in anthropology today, and in the future. It has changed from an initially “classic” fieldwork centred thesis, to the literature-based thesis it is today. As social media is a broad subject, I’ve elected to focus especially on Twitter. I chose Twitter partially based on it being a media I knew, but also due to the original aim of the thesis. As a literature-based thesis, my empirical data is presented in the form of experiences. I draw upon my own experiences, as well as those of authors I mention, linking them to texts ranging from Bronislaw Malinowski and Erving Goffman, to Devin Gaffney & Cornelius Puschmann and Michael Beurskens. Through the various authors I refer to, I attempt to cover a broad spectrum of different topics relating to opportunities and challenges between anthropology and Twitter. As such, this is no “deep dive” into any one opportunity or challenge.

The thesis is constructed around the idea of opportunities, challenges and ethical questions. I approached these ideas through initially questioning our anthropological tools. Authors like Yarimar Bonilla & Jonathan Rosa and Alice E. Marwick offer practical examples of Twitter studies. Annette Markham raised some questions regarding the purpose of fieldwork, and questioned why we second-guess digital (anthropology)data. This was largely inspirational for how I approached thinking opportunities and challenged with Twitter. Judith Okely, on the other hand, has covered the ideas and advantages of for example physical presence. This forced me to consider the challenged carefully and try to place Twitter in relation to classic fields and fieldwork. There are also technical reads, touching upon the basic tools which we should apply to these studies. As I argue in the text, these are added both to enlighten the reader to how these technical aspects actually work, but also highlight just how complex it is to understand.

The ethical aspects are both tied to law, anthropology and general concerns that have arisen of late. As social medias popularity rises, we must also make more ethical considerations. Some of these are obvious and familiar, such as anonymity and privacy, but others, such as navigating Twitter laws or bots and trolls, are harder to grasp. My conclusion tries to tie together all the opportunities and challenges and as they have been presented. Through the understanding I’ve built up of how to approach these, I question the way we (anthropologists) think about social media.
Preface

The purpose of this thesis is to question how anthropology can relate to new social media platforms. It had what I assume is an unusual beginning, even for a subject where we are encouraged to explore and study something unfamiliar in an (for us) unfamiliar setting. Through almost two earlier iterations, it changed from fieldwork-based to a form of literature analysis. As someone who has studied for three and a half years getting ready to perform and write about a fieldwork, it was challenging to “reset”. On top of this came the half year spent on the fieldwork, and half a year figuring out the new direction (including the short Twitter case study) which eventually added up. When approaching it anew, I carried over certain key elements from the initial research proposal, and thus maintained a connection to the things I found interesting. Discussing things that touched upon the experiences I did have, allowed me to engage with the material on a more personal level than I initially thought possible. While I at times questioned the validity of using myself as I have done, I attempted to find the right balance between my experiences and the arguments presented by others. Throughout the writing process my “goal” or aim also changed. Initially I thought answering the hypothesis would round the thesis off, but as I worked with it, its scope broadened. The texts I’ve selected, and the themes I discussed are a product of what I’ve experienced in light of the knowledge I now have. While new texts on social media emerge seemingly every day, I remain with a question; Why does this still appear unfamiliar or “new” to us?
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Introduction

In this project, I’ll look at the social media platform Twitter, as a field of study for anthropology. How can the professional tools, provided by social anthropology, help us understand and study Twitter? What makes doing fieldwork through Twitter unique or special in comparison to “classic” fields and fieldwork? How can “old” text on fieldwork theory cover options such as Twitter? The reason why I would argue that this discussion is important, can be seen in some of the base definitions of social anthropology; “Social Anthropology is the comparative study of the ways in which people live in different social and cultural settings across the globe.”¹ As examples of just this, we can see the increase in relevance and use of such social media over the last years². In the US, it went from 5% adult users in 2005 to over 69% in 2016, and social media had a large impact on the American Presidential Election of 2016³. Closer to home, Statistisk Sentralbyrå (SSB) have shown that as many as two out of three between the age of 16 and 79 use social media every day⁴. Going back to my initial questions, my hypothesis here will be that:

- While Twitter, as an example of a new social media, challenges anthropological method, many of the classic ideas and concepts for fieldwork still very much apply.

Personal anecdotes and ”fieldwork experience”

When I first got introduced to interaction and contact with others online, it was an introduction to something scary and unknown. I was perhaps 9 or 10 years old. We were in an underground classroom with narrow windows that let in a minimum of light. Around the room the now outdated “box screen” computers stood, and my class was learning how to search for things on the internet. As expected we didn’t really pay much attention to what the teacher had to say, but there was one thing I remember clearly. Amidst attempting to teach us an early form of source criticism (don’t just use Wikipedia), he taught us a set of rules that my parents, as teachers themselves, also repeated to me. While I don’t remember them word for word, the essence that stuck with me for a long time was the following: The internet is scary.

¹ http://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/about/social-anthropology
² http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/
³ https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/03/donald-trump-internet-success-twitter-us-election-media; http://www.wired.co.uk/article/twitter-bots-democracy-usa-election
When having contact with people you don’t know on the internet, be sure to never use your real name, or give out any personal information.

Through this glance back at my perhaps earliest experience with the internet I wish to put myself and my “timeframe” in perspective. The “nettvet”\(^5\) rules, as they were called, became such an integral part of how I interacted with others online that I felt it had to be mentioned. My first active interaction with unknown people online was through a game in middle school, at which time I barely told people what country I was from, let alone my age. It was not until I started using Facebook in high school that I divulged any personal information of size. While this, to me, seems overprotective and unnecessary now, many of the recent news stories about paedophiles and how children are tricked online seem to bring back some of the same cautionary tales I was taught. This may not be an argument for the nettvet rules themselves, but it further underlines the growing importance of social interaction online. As an avid user of both social media and online games I draw upon my own experiences to consider and question the debates raised by other authors. While not observed or experienced primarily as anthropological or ethnographic data, it is none the less an important part of how I understand and relate to many of these questions. I therefore choose to include some of these experiences in this thesis.

As social media became a growing part of how I interacted with others, as well as in society in general (elections), it was natural for me that it would be an essential part of my study. Keeping this in mind, I attempted to view Scottish youth and social media, in relation to questions of identity through social media. As this didn’t work out, due to a lack of informants and data gathered during the fieldwork, I ended up with a thesis based on academic literature, rather than a fieldwork approach. This featured a brief case study of the American Presidential Election of 2016, with a focus on candidates and their use of Twitter. I looked at Twitter as a field of study: what made it unique or special, the relationship between performer, audience and hashtags, and how those relationships affected identity. In my current thesis, I’ve retained the focus on social media. Both the attempted fieldwork in Scotland, and some of the ideas from the case study of the American Election, has left me with some valuable experiences. I will use these previous experiences, in combination with the literature on social media and fieldwork theory, to view the relationship between Twitter,
as a social media platform and field, and Social Anthropology, as a provider of tools to understand it.

**Questioning the hypothesis**

In trying to answer the hypothesis, I’ve formulated some questions I think are important to answer. How applicable are the professional tools provided by social anthropology when trying to understand and study Twitter? To clarify this, I will discuss Twitter’s validity as a field regarding writings on fieldwork and the goals of fieldwork. How does it fulfill the ideas of an anthropological field, and if it doesn’t, can it still be such a field? I will also look at opportunities and challenges with Twitter from an anthropological point of view. How is fieldwork through Twitter unique or special? What opportunities does it provide, and what does it lack in comparison to the “regular” field? Did I personally notice the differences, if any, through my experiences from my time in Scotland versus when I looked at the election, and how do these compare to what others have written? By applying my own experiences to the writings of others, I hope to highlight at least some aspects of these questions.

When looking at texts on fieldwork and how it should be performed, as well as how we define fields, are these texts able to incorporate social media such as Twitter? What can the thoughts of writers such as Malinowski or Boas, who were pioneers regarding modern fieldwork theory, provide in such a discussion? Is any fieldwork from social media too thin, as Annette Markham (2013) writes in “What Would Malinowski Do?”, or can it be an adequate foundation for an anthropological study, such as in “#Ferguson” by Yarimar Bonilla & Jonathan Rosa (2015). Many anthropological texts argue that the holistic approach is essential to understanding the idea of a field in such a globalized time, but few of them speak of the role of social media other than as an example of globalization and contact. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992) bring up the point of how traditional thoughts on borders might have to be discarded. While they don’t mention social media, their ideas are still very much relevant when looking at Twitter in an anthropological sense.

Regarding opportunities and challenges as presented when seeing Twitter as a field, the findings in #Ferguson and Alice E. Marwick’s (2014) “Ethnographic and Qualitative Research on Twitter”, as examples of anthropological work on Twitter, are great sources of comparison with my own limited fieldwork experience. #Ferguson looked mainly at hashtags
on Twitter, and what was posted under these. Marwick goes further into a discussion of her own work and its validity, as she looked at both Twitter and daily life. As mentioned earlier, I tried to approach viewing Twitter, through anthropological tools, by using “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” (Goffman 1959). Applying his ideas on performer-audience relationships to Twitter, gave me some data which shows examples of how Twitter can be used to study anthropological themes. This data in itself will not play a major part here, but the concept and idea behind it were a driving force for this final iteration of the thesis. Comparing it against the ethical/practical issues I encountered, as well as the issues surrounding my attempt at a more “regular” fieldwork in Scotland, I wish to highlight both the opportunities and challenges with Twitter in anthropology. Combined with both writings on fieldwork theory in general, as well as specific writings on social media (i.e. Twitter and Society 2014, edited by Weller et al.), I hope to shed some light on how social anthropology might be used to view Twitter.

The Scotland fieldwork

When discussing the fieldwork from Scotland, I have called it “attempted” because it did not yield any data towards my original thesis. I stayed in Edinburgh for approximately six months, from February to July 2016. During that time my plan was to get to know Scottish youth/students at the university or at popular student hang outs. I was interested in getting to know students with both Scottish and English nationality. The idea was to see if there was any difference in how they related to the question of independence and nationality in their everyday life, as opposed to how they related to it on social media. My hypothesis was that there would be differences between highly engaged individuals and others. I assumed there would be some discrepancy when looking at how less engaged people related to the issue in “real life” as opposed to online. Already in its initial stage, my attempted fieldwork was met with some difficulties. As I wished to get the fieldwork underway, I chose to initially stay at an Air BnB, while looking for a cheaper, more permanent housing solution. While initially fine, things soon turned a bit sour. Being in a new city, staying in a temporary place and managing to get ill with a high fever made me feel like I was in a limbo situation. The sickness set in within the first two weeks and pretty much knocked me out. The sickness and house search had taken a few weeks out of my time, but I had high hopes going forward. I did eventually find a room at a student housing, which was one of my initial wishes. One of the
ideas I had was to use such a student housing as an easy way to get introduced to potential informants. The student housing was a series of blocks, where 5-6 people on each floor shared 2 baths and a dining/living room. As it turned out, most people on my floor were fairly new students, most of them having studied for half a year or a year and a half. In hindsight I suppose I had romanticised how easy it would be to get in contact with informants once I were “among my own people”. In reality, I rarely saw any of the people I lived with, and they seemed to have limited interactions with each other as well as me.

This is just a brief summary of some what I experienced during my stay in Scotland. While there was little of value towards my initial thesis, I still gained personal experience with some of the difficulties of preforming fieldwork. As mentioned it did not yield any empirical, ethnographic data directly applicable to my study. But the experience of feeling like I was too late, as I arrived after the independence referendum had been resolved, stuck out. As a final, positive side note, I wish to mention my meeting with some friends I had previously made online. While not directly connected to my Scotland study, actually going and meeting them face to face was a pleasant experience that also helped give me some perspective on social media and physical presence. It is this part of the attempted fieldwork, the experiences and challenges, I will focus on and refer to throughout this thesis.

The Case Study of the American Presidential Election

Before I describe my brief case study of the American Election (here after commonly referred to as “the Election”) mainly through Twitter, I wish to briefly explain what Twitter is.

“Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, “tweets”, restricted to 140 characters. Registered users can post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface, SMS or a mobile device app.”

In addition to this, users can Tweet at other accounts/users by using @InsertTwitterHandle. Tweets are also very often marked with different hashtags. Hashtags are a way of posting something in regard to certain themes/happenings or just to group Tweets. As shown in one of

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6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter (has since been changed to include a comment on the change to 280 characters in some countries)
the texts I rely heavily on, Bonilla & Rosa’s “#Ferguson” this can be used to follow an event, be part of a movement, or for the anthropologist, gather data on social happenings and movements. It is also worth noting that Twitter has changed from 140 characters to 280 as of November 2017. This was partially because languages based on single characters for words were able to convey more per tweet7.

The way in which I used Twitter in my case study, combined with the attempted fieldwork, was what created the foundation for my current thesis. In the case study I looked at relationships, role and identity on Twitter, and considered Twitter as a field of study – what makes it unique or special. Trying to maintain some of the original idea from my Scotland work, I wished to look at the relationship between performer, audience and hashtags, and how those relationships affected identity. Some of these are themes that will return in this thesis, as they help identify some of the opportunities and challenges we might face when using Twitter in social anthropology.

I tried to gather some ethnographical data through the Election on Twitter. I kept on from August 1st to Election Day November 8th, and focused on tweets either to candidates in relation to specific cases, such as debates and statements, or the different hashtags that emerged. To keep it catalogued I used Twitter’s “advanced search” options, which allowed me to filter by time, person and hashtag. As an example of what I found interesting, I have Trump’s tweet about how no one respected women more than him. This shows how he tried to change what values were identified as part of his image. Another way in which I measured the response, was by looking at hashtags that emerged or could be connected to this thematic. Two specific examples I came across are #WomenForTrump and #NastyWoman.

#WomenForTrump shows a picture of how many supported him. The publication of the leaked recordings of Trump saying the infamous “grab them by the pussy” quote8 meant he got a lot of negative press regarding his view of woman. While perhaps more a commentary on management of public image or the workings of election campaigns than people’s actual opinions, the #WomenForTrump was highly visible during his next TV broadcast speech. #NastyWoman was a term first used by Trump to describe Hillary in a negative way, but it was eventually change to a very pro-Hillary hashtag. My reason for referring to them as Trump and Hillary, rather than Trump and Clinton/Donald and Hillary, is based on the way

most media referred to them during the Election. My assumption is that this was partially due to the fact that Clinton might be misunderstood as Bill Clinton. As I mentioned in the explanation from the Scotland work, I will also relate to the Twitter case study in light of the experiences I gained.
Chapter 1: The idea of Twitter, field and its purpose
Since I started my bachelor’s in social anthropology, the idea of field and fieldwork has always been central. While we were early taught that the idea of anthropologists working solely in small, remote villages no longer applied, the notion of finding a geographically limited space to conduct my fieldwork stuck with me. In my thesis, as in anthropology in general, the concept or idea of field is central. Through my own experiences and working with this thesis, the idea of field has changed. The initial idea, for my Scotland work, was the field as the physical or geographical space where I and my informants interacted in relation to my thesis question. While Twitter was a part of this research question, it was not until I did my case study of the American Election that I started considering Twitter itself as a possible field. In my initial idea Twitter was simply a social media platform, where the informants acted out parts of themselves.

But what is a field or the idea of field, and how does Twitter fit the anthropological ideas of field? Before I try to answer this, I wish to give a brief historical overview of anthropology. By showing how anthropological theories and practices have evolved throughout history, I wish to show how Twitter, as an example of newer social media, can be considered through our professional tools. When looking at basic theories and approaches to ethnographic work in anthropology, there is too much for me to extensively cover, and much of this would not be relevant to this thesis. I will therefore mainly mention what is relevant from the different schools of thought to how we might understand Twitter today. To cover these, I will mainly rely on Alan Barnard (2000). In this book Barnard cover everything from early pre-anthropological forerunners, such as natural law and evolutionism, up to interpretivism and postmodernism. As many of the text I refer to in later chapters consider different ideas of field, I will also briefly mention Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson’s “Beyond Culture”.

Looking at recurring and consistent themes through these theories, I’ve also found it necessary to take a closer look at fieldwork/ethnography. Judith Okely’s “Anthropological practice” (Okely 2012) and Annette N. Markham’s “What Would Malinowski Do” (Markham 2013) offer some differing and interesting thoughts on these subjects. While Okely’s text is what I would consider more “classical” in its approach, Markham directly deals with newer forms of fieldwork.

Finally, in this chapter, I will mention “Netnography: Redefined” by Robert V. Kozinets (Kozinets 2015). It offers interesting insight into the themes of my thesis, and as such I’ve
elected to draw upon his ideas to question both opportunities and challenges with Twitter use, as well as the ethical aspect of Twitter use by anthropologists. I must also admit that I am somewhat sceptical to his approach, as I read it as somewhat influenced by Kozinets economics background (see “About Author” Kozinets 2015)*. An argument could be made for “Netnography: Redefined” having a larger role in this text. As I mentioned, it discusses many similar points to those I raise. The fact that I was made aware of it rather late in the process of writing this thesis, and thus had little time to get familiar with the approach, makes me consider myself somewhat unqualified to discuss it. Kozinets especially stresses how it has been “redefined” or reworked in order to fit the modern picture with social media better, mentioning Twitter and Facebook the choice to highlight it is to offer the reader a picture of the literature available. In short, I do not mean to dismiss his approach or ideas based on limited knowledge. He refers to how it has been successfully used, which may very well be true. I think his connection to business, which is something that is essential when discussing Twitter and ethics, raises interesting ethical questions. This is something I will return to in chapter 4.

**Barnard and brief exploits from anthropological history**

How does Twitter fit into an anthropological understanding of a field? In some ways we find the same things or themes many of us associated with classic anthropological fieldwork. There are people and interactions, communities and culture(s) to mention some. The perhaps most glaring difference would, to me, be the lack of physical borders. But is this a hindrance or a help?

In his book “History and theory in Anthropology” Alan Barnard gives an overview of how anthropology has changed over time. From his distinctions of forms of anthropology, I will mainly rely on “social anthropology”. As he describes it (Barnard 2000:4-5) we often distinguish between ethnography and theory, but to him they are two sides of a coin. The main point I wish to draw attention to in his description of anthropology is his four basic elements of theory (2000:5); 1 questions, 2 assumptions, 3 methods and 4 evidence.

*Additional reading on Kozinets [http://kozinets.net/about](http://kozinets.net/about)
Especially interesting for my thesis is questions and methods, something which I will return to later in this chapter.

When looking at anthropological texts from tribes such as Malinowski’s work, I often got the impression that the presence, or availability, of such borders was a crucial part of how one defined a field. “The Subject, Method and Scope of this Inquiry”, which he wrote, has been considered the golden standard for fieldwork within anthropology. This goes back to the classic image of the anthropologist as a person studying an isolated tribe in an isolated space. Montesquieu’s theory that climate was the factor that made cultures different (Barnard 2000:24) is a good example of how physical space was given importance. Earlier on Barnard describes how evolutionism – based on the idea of evolution as the primary change in culture, and diffusionism – the idea of culture as migrating or diffusing from a place of origin to other areas, can be considered part of diachronic perspective. This perspective is something he sets opposite to a synchronic perspective (2000:9). The difference between these two, as he describes it, is that diachronic focuses on things through time. Structuralism – the idea of the structures in society/culture as the key aspects, and functionalism – where the function something serves is the important part, are part of the synchronic perspective. Synchronic primarily incorporate theories that focus on things in the same time. What interests me, however, is not the differences between these early influencers on anthropology, but rather the similarities regarding how they viewed field. To me, both these ways of studying systems, with Malinowski as part of functionalism, had a way of studying systems that were conditioned upon a defined space where one could observe it. This is evident through the idea of Malinowski’s study of the Trobriand Islands as the golden standard of fieldwork. While his ideas were perhaps not meant to be conditioned on such an idea of space, I often imagined that a space, perhaps even physically definable, had to be present in any anthropological work. However, in his basic idea of the ethnographers’ role, namely “to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world” (Malinowski 1961:25), there is no actual mention of borders, physical or otherwise. Through this kind of definitions and ideas I see the potential room for Twitter. While the texts of Bonilla & Rosa or Marwick show that anthropology can be done on Twitter, the idea of Malinowski allows for a natural understanding of why it fits our field.
Gupta and Ferguson – ideas of field

Returning to the question of physical borders, I wish to mention “Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference” by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Gupta & Ferguson 1992). As an “older” text in comparison to most I refer to, they challenge some ideas that the other texts seem to have moved beyond. I will therefore present their ideas and arguments in light of my thesis. This is not an accurate retelling of their text, but rather a view of certain ideas they had, that proved interesting when considering Twitter. Amongst other things, they argue that thinking culture and society as defined by or connected to states or geographical areas is problematic (1992:2). By highlighting “problematic groups”, such as migrant workers or subcultures, they dealt with rigid theories and terminology. Through such groups they saw a rising problem with deterritorialized identities. This reminds me of the idea of the internet or social media as a place or space where one can be whoever one wishes. As I have experienced it, this idea was more prominent prior to the popularity of very personal sites such as Facebook. The essential argument Gupta and Ferguson push is the idea of imagined spaces. Something that makes even this “old” text interesting to me, is their link between exemplifying America and how states “play a crucial role in the popular politics of place making and in the naturalized links between places and peoples” (1992:6). The very ideas of “American culture”, “Americans” and politicians (as an embodiment of the state) were highly relevant during the Election. An example that highlights this would be the campaign poster made by Trump Jr, featuring 3 of Trump's children with the slogan “This is not a Republican vs Democrat election. This is about an Insider versus an Outsider”. Gupta & Ferguson also imply that “mass media” analysis challenged the ideas of culture (1992:12). While their category of mass media mentions films, tv, radio, newspapers and so on, and is thus a bit outdated, they do bring up one point I find interesting.

Recent work in cultural studies has emphasized the danger of reducing the reception of multinational cultural production to the passive act of consumption... We worry at least as much, however, about the opposite danger of celebrating the inventiveness of those “consumers” of the cultural industry... reinterpreting and remaking them... sometimes in a direction that promotes resistance rather than conformity - Gupta & Ferguson (1992:12)

10 [https://twitter.com/DonaldJTrumpJr/status/771858220864434181](https://twitter.com/DonaldJTrumpJr/status/771858220864434181)
Their argument here was directed towards the lack of public ownership of these public spheres, and I do share some of their concerns. An episode of Trygdekontoreto\textsuperscript{11}, which I will return to in chapters 3 and 4, referred to how the “consumers” were being manipulated by actors they did not know, resulting in a form of resistance. The example they used was a Facebook group set up by a Russian bot. This group, seemingly American in origin, promoted a free Texas, separated from the US.

**Okely – fieldwork and ethnography**

Before I follow up on Malinowski, I wish to look a bit closer at some of the basics for anthropological work. As evident by what I have focused on from Barnard’s writing, especially Malinowski and his influence, makes it necessary to cover terms like field work and participant observation further. In “Anthropological practice” Judith Okely (2012) describes participant observation as “more than co-residence, verbal interaction and observation; it also involves knowledge through the body, through all the senses” (Okely 2012, p77). While I would agree with what I understand as her underlying point, namely that active participation and being present are essential to fieldwork or anthropology, I question the importance of the physical presence. More specifically I question how she appears to condition physical presence in chapter 6 “Fieldwork Embodied”, with being in the same space as the informants. The importance or difference such physical presence might make is something I will discuss later, when viewing the works of Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick. When reading Okely and the examples of how being physically present can at times be essential (Okely 2012, p107-124), I do not disagree with her, but I would argue that there is a lack of incorporation of online presence or participant observation through social media. This should, however, not be interpreted as an argument for the abolishment of the practice of anthropologists traveling to the informants and living like, or with, them. Instead, like Markham which I will come to in the next sub-chapter, I wish to question if it is always necessary to do so in order to have valid data. As I mentioned from my trip to Scotland, I ended up meeting some people I knew through social media and games in other parts of the UK. While I wouldn’t say that I necessarily got to know them better, as they were people I

\textsuperscript{11} https://tv.nrk.no/serie/trygdekontoret/MUHU06000718/17-04-2018
had both talked to and seen before, there was undeniably something special about also meeting in person.

In chapter 7 Okely show how different aspects with the anthropologist affect their fieldwork (Okely 2012:125-153). Aspects such as gender, age and ethnicity, but also more “obscure” features such as personality or historical context may all have negative or positive effects on both access to a field, and informants. These are points which I will return to in the next two chapters of this thesis, as I discuss both the opportunities as well as challenges aspects I consider Twitter represent for anthropology. To me, it holds interest as I consider also these challenging aspects as part of the idea of the field. However, I would argue that several of the issues she connects to bodily, physical presence in the field can also be applied to experiences the anthropologist can encounter online. What she mentions regarding Myerhoff, is a great example of how physical presence can be a necessity in order to understand and convey an experience as “the natives”. Okely refers to Myerhoff’s experience (Myerhoff 1974) as showing how understanding beliefs affected physical experience (Okely 2012:108). But when looking at exactly what she describes, I find myself wondering if the same could not be said of someone trying to understand a # or a group on social media. To understand aspects of a culture is equally important for someone trying to study a movement, # or group of people online.

When talking about this theme I often rely on the period from my own life when I played FPS (First Person Shooter) games. When I heard from my parents how someone had received death threats online, my approach to this was rather ambivalent. The morale aspect was clear to me, no one should receive death threats, but on the other hand, I felt the need for context to pass such a judgement. The reason for my hesitation sprung out of my own experiences. When playing FPS, I would expect to receive some sort of abuse or threats nearly every match. The ability to, unfiltered, let loose your frustrations seemed to create a space where this was accepted behaviour, and as part of this myself, I took little notice of it. After a while it even became a part of “gaming the game”. In other words: I would try to use their anger into goading them to making poor decisions (in-game). But this did not mean I felt like this was neither acceptable behaviour elsewhere, nor an excuse to send death threats to for example politicians or journalists. The context for such interaction and behaviour was strongly tied to the setting and platform. This, I would argue, goes back to what Okely describes, namely how we in the field interact with others (Okely 2012:125). A somewhat
an amusing note is how I would pretty much give up zero information about myself, as anything provided would be used against you. But it was also in this setting I for the first time encountered the importance of the local, definable and limited from “real life” online. While I had a belief in the power of the internet and computers to let me be something, someone else than myself (I did, after all, not actually run around shooting people), I noticed how both I and others could easily group up against one another based on nationality.

I wish to once again make it clear that I will not claim or argue for my experiences as any sort of ethnographic work. The examples I use refer to events that happened both prior to and during my time as a student. An argument could be made for the experiences as empirical data when considered through the lens of anthropological thinking. While, at the time, not imagined as anthropologically interesting, I have often thought back to such experiences when reading anthropological texts. It is because of this that I choose to include such examples. Looking back at these memories, in light of this thesis and the themes discussed, has been interesting for me. It should also be noted that this was playing FPS on a hobby level, something which does not represent what one sees in more professional settings.

Markham and why we do what we do

When finding texts of interest to this thesis, I looked for someone who could help me bridge the gap between classical and “newer” anthropology. An author that very much attempts to open the arena for newer media in fieldwork thinking is Markham. What she writes in “What would Malinowski do?” (Markham 2013) is an interesting piece that attempts to incorporate the classical with the new. In a similar way to how Barnard described his ideas of questions and methods (Barnard 2000:5), Markham wants to focus on the purpose of our research and the methods we use to find data. As her title suggests, she tries to highlight what Malinowski would actually want to get out of a fieldwork. The way I read Markham, I see it as an attempt to move the focus back towards what anthropologist are trying to examine or find the answer to. Rather than focusing on the ways of which we find these answers, Markham fronts a sort of movement towards focusing on ends rather than means. As she puts it, her purpose is to question the relationship between fieldwork and ethnography, and if one can do fieldwork that is not necessarily ethnography. Markham wants to change questions from how can we use Twitter or Blogs, to why should we observe or interview (Markham 2013). To push these
questions further she asks the title question “What would Malinowski do?” if he had access to the internet. One of her main ideas is looking at participant observation as participation and observation separately. She especially points out an issue I myself encountered during my Twitter case study, namely the danger of being flooded by data. Some of the examples she brings up, like several hours of footage or snapshots appear to me to be signs of how uncertain we are when approaching the study of new platforms. It is understandable. When you are first, how can you be certain of what is important or relevant?

I wonder if some of the firmly held ideas from anthropology simply hold no relevance when studying things such as games or avatar sites. How relevant are “everyday actions” on such platforms when they follow set patterns not created by the people moving them, but inherently through the coding of the programs? When recording almost all ones gameplay, as Markham suggests some have done, should we perhaps ask ourselves if we would film all our movements out in the field? As she puts it “... understanding culture has never been a matter of collecting everything and then analyzing it later” (Markham 2013). It might be that the more practical, and perhaps more rewarding way, would be to limit ones' field of study, perhaps even a sub section of a game rather than the whole thing. In terms of Twitter both Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick solved this issue differently. Marwick’s approach was more akin to a recognizable form of participant observation, where her initial contact with the informants was done face-to-face. Bonilla & Rosa relies more on Twitter in and of itself, and their issues are more similar to those described by Markham.

In relation to my issue regarding Okely and the close connection between fieldwork/participant observation and physical presence, Markham mentions how this has been attempted solved in relation to online studies. She also points out how just relying on saved data/information might mean we drown in too much information, while missing out on crucial cues that participation might provide. This is a point I very much agree with. While I question the need for physical closeness to validate participation, I do not question the value of participation in itself. From my own experience with studying Twitter during the American Election, there were frequently cases such as #NastyWoman. These events made little sense viewed solely on social media but had to be connected to debates or other happenings. What is perhaps most interesting, are her remarks about how anthropology has been done. As Markham points out, there was no single “correct way” of perform a fieldwork before. Her point regarding some people taking pictures, while others do not, resonates especially well
with me. Bonilla & Rosa, which I will return to in chapter 2, used a picture from #IfTheyGunnedMeDown. This picture, as I see it, explained the situation and the context far better than any description of what it showed\textsuperscript{12}. While not an argument for excessive data gathering, it serves as a reminder of how different data can serve similar purposes. When we accept that different approaches can yield equally interesting studies, I think that there is more room to understand the role of social media. Just as the picture added something to Bonilla & Rosa’s text, I did not miss pictures in Marwick’s. Similarly to “classic” fieldwork, not everything is required or necessary.

**Marcus and Candea – Geography and ethnography in the multi-sited debate**

Another debate that I think is relevant when considering new social media such as Twitter, and how to use the data it can provide, is the matter of both geographic boundaries and multi-sited fieldwork. Through social media we might see, as Bonilla and Rosa did, how groups may be rallied to causes across continental boundaries. I have chosen to briefly cover their different views, as the idea of multi-sited is something that, perhaps indirectly, reoccurs.

George E. Marcus and Matei Candea offer differing opinions on the matter of multi-sited fieldwork. Marcus argues the need for multi-sited ethnography in his article “Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography” (Marcus 1995). He writes that this is a practice that mainly springs out of what is considered postmodern ethnography (1995:96-97). One of Marcus’ points, which makes this debate especially interesting for my thesis, is how multi-sited has a strong connection to what he describes as interdisciplinary areas (1995:97). Two such areas he mentions are media studies and science and technology studies. This shift, as also described by Barnard, followed the “evolution” of anthropology during the 1970-1980s. When considering my own experiences, as well as those reflected in the writings of Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick, which I will elaborate on in later chapters, much of what Marcus writes fits. As a sort of byproduct of postmodern ethnographic thinking, the changing focus to following people, causes or whatever connects what one studies, is as he writes “at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research”

\textsuperscript{12} https://twitter.com/OGAtkin/status/498637765790019584
What I perhaps recognize in this statement and thought, is an idea that incorporates how I felt in regard to my own research on Twitter. As described earlier through the theories of the structuralists and the model fieldwork of Malinowski, there was always something I perceived as limited the room for incorporating newer social media. While I would, as I have touched upon, argue that much of this can be reconsidered if one thinks as Markham does, it is perhaps easier to understand in the setting of the post-modern ideas and multi-sited ethnography.

Candea offer an opposing view in “Arbitrary locations: In defence of the bounded field-site” (Candea 2007). Throughout his text, he brings up some issues he sees regarding multi-sited fieldwork, as opposed to what she would call bounded field-sites. One of Candea’s main arguments concerns how site is defined, or perhaps not defined, in the multi-sited process (2007:171-172). While he raises several interesting points, amongst others he is critical of how Marcus and others do not address certain problems (2007:174), I wish to simply highlight this one argument. He argues that the process of defining site is left to the subjects of study rather than the anthropologist. If considering Twitter, this is difficult to argue either way. A study such as John Postill’s, who followed political activists in Spain through social media and during physical protests (Postill 2011), would then yield a definition of site that indeed changed. This is a text I return to in the beginning of chapter 3 while, as I will argue for throughout the thesis, a connection between “real life” and social media interaction will almost always be present, Candea’s argument does not always have to apply to social media. A study such as Bonilla & Rosa’s (Bonilla & Rosa 2015) may exemplify this. As I discuss their text more thoroughly in the next chapter, I will just briefly outline the difficulty I see regarding Candea’s idea. As they focused on studying hashtags and Twitter activity related to a specific case, the site would simply be Twitter for some. For some, however, it was also connected to a physical place and physical action. As a topic that brought global attention, some would simply interact with it on the “site” of Twitter.

**Kozinets Netnography**

Robert V. Kozinets has attempted to introduce the discipline of netnography into more mainstream anthropology. His thoughts and ideas regarding netnography very much touches upon the points I raise in this thesis. His first publication touching on netnography was in
1998 though the text “On Netnography: Initial Reflections on Consumer Research Investigations of Cyberculture” (Kozinets 1998). This initial writing would not have held as much interest for my work, as he defines it in the abstract as “... a new qualitative method devised specifically to investigate the consumer behaviour of cultures and communities present on the Internet” (1998:1). The close connection here between marketing aspects and ethnography stems from his education as an anthropologist and professor of Marketing at York University. I find his newest publication on the matter of netnography, “Netnography: Redefined” (Kozinets 2015), an updated version of “Netnography from 2010”, to more closely relate to matters of anthropology and ethnography. As an example of what this new edition focuses on, he mentions that it will “engage with, describe and illustrate netnography that uses the different social media sites and forums, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and others;” (2015:14). It is therefore the 2015 version I will refer to in this thesis.

While this book is coloured by a marketing approach, it is supposed to primarily concerns and addresses ethnographical issues. I will in this chapter give a brief overview of some of his key ideas regarding anthropology and social media study. Later, in chapter 4, I will refer to his chapter on ethics from the same text.

Kozinets perhaps main argument is that the difference between online ethnography, as a collective title for virtual-, digital-, web-, or mobile ethnography, and face-to-face ethnography is so significant that it requires “a ‘new mapping of reality’” (2015:15). I agree that there are significant differences and aspects of ethnography regarding social media platforms that require perhaps new, or at least “tweaked” approaches to understand. His point of view is centred in netnography, something I would argue can be seen in his use of the example regarding how “…someone interested in mobile phone rituals in rural China would not also travel to rural China” (2015:103). This is, to me, in contrast to how Alice E. Marwick described the “in-person” fieldwork part of her doctoral (Marwick 2014:114), where the face-to-face aspect was a central component.

The platform of study for netnography was originally online community and online culture, as derived from more classical anthropological thinking (Kozinets 2015:18-19). However, he comments on how these concepts have been shaken up in anthropology, somewhat akin to the debate of multi-sited ethnography, which I will mention in the next chapter. He refers to the internet as always having been social, but questions the idea of communities and identity as

13 Has since 2016 worked at the University of Southern California
constant (2015:20-21). His comment on the internet as always social I read as going back to the idea of Web 2.0 as a socialization of the web. Kozinets describes how certain things, such as his national identity or being a Game of Thrones fan, are “... not constant, permanent, nor a central aspect of many of my social dealings...” (2015:21). This, he says, applies both in person as well as online. It was these very aspects of role and identity I originally planned to study in Scotland, as outlined earlier. To me, this is very close to what Goffman wrote on role and role management. Kozinets also talks about the interconnected relationship between humans and technology. Just as we affect it, so does it affect us (2015:37-39). As I will discuss this in chapter 4, I will not go deeply into it here. As a simple way to understand that the duality in the relationship between us and technology, Kozinets refers expression. The lack of ability or opportunity to recognize facial gestures and expressions were initially considered a great hinderance to communication online. But as we know today, and he points out, people found ways to express themselves through smileys or other ways to convey feelings (2015:40-42). In other words, the online social platforms provided limitations, but also opportunities, and in working with these, we developed new ways of expressing ourselves.

As I will later reiterate, I am critical to what I considered commercial undertones in the text. While, as I pointed out earlier, I have not had time to properly and fully read “Netnography: Redefined”, he in no way attempts to hide his ties to the commercial sides of research (2015:11, “About the Author”). I therefore do not mean to imply that he tries to trick us into taking a commercially advantageous approach. None the less, it is something to keep in mind if choosing to use Netnography as one’s approach.
Chapter 2: The opportunities

In this chapter I wish to consider how interesting opportunities for anthropology may arise in relation to Twitter. As something “new”, or at least different, I wish to examine what might draw us towards incorporating it into our studies. To start off I will question how data, collected through a newer social media (Twitter), compares to what we usually think of as ethnographical data. As a crucial problem for modern studies, Markham highlights the issue of data. More specifically she writes that one might be overwhelmed by too much data. This is something I myself encountered when trying to absorb as much as possible from Twitter regarding the election. As Markham points out, ethnography and fieldwork does not have to mean the same, and if we differentiate between the two, there is no reason why data from Twitter, games or other media platforms should not be usable in anthropology. Drawing upon the classical literature mentioned in chapter 1, as well as authors such as Erving Goffman, I will attempt to compare the key points identified in chapter one with Twitter studies. In this chapter, the primary focus will be beneficial aspects of Twitter. Just as anthropology may be used to understand and study aspects of Twitter, so can Twitter provide an interesting view of the anthropological approach. The findings in Bonilla & Rosa’s “#Ferguson” and Marwick’s “Ethnographic and Qualitative Research on Twitter”, as well as my own experiences, will be the primary sources of empirical/ethnographic data here. In looking at their texts, the ideas from the different authors in the previous chapter, can be understood and discussed in light of social media (Twitter). Burns & Stiegitz’s “Metrics for Understanding Communication on Twitter” differs as it does not deal with any directly ethnographic or empirical study of its own. I none the less think that it offers some valid arguments for how a more quantitative approach may also benefit us.

But before I start to discuss how this creates opportunities for anthropologists, I will refer to Devin Gaffney & Cornelius Puschmann’s “Data Collection on Twitter” (Gaffney & Puschmann 2014). The reason why I wish to start here is because their text offers a fairly deep insight into both Twitter data and data collection. Gaffney & Puschmann’s text is part of the collection of texts in “Twitter and Society” (2014). Several of the other texts seem to rely on an understanding of the technical aspects brought up in their text. For example, Bonilla & Rosa, Marwick, Burns & Stiegitz rely on their writing here, without properly explaining or referring to it. As the latter two are part of the same book, this is understandable, although I wish it could have been made clear within the individual texts. While a very technical start to this chapter, and perhaps a bit of a “heavy” read, I would argue that it’s important to highlight
also this aspect of Twitter study. Not only does it provide crucial information to fully grasp what it means when Marwick talks about going through 4000 tweets or refer to how someone went through over 1 million. It also gives a very real picture of the kind of “new” concepts we have to familiarize ourselves with when considering Twitter. While I have an interest in programming, this text none the less seemed very technical to me. Thinking back, however, I also found it very technical when learning the different anthropological approaches during my bachelor's degree. The main difference, was perhaps that much of what those anthropological theories built upon were themes, ideas of structures we could relate to. With the recent Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, which I return to especially in chapters 3 and 4, there may be room for public awareness regarding data and Terms of Service. Considering this and the rapid growth of social media’s popularity, I would argue that a genuine need for understanding at least part of these technical aspects will be advantageous. While it’s too late to get out ahead of the trend, there are no signs that social media is going away. Though some argue that the specific platforms will become outdated and replaced (Twitter, Facebook and so on), I cannot recall anyone believing social media itself will go away. Even my dad, who uses neither Facebook nor Twitter, has gained a basic understanding of how it works. In a time where even high-level world politics occur on Twitter, we are all forced to relate to social media.

**Gaffney & Puschmann “Data Collection on Twitter”**

As I mentioned earlier this is a very technical text, dealing with the actual workings of Twitter data, and how we access it. Devin Gaffney & Cornelius Puschmann’s text is split into two main parts, the first focusing on Application Programming Interface (API), and the second part describes some of the tools we can use to extract data from Twitter and API. While I have warned about the technical-heaviness of this text, I firmly believe it offers an important insight into how Twitter data collection is. As such, the technical aspect is an essential part. During my work with this text I came upon other sites who dealt with the request lines to the API directly. While an argument could be made for including more of this, to further clarify how it works, I choose not to delve into it. My reason for not doing so is partially because I must admit that I do not fully grasp it, but more importantly here is the fact that it is technical data which does not in itself add anything to my discussion. Should one, however, be a bit more interested, I wish to add one link. A brief, but deeper, explanation and understanding of
the requests themselves, as well as a breakdown of what each part of the request does, can be found at [https://www.ibm.com/developerworks/library/x-twitterREST/index.html](https://www.ibm.com/developerworks/library/x-twitterREST/index.html).

API is perhaps best understood as the way in which data is organized to be easily retrieved on online services such as Twitter. In short it defines and decides how we can communicate with, in this instance, the data available through Twitter. To explain API and Twitter, Gaffney & Puschmann start by dividing Twitter API into three different kinds, namely Streaming API, REST API and Search API (Gaffney & Puschmann 2014:56-60). Since the Search API is planned discontinued, I will not mention it further. As they explain it, the more common form of API would be a “pull” based system. Simply put, this could be understood as us pulling information from a server. The Streaming API, on the other hand, is what Gaffney and Puschmann would describe as a “push” based system. As we can understand from its name, the information is here streamed live (at least in the case of Twitter). They describe this stream of data as “… supplied in the fashion of a live polling system not designed for historical analysis…” (2014:56). An issue then is if one is reliant on live, “in-the-moment” data for ones’ study. As Gaffney and Puschmann write, events or trending hashtags can appear spontaneously, and the importance of them is difficult to immediately recognize (2014:56-57). In contrast to this, they point out the advantages of collecting data for a longer time, perhaps more akin to a fieldwork period, as user interaction fluctuates between both groups and individuals. Another interesting point they raise is how Twitter limits our access to the tweets through bandwidth, split into three “tiers”. Normal access, “spritzer”, grants 1% of all tweets posted, “gardenhose”, 10% – which may be granted to “… users with defensible and compelling reasons for increased access ”, and “firehose” 100% - reserved “for business relationships with Twitter or authorized re-sellers ” (2014:57-58). Gaffney & Puschmann argue that 1% should suffice for most smaller-sized research projects, and that the system also notifies you if you miss any data due to a cap. The main ways to access data with the Streaming API are through sample or filter (2014:58). Sample, as they explain it, is fairly straightforward; it gathers a sample between 1 and 10% of all tweets, randomly selected. Its value, academically speaking, derives from their claim that the data can be reproduced, as two samples from the same point in time would be identical (2014:58). Filter is a method that allows us to target more specific data. Through Tracking – search for and request only tweets with certain keywords, Follow – allowing us to track tweets from only certain users, up to as many as 5000 and Location – letting us access data to see where tweets originate from geographically (2014:58-59).
REST - short for Representational State Transfer, API is based on the pull system. As Gaffney & Puschmann present it, this system can be used to access background data, such as followers/who one follows and trending topics (2014:59). As with Streaming API, there are certain limitations from Twitter’s side, here in the form of how many requests can be made per hour. As far as I can read it, the current limitations are 180 requests per 15-minute window\textsuperscript{14}. While this may sound like little, considering the amount of people using Twitter, the numbers are a bit more complex. As Gaffney & Puschmann describe it, each request (of the 180) can return as much as 5000 IDs. In short, using a request to find the ID of a person’s followers can return up to 5000 followers in one request. (2014:59-60). As accounts must be authenticated and registered to make requests in the first place, Twitter further says that requests from different sites will all count towards the same limit\textsuperscript{15}.

In the last part of their text Gaffney & Puschmann refer to some of the different “tools” we can use to simplify interaction with the APIs. By tools here, they refer to different kinds of programs or sites available for collecting the Twitter data using API’s. I will here briefly reiterate the six they mention. As it is something I wish to discuss later, I have to note that several of the tools they mention as of today no longer work. While some are simply gone, most seem to have been merged or incorporated in one major site/resource central.\textsuperscript{16}

The Archivist (TA) and Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet (TAGS) were either programs or scripts the researcher had to actively use to gather data (Gaffney & Puschmann 2014:61-62). TA, which relied on the Search API, seems to have been discontinued, perhaps because of the Search API being stopped. TAGS, however, relies on the REST API and is still available. The main difference between these two was that with TA you had to run the program actively through installed software on a computer. Running through the Search API also meant it was subject to the limitations of that API as well. While TA isn’t available anymore, they argue against using similar programs. As a “locally” run program, from the researcher’s pc, it was susceptible to disconnects, latency or something going wrong with the specific pc (2014:61-62). Furthermore, they say it could not offer reliable samples unless manually verified. TAGS, on the other hand, was cloud based and run through Google

\textsuperscript{16} https://developer.twitter.com/
Spreadsheets. Being a hosted service, in other words not having to be ran through software on a pc, and not having to be hosted on the researcher’s pc, gave it some advantages over TA. As TA was limited in part by the Search API, so TAGS is hindered by the REST API’s previously mentioned limitations. Gaffney & Puschmann say that both were able to run “statistical operations on the extracted data”, as such providing a degree of analysis (2014:62). What differentiated these two from the others were the fact that they had to be actively ran to gather data.

Another tool that is out of date, like TA, is yourTwapperKepper (YTK). As they describe it as “one of the most popular tools available to researchers wanting to simplify the process of extracting data” (Gaffney & Puschmann 2014:62) this is rather depressing. It took advantage of both Streaming and Search API, although the researcher had to run some scripts. The downsides were that it, unlike TA and TAGS, did not provide as much metadata, and did not perform analysis. As it is no longer a viable option, I will not delve further into the technicalities of it. Its reason for being outdated can be found on the website in the “Read me” section. As I understand it, it broke a part of the Twitter Terms Of Service (TOS) around 2013, and has not been updated since then17. Described as similar to YTK, Twitter Database Server also appear to be fairly outdated, as nothing has been posted on its site since 2014. Equally, the next example of 140kit has not been updated since 2010, and the site itself seems to be closed18. Looking through these seemingly all discontinued tools were a bit of a let-down.

Their two final examples, however, lead to some interesting finds. GNIP and DATASIF were both premium services, meaning you had to pay them for the service. This is also one of the issues regarding it, as the cost Gaffney & Puschmann mention ranged from 3.000 USD to 30.000 USD a month. GNIP now seems to have been integrated in a larger toolset, under developers.twitter.com19, but still retaining a premium approach. While they offer some free solutions and basic tools, you can also apply for “enterprise access”, which I mention as one of the categories you can select here is “Academic Research”. DATASIF still maintain their own site where you can buy data20. Their firehose access to Twitter data was obtained through a “trade-in” of the Retweet button, which they invented. As one of the problems with these

17 https://github.com/540co/yourTwapperKeeper
20 https://datasift.com/
services was their focus on businesses, I cannot say how much has changed. The addition of Academic Research to the list of services you can apply for would indicate that it has perhaps changed.

To conclude their text, Gaffney and Puschmann consider the relationship between quantitative and qualitative. As they see it, quantitative will always be a part of qualitative studies on social media, as any limitations must be made through filtering, searching and so on (2014:64). None the less, they stress the point that “quantitative research should present data as it pertains to the question asked, rather than simply because it is possible and large volumes of data have been collected.” (2014:64). They also highlight the issue of representation. As Gaffney & Puschmann put it, the differences in adoption rate – how quickly/who “adopts” and uses the media, and usage strategies – how and for what purpose different people use it, makes it hard to generalize. They also fear that what is commonly referred to as the “vocal minority” will obscure data, as they are far easier to track and notice than the “silent majority”. This may be somewhat combatable through the launch of Twitter analytics from 2014, which allows users to track followers, how many people you reach with your tweets and so on. None the less, these questions of representation are something I will return to in chapter 3 and 4.

**Burns & Stieglitz and Metrics for Understanding Communication on Twitter**

Continuing with the more technical aspect from “Twitter and Society”, albeit more practically oriented, is Axel Burns and Stefan Stieglitz’s text “Understanding Communication on Twitter”. Their text differs from Gaffney & Puschmann, as they focused more on the gathering itself. Burns & Stieglitz’s focus more on the metrics, and how this data can be understood and used. I would also like to mention the difference between this text and those of Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick, which are also part of this chapter especially. While Burns & Stieglitz also focus on Twitter, their interest and approach is one based more on the statistical (metric) sides. Through looking at data available through Twitter API (Application Programming Interface) they hope to find recognizable patterns or “...provide a framework for quantitative analysis on Twitter communication...” to enable researchers to “... adapt
methodological approaches and to conduct analyses on their own” (Burns & Stieglitz 2014:69). It has been a concern of mine, as well as Bonilla & Rosa and Markham, that we might be flooded with data through Twitter. Burns & Stieglitz hope that showing how metrics of Twitter data, viewed through analysis of different datasets, are required for “... a deeper understanding of the communicative phenomena which they describe” (2014:70). In short, while Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick are describing a study they did, and use that as a starting point, Burns & Stieglitz consider a more theoretical framework. Still, for the purpose of this thesis, their approach is more practical than that of Gaffney & Puschmann for the discussion. As mentioned, Burns & Stieglitz’s text is a natural step moving forward with what Gaffney & Puschmann outlined. Metrics, as Burns & Stieglitz use them, are an active use of the data collected through the APIs in order to gain insight in certain patterns or identify behaviour that reoccurs (2014:69-71). To further explain and explore this they organize the metrics into certain sub categories. They do however emphasize that other metrics they have not mentioned, or accounted for, may be developed as others conduct their own studies. It is emphasised that others should document and share their findings, so it may all become part of “... the wider toolkit of conceptual models and practical methods which is available to social media research” (2014:70).

Moving on to more practical thinking, through describing different ways of using metrics, Burns & Stieglitz start with basic metrics. The idea here is to use key data from tweets, such as sender, recipient(s), timestamp, tweet type, hashtag(s) and URLs (2014:71). Through looking at this data, they argue that they can find metrics that allow us to identify communicative patterns. It can be used to examine a set time period, an individual user that participates or “...larger groups of users which have been identified on the basis of specific criteria” (2014:71). Temporal metrics relate to phenomena or trends as they occur. Tracking keywords or hashtags will in this way show increases or decreases in user activity. Going deeper into the data, however, will allow us to track original tweets, @replies, retweets or URLs and hashtags (2014:71). When considering these datapoints in relation to specific users, Burns & Stieglitz refer to this as user metrics. By considering active users with the number of tweets tweeted, we may distinguish between heated debates/increase in activity amongst users, and a pure increase in active participants. Speaking somewhat to Gaffney & Puschmann’s end concerns, Burns & Stieglitz explanation of the possible things we can see through user metrics, address both user activity and usage strategy. Their understanding of users’ different approaches is something I understand as a more practical way of considering
usage strategy. As they see it, three main approaches exist, annunciative – original tweets, conversational - @tweets, and disseminative – retweets (2014:73). Broadening this to also include the “balance” between these three may, as they argue, provide an image of the person’s role in the communication. As they describe it, a person receiving many @mentions, but seldom @reply, can be considered subjects of conversation, as opposed to subjects within conversation (those who do @reply). If trying to consider Trump here, however, I find it difficult to place him. While he seldom replies to individuals and can easily be considered a subject of conversation, he also tweets general answers that make him a more active subject within conversation. Being the president of the United States is, of course, a very special position, where it is natural for him to be the subject of many conversations. His approach of sometimes addressing the conversations through Twitter is what makes him special.

When trying to assess Twitter in an anthropological context, I originally found myself constantly thinking: “How can this or that problem be solved?” However, as I kept reading and thinking about this, my mind-set changed more towards: “Aren’t there just as good, or perhaps even better, solutions to these anthropological issues on Twitter?” Twitter allows us an opportunity to follow new emerging trends, as seen through the Temporal metric approach, in a way I would argue is near impossible without social media. We can compile and draw the essence out of data as the events unfold and we are alerted to them nearly as quickly as anyone else in the world. To exemplify this, we could consider the emergence of #MuslimsReportStuff. While I personally do not like “what if we didn’t…” trains of thought, I will use one here. If we did not have Twitter, when would I be made aware that there was an outrage towards this one statement? At best I assume I might get an inkling in the paper the next day. Twitter allowed me, just like the new agencies, to pick up on it almost instantly. While sites like CNN21 and Huffington Post22 picked up on it the same day, they did so by noticing the trend on Twitter. This does, however, also risk putting a requirement or obligation in the mind of the researcher. In trying to always be up to date on trends, as through temporal metrics, we may approach the hoarding of data outlined by Markham.

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22 https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/muslimsreportstuff-trump-debate_us_57fba1b4e4b068ecb5e03aac
Bonilla & Rosa #Ferguson

Now that the technical aspect has been, at least attempted, covered, I wish to move away from it, and more towards looking at actual applications of Twitter in anthropology. I will start with #Ferguson, as it revolves around an anthropological study with Twitter, and offers more practical understanding of the technical aspects. In their article, #Ferguson, Yarimar Bonilla & Jonathan Rosa describe how they followed the development of social movements following the Ferguson incident in America. Their focus was looking at hashtags (#), the posts related to these and the surrounding coverage. The #Ferguson case became one of the more prominent amongst police in USA shooting and killing unarmed African American teenagers. #Ferguson refers to the hashtag that was used to relate to this specific case, as the town where it happened was Ferguson, Missouri. Re-affirming the importance of Twitter as a social media many use, Bonilla & Rosa refer to how #Ferguson was used over 8 million times in just a month (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:4-5). The point of the article, as they describe it, is to highlight both the importance, but also the issues regarding what they call “hashtag ethnography”. As they describe it, hashtags are not only used to place or file comments, but also frame what the comment is about (2015:5). Their first point of discussion is rather close to one I raised earlier, namely “Can hashtags become a field site?” (2015:5-7). Bonilla & Rosa discuss how the #Ferguson tweets had to be seen apart from the actual town of Ferguson. They describe how the hashtag #Ferguson initially provided information and updates relevant to what had happened there, but it also became a way for people to “... frame what these comments “were really about”...” (2015:5). Showing how tweets with #Ferguson could be used, not only by supporters of the police and supporters of the victims, but also by people forwarding own agendas or simply following the trends, Bonilla & Rosa warn that we must consider “... variety of uses... for any given hashtag as well as the stance and perspectives associated with any given use” (2015:5-6). But as they point out, hashtags are not primarily for researchers to categorize and find data. Just as we can use it to isolate what we are interested in, the people we might study also use them similarly. It is therefore important to consider its distorting effect (2015:6). They point out how social media “... create a distorted view of events, such that we only get the perspective of people who are already in our social network” (2015:6). In other words, if the majority of tweets or posts you see come from people you know or friended, most of them will probably share your views. This is very close to the idea of echo-chambers, which I will discuss in the next chapter.
It is here, in combination with factors such as questioning who uses Twitter and how they use Twitter, that Bonilla & Rosa consider Twitter more complex and problematic. To highlight an issue such as representation, they point out the complexity of something as simple as the fact that 8 million tweets had #Ferguson in them. While the number is substantial regardless, what does it actually tell us if we don’t know how many were against the police or against the protesters. Equally, how many were posted by journalists, and how many by private persons? As they say, “Beyond knowing that people tweeted, we know little about what those tweets meant to their authors and imagined publics” (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:6). This presents itself as a challenge – and representation is a theme I return to and discuss in chapters 3 and 4, as this is not the focus of this chapter.

Tying Bonilla & Rosa into the discussion of this thesis, I will try to see their writing in light of what they describe and what I experienced from my case study of the Election. In my case study of the Election, their description of hashtags proved very fitting. Seemingly everyday events were given political meaning by having hashtags like #StrongerTogether (Hillary Clintons slogan) or #MakeAmericaGreatAgain (Trumps slogan). Furthermore, they refer to John Postill and Sarah Pink (2012), who present a look at changing “…the methodological emphasis from models of network and community to a focus on routines, mobility and socialities” (Postill & Pink 2012:124). As such, Bonilla and Rosa, with their focus on especially racial issues, argue that Twitter, as a social media platform, allows for “collectively constructing counternarratives and reimagining group identities” (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:6).

Considering this into the discussion, I would like to mention #MuslimsReportStuff, again. This was a response to a statement by Trump in the second debate, where he encouraged Muslims to report “when they see something going on” (Presidential debate 9th October 2016). Considering the way this hashtag was used, I got the impression that it showed how Muslims in USA felt they needed to show that they did not identify with the values or picture that this statement created. While it started with tweets regarding Trump during the debate itself, and some tweets were directly commenting on the political discussion, many were of a different nature. An easy way to see this is by looking at the tweets under the hashtag, where people report their family members for “drinking suspicious amounts of juice” or “seeing strange clouds”. In short, what they reported was not what Trump wanted reported. The image he created of them did not resonate with how they viewed themselves. While it was on one level very much in line with how discussions or debates were during the Election, it still stood out to me. As became perhaps the primary way for Trumps opponents to deal with him, it
tried to ridicule something he said, but rather than adding to a point-and-laugh culture, this hashtag became more about humour and trying to show how ridiculous it was to ask such a thing of people. Other examples would be #NoAngel (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:9) and #NastyWoman/#IAmANastyWomanBecause (after Trump called Hillary a nasty woman October 19th 2016).

As Bonilla & Rosa’s #Ferguson was used to give context to tweets, so was #MuslimsReportStuff and #NastyWoman. Though connected to the debates and Election, just as #Ferguson tweets originally were connected to the incident there, I believe that these hashtags may give reason to, as Bonilla & Rosa argue, consider Twitter as a field. They exemplify not only how social movements, groups or trends may occur here, but also how these are connected to our “face-to-face” reality and interactions. Their value not only as API data or metrics, but directly as ethnographic data emerges through the underlying meaning behind the numbers and raw data. Just as we must work through field notes, so does this data require work. As mentioned, Bonilla & Rosa highlighted how tweets for and against something may have the same hashtags, and #NastyWoman is a good example of this. While it largely encompassed Tweets of woman or others supporting Hillary, there were also Tweets in favour of branding her as a nasty woman. It is also in this space, or at this use of hashtags where I find an argument against the thought that online spaces are so called “eco chambers”. By eco chambers I refer to the idea that we create a space where everything affirms our own opinions, rather than provide us balanced news of views. As such, hashtags that gather people with different opinions can act as opposed to this. The idea of eco chambers is none the less a valid concern, which I will address further in chapter 3.

Another point which Bonilla and Rosa raise, which I attempted to learn from (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:6-7) was their description of how looking at one single hashtag (#) would mean you miss out on many relevant tweets that were not marked with that specific hashtag. As they suggest (2015:7), I tried to stay with the candidates Hillary and Trump. I also attempted to identify other individuals who tweeted a lot during and about the election. While this did provide some issues, which I will get back to in Chapter 3, it was undeniably an easy way to gain access to data and informants/subjects. Furthermore, I too constantly experienced how the data and information I got through following these individuals or the hashtags were very reliant on surrounding context. As Bonilla & Rosa describe it, many hashtags surrounding the Ferguson case where used in response to current events. Under the headline “Hashtag
activism versus “real” activism” (2015:8) they question the difference between these two ideas. Hashtag activism has previously been used to criticise how people do simple things, like changing their profile picture, to show support for a cause. The worry I had regarding this was that it gave people an easy way to feel better about showing support for something, without really having to relate to the issue. Bonilla and Rosa, however, argue how this can be seen as a way of validating others effort. It allows people to show support for an issue they are too far from to physically interact or affect. Another example of the power of Twitter and social media to organize and engage people was seen after the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting earlier this year. Here we saw how student protests in the US were also supported by similar protests in countries such as Norway, Germany and Australia to mention some. Not only does this exemplify the power of social media, but the power of social media users. While it is easy to attribute this to the power of the platform, we must not forget that people were behind the organizing.

As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, I have chosen to focus on the opportunities in this part of the thesis. However, what by Bonilla & Rosa wrote in their introduction to #Ferguson, also emphasizes that there are clearly some problematic aspects as well. Two problems, or challenges, which arise here are the issue of misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Questioning the validity of the data, how well we can portray the informants and the ethics in these kinds of studies are all themes they touched upon. In chapters 3 and 4 I will continue to address also these issues in relation to anthropology.

**Marwick “Ethnographic and Qualitative Research on Twitter”**

Alice E. Marwick’s text, while also focused around preformed ethnographic work, has a slightly different approach than Bonilla and Rosa. It too, is a part of the book “Twitter and Society”. In her text Marwick describes her doctorate study, which embodied some of the ideas I had hoped to use in my Scotland fieldwork. As mentioned earlier, I had hoped to perform a fieldwork where I could follow informants both in face-to-face interactions, but also on Twitter and other social media. Her description of how the face-to-face information could either fit or diverge from the view one gathered from Twitter data (Marwick 2014:114-23)

115), was ideally what I had wished to look for. Under “Digital or virtual ethnography” she describes the issue of thinking space/place when faced with Twitter (2014:115-116). Twitter, as she describes it, differs from other online arenas in that it is harder to define a bound area or persons of study. In the introduction to her text, Marwick warns about the dangers of generalising based on hashtags or other data points. She starts by examining the importance of the interview. At the time of her study, the 140-character limit also applied to Direct Messages (DMs), but this was removed in 2015. As she had to adapt to that limit, Marwick suggests normal interviews or using phones or Skype (2014:110).

When interviewing on Twitter, she suggests either asking one’s followers or using the @ function to ask specific individuals, considering this both quick, easy and free. The issues that arise regarding this, is both the matter of people not replying – interpreting an @ message may as a marketing survey, as well as the “…convenience sample made up of one’s own followers…” (Marwick 2014:111). The latter part then going back to what Bonilla & Rosa also commented on. Considering this, she labels “question and answer” tweets as “a very short survey”. Marwick then explains how she used, or attempted to use, Twitter interviews as part of two separate studies. In the first study (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a) they looked at context collapse and the merging of different acquaintances or social groups into “friend” and “follower”. Through the use of a research account – a Twitter account created solely for research purposes, she attempted to contact a wide range, from the top followed to her own followers. By doing so, they found that people with a few hundred followers were just as careful regarding their tweets as those with thousands (Marwick 2014:111-112). The second study tried to understand teenagers use of Twitter. After sampling part of 400.000 tweets she attempted to contact 300 users, and got a single reply that did not help. Based on this she concludes that teenagers are less likely to @reply strangers than “highly followed adult accounts” (2014:112). She also criticizes herself for letting too much time pass from data collection to attempted contact, perhaps akin to Kozinets critic of scholars who “…seek cultural and communal consistency” (Kozinets 2015:9). This goes back to the ideas of temporal that Burns & Stieglitz mentioned. This experience of feeling like you are too late was something I felt during my Scotland fieldwork. As mentioned I arrived after the independence referendum had been resolved, and got the feeling that many people did not

wish to discuss the subject at that time. Her conclusion on the matter is that Twitter interviews best serve as a supplement, or at least should not target specific Twitter users.

Interviews about Twitter are to her different from those attempted done on Twitter. The methods she mentions are long-form in-person, email, phone, or Skype interviews. With the removal of the 140-signs block on DMs, the argument for email over Twitter DMs is perhaps outdated. Marwick highlights the importance of such interviews by referring to Kwak, Chun and Moons “Fragile Online Relationship: A first look at unfollow dynamics in Twitter” (Kwak, Chun & Moon 2011). Combining 22 interviews with data from 1,2 million Twitter users in Korea over 51 days, they studied what leads to the decision to unfollow someone. While I will not delve into this study, they highlight the importance of reciprocity in the relationships as well as its duration. The importance of reciprocity was something their quantitative findings did not reveal, but rather emerged from the interviews. A downside is that if one does not, as Kwak, Chun and Moon did, somehow limit one’s interview subjects geographically, the process of conducting the interviews is hard. Another point Marwick brings up is the fact that those who speak to you are only those willing to talk to researchers (Marwick 2014:113). She also comments on how she feigned ignorance to get an understanding of how the users (of Twitter) understand the technology, which revealed “implicit norms and social practices” (2014:114).

Marwick also directly comment on the use of hashtags for data collection, considering it alone inadequate due to underrepresentation and a lack of proper communities (Weller et al. 2014:116), an idea that fits what Bonilla and Rosa wrote. Focusing on qualitative research, Marwick goes on to explain briefly how programs or coding is used to collect what one assumes is relevant data (2014:117-118). Another approach she mentions is close reading, where “texts are read paying rigorous attention to individual words, syntax, and diction” (2014:118), or critical discourse analysis, referring to Norman Fairclough definition that “language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language” (Fairclough 2003:2). These methods can be realized, she writes, by focusing on tweets to or from one specific user, tweets with a specific hashtag and so on (Marwick 2014:118).

In line with this chapter’s theme, I would argue that this is also a positive. As an anthropology student I have numerous times been told to be open for the unexpected and that the data
gathered in the field could change the focus of a thesis. In having access to such an open platform, where data can so readily be gathered and recorded, I would argue that we can see informants we otherwise would overlook, because they might not fit the idea of the ones participating in our thought field. While this may indeed seem more akin to a quantitative and statistical approach, I would argue that in the right context this may be a tool for qualitative work. If one were to use the tools provided by Matthew Russell in “Mining The Social Web, 2nd Edition” (Russell 2013), it is clear that the base of data collected through his codes will primarily be quantitative data of perhaps less interest and value for an anthropologist. However, by using the data collected in such a way as a steppingstone, I think that there is potential to move towards something more akin to Marwick or Kozinets Netnography.

**Classical fieldwork data and Twitter data**

When considering what both Bonilla and Rosa and Marwick wrote, Markham’s concern over data is clearly shared by others. Reading Bonilla and Rosa, and thinking back upon my own work, I agree that one must be especially aware of what the focus of a study through social media is. In my work I used Erving Goffman’s “The presentation of self in everyday life” (1959) as a basis for what kind of data I wanted to find. By focusing primarily on Hillary and Trumps Twitter accounts through the election period, I wanted to see how it was used to manage the different images/roles they had. This was somewhat close to what Marwick described. As different scandals were a central part of this election, especially the harassment accusations against Trump and the matter of Hillary’s emails, these became one of my main sources for information. It is also clear to me, as both articles agree upon, that most settings where one used data from social media, physical observation or presence and the more classic fieldwork data will often be required to gain a deeper insight. As Bonilla and Rosa pointed out, the simple fact that more African Americans use Twitter than white Americans, should be considered, especially when viewing racial issues.

This can again be linked to the issues raised by Okely in her chapter on “Fieldwork Embodied” (Okely 2012). As she writes, both gender, ethnicity and history all affect our access and inclusion in our fields of study. The fact that such things are still relevant on

Platforms such as Twitter, might on one hand seem a bit discouraging, as it perhaps highlights the limitations of even these medias. Rather than viewing it as such, I would suggest a more positive approach. It offers us, as anthropologists, something known and understandable to work with. While there are closed and hidden groups one would perhaps not get an insight into, we stand free to study numerous groups, threads, #’s, retweets and so on, unhampered by our gender, sexuality or ethnicity. While the limitations of what we are given readily access to is governed partially by the companies (Twitter, Google, Facebook), it is none the less open for an anthropologist to find what he or she seeks.

A “sunshine story” I wish to mention here, as a pro-Twitter example, would be my mother’s ongoing collaboration with an English artist she met through Twitter. My mother, being an artist herself, started using Twitter in 2013. Their friendship and work together sprung out from a mutual respect of each other’s opinions, and an understanding of the other as skilled. For them, having regular talks via Skype is an important part of their friendship and work. When asked, my mother simply replied that “For our generation, seeing one another is a natural thing”. Even more interesting, perhaps, is the fact that this relationship, started on Twitter, has led to several trips and face-to-face meetings. This, perhaps, shows an opportunity for how one may create stronger connections. While I have seldom used Skype to talk to my “online friends”, the changing of a profile picture to an actual picture of myself did help create a stronger relationship with some people. Another difference that says perhaps more about our relation to social media not based on age or generation, but where we are in life, is how we relate to the use of social media. While my own use of social media primarily revolves around connecting and staying connected to people (at least I think so myself), my mother’s use is of a more practical nature. For her, as well as other artists, the use of Twitter or Instagram is more related to both reaching an audience as well as other artists. This might seem to emerge as a problem which anthropology has to deal with.

I would, however, argue that the methods and ways of processing the data, both through scripts and programs, the use of metrics and simply contacting people, may largely “neutralize” this issue. We are also not unfamiliar with phenomena being understood or interpreted differently by different generations. A study that further considers this in relation to “new media” is Mirca Madianou and Daniel Millers “Migration and New Media – Transnational Families and Polymedia” (Madianou & Miller 2012). They show how mothers from the Philippines keep in contact with family, especially their children, while they travel.
abroad to work. To exemplify the difference in generational understanding, they show how this sometimes does not work as a substitute for “being there” (2012:88). In the example they highlight, the parent attempts to keep in touch with the children through calling, while the children end up viewing this more as an annoyance. These situations are, of course, more complex than something that can be explained through simple difference in generational understanding of media. As Madianou & Miller prove how a book can be written about this subject alone, I will go further into this here, but I wished to highlight also this aspect of (social) media usage.

But while both articles raise questions regarding the validity of Twitter data alone, Marwick’s writing on close reading and critical discourse analysis proves, in my opinion, that good, qualitative data can be collected for anthropological use perhaps solely through Twitter. Based on how Marwick and Bonilla and Rosa exemplify the use of Twitter data, and going back to Markham, I would argue that there is room for using Twitter data to answer basic anthropological questions. As commented by Markham, some of this might be lingering stigma and ideas from others on what creates or defines proper research data, or perhaps it is the idea of the perfect field site. While I would tend to agree that the best solution would be to either supplement a study with Twitter data, or perhaps even better, supplement a Twitter study with “classic” ethnography. It is obvious to me, that Twitter and other social media provide such a vast amount of open, almost free data. Using the texts above and supplementing some of my own experiences, I’ve tried to give a picture of how anthropologist view or can view Twitter and Twitter data. It is here important to remember my initial point, namely that this is not something driven by choice, but as I argue, rather by need. Social media has arrived, and even though the platforms themselves might change (Facebook, Twitter), the concept “social media” is going nowhere. Texts such as Postill & Pink, which I refer to in chapter 4, are in my opinion too focused on problematizing how we should relate to Twitter or social media. While chapter 3 considers many of the same concerns they have, I have here chosen to highlight a more positive approach. In my, albeit brief experience, social media study is not incorporated in anthropology at a base level which I would argue it should be. When it affects elections, social matters, lets us show empathy or sympathy across the planet, should we not teach ourselves the tools to understand them, rather than argue its flaws? The growing use of social media alone should intrigue us enough to perhaps teach or learn coding and API use, as part of fieldwork theory.
**Chapter 3 – The Challenges**

In chapter 2 I used the benefits or opportunities through Twitter, viewed anthropologically, as the basis for the discussion. While there are clearly some advantages or elements with Twitter that can provide positive opportunities for anthropology, there are also certain problematic or difficult aspects with such use. In this chapter I will discuss some of the challenges I encountered, as well as those mentioned in several of the previous texts. I will here try to not only identify these challenges, but also consider what implications they have for anthropology. While this chapter is not, like the previous two, divided by authors, I will none the less start with referring to one text. As such I will only introduce this one new text, “Social Media Ethnography: The Digital Researcher in a Messy Web” by John Postill & Sarah Pink (Postill & Pink 2012). My reason for including this text here, is that I view it as a somewhat issue or problem-oriented text. The essence and arguments used in their text will be carried over into the other sub-chapters. These sub-chapters are organized by theme or subject.

**Postill & Pink “Social Media Ethnography: The Digital Researcher in a Messy Web”**

John Postill & Sarah Pink’s text mainly discuss some ideas they had regarding digital research in light of a fieldwork performed by Postill. Postill’s fieldwork, which they refer to as “forthcoming” has since been published (Postill 2014). As I am primarily interested in the argumentation presented by Postill & Pink in this (the 2012) text, I have briefly referred to Postill’s writing per a 2013 version. This is due to this 2013 version being the closest I could find to the publishing of this text, and such the most relevant for their comments here.

Postill’s forthcoming text was a study he did of the 15M movement in Spain. This was a political movement that demonstrated under the slogan “Real Democracy Now” (Postill 2013:1-2), starting May the 15\textsuperscript{th} 2011. As their protests and organization was largely reliant on social media such as Twitter, I find their discussion highly relevant. A primary argument of Postill & Pink is how the online interactions, as Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick also showed, were linked to none-online events (Postill & Pink 2012:125). Mentioning Kozinets (though referring to his 2010, non-redefined netnography) they propose a change from analysing online communities, to look at digital socialities. As they explain it:
A plural concept of sociality that allows us to focus on the qualities of relatedness in online and offline relationships offers a better way of understanding how social media practices are implicated in the constitution of social groups, and the practices they engage in together - Postill & Pink (2012:133)

Through their focus on ethnographic place and how social media practice creates places (2012:127-128) reminds me of the multi-sited debate. This reference is further strengthened when considering Pink’s argument for ethnographic places as “… not bound localities… but collections of things that become intertwined” (Pink 2009). Also, the description of how Postill followed links as well as his informants, through their use of multiple different social media platforms (2012:132), further underlines this. They argue that the interconnectedness of the different social platforms is too important for it to be possible to conduct a study using only one. Another point they stress is the connection between online and offline. As previously mentioned, there are indeed many events online that cannot be understood without knowledge of physical events. The similarity between the kind of people or groups Postill studied and those in Bonilla & Rosa’s #Ferguson, should here be noted. Through Postill’s fieldwork with the Spanish activists, Postill & Pink highlight the importance of the online-offline relationship. Just like Bonilla & Rosa, he shows how communication and activity online could govern offline activity, and vice versa. Postill’s participation in the protest march with the 15M movement, and how this event affected the social media landscape (2012:131), reminds me of how debates or comments affected Twitter in my own study. Somewhat contrary to what Marwick did, and perhaps wisely so, Postill & Pink stress the importance of interaction with research participants (2012:129-130). This, as they say, can occur both as strong ties to key research participants, but also “weak ties” to a broader spectrum through simple retweets.

Interestingly, I also find several arguments that can be linked to Okely. Postill & Pink refer to the physical strain of clicking every day (2012:128) due to Postill’s work. This goes back to Okely, as it shows how even preforming digital anthropology may yield bodily experience. As they present it, I understand this as something they consider an argument against the idea of social media study separated from physical study. Not because it argues for a physical movement, but rather shows that there is a physical aspect to the online component of the study. Interestingly, they also have an example of the online situation adapting to the lack of the physical. Referring to earlier work done by Postill, they say that avatars and emoticons
“...compensate for the reduced bodily cues of online communication” (Postill 2011:106). I wish to briefly mention Caroline Humphrey here in relation to this idea. In her text “The Mask and the Face: Imagination and Social Life in Russian Chat Rooms and Beyond” (Humphrey 2009) she writes that an avatar (our profile picture/photo) was explained to her as: “The avatar is not designed to demonstrate the person’s face. It should convey the inner state of the person, his soul, one might say, or the condition of his soul” (2009:40-41). As a comment, the use of emoticons to convey meaning that is otherwise hard to communicate, should be familiar to most of us. I usually use irony or sarcasm as one of the easiest ways to exemplify this. Even people I have known for several years can have a hard time picking up on sarcasm through purely written words. Another effect that touches upon the same theme is how they explain hashtags. Rather than thinking of them purely as expressions or organizational tools, Postill & Pink refer to it as something that “...produces the experience of being ‘in the digital crowd’” (2012:131). Through their text, they arrive at the conclusion that authors such as Markham touched upon something essential. They end by suggesting a move from thinking community on social media, to thinking sociality and movement (2012:132).

Before finishing this subchapter on Postill & Pink I wish to comment on the matter of Postill’s approach to data sorting and bookmarking. In describing Postill’s way of collecting and sorting data, they mention the bookmarking site delicious.com, Dropbox and Google Docs (2012:130). The link they provide do delicious does not appear to work (as of March 2018)26, however searching Postill’s online profiles provided a different link27.

Data – a flood of data or a stream of information

In the previous chapter I highlighted what I consider to be positive aspects with Twitter either anthropologically, or for anthropology. While I in chapter 2 considered how we could apply programs and systems to process data for us, I would here like to consider a downside to this. If we do not interact in any way or actively have a relationship to the data we collect, are we not simply historians? If all we do is point at vast data collected, and say we can see this or that, is it anthropology? Do we, as Markham means, miss out on crucial aspects?

26 http://www.delicious.com/tags/jpostill
27 https://del.icio.us/jpostill
It is here, then, that I will start with my first theme for this chapter, namely data. How we select our data, how we find what is relevant or irrelevant are all aspects of data we must consider. As an issue raised by most of the authors I have referred to, it’s clearly a key component to social media and anthropology. A crucial problem for these modern studies, Markham highlighted the issue of data. Her example of how some people seem to amass unnecessarily large amounts of data, as well as the removal of Postill’s used site, are only two of the issues. What Markham described was something I myself encountered when trying to absorb as much as possible from Twitter, regarding the election. I attempted to learn from what Bonilla and Rosa write in #Ferguson (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:6-7). They describe how looking at one single hashtag(#) would mean you miss out on many relevant tweets that were not marked with that specific hashtag. As they suggest (2015:7) I tried to stay with the candidates, Hillary and Trump, but also other individuals who tweeted a lot during and about the election. As such, they were to be my “key research participants” as Postill & Pink put it. This was an easy way to access data, but a question I wish to attempt to cover here is what kind of data this was. Was it the same as the data Okely mentions, gained through experiencing and participating? Was it the kind Malinowski got access to through his fieldwork, based on the classical idea of fieldwork that he “invented” the standard for? As Markham pointed out, ethnography and fieldwork does not have to mean the same, and if we differentiate between the two, there is no reason why data from Twitter, games or other media platforms should not be usable in anthropology. Most of these issues were discussed in #Ferguson, where Bonilla & Rosa argue that while hashtags can be a field;

_However, recognizing that hashtags can only ever offer a limited, partial, and filtered view of a social world does not require abandoning them as sites of analysis. Rather, we must approach them as what they are: entry points into larger and more complex worlds -Bonilla & Rosa (2015:7)_

In short, while their study primarily revolved around Twitter and hashtags, they had to see it in relation to happenings related to the hashtags. The hashtag alone gives too little context and, as they go on to say, will often be used to simply make your posts go “trending” or be noticed because of the hashtag. It is perhaps here we should apply the algorithms I mentioned in chapter 2. I agree that Twitter data can and should be considered as useful for anthropology. This is backed up by both more technical and methodical writings, such as Gaffney & Puschmann and Burns & Stieglitz, as well as specific use in studies by Bonilla &
Rosa, Marwick and Postill & Pink. However, I get the sense that they are all very careful with emphasizing how it can be used to view or find certain things. As I read them, none of them would argue that Twitter data on its own is sufficient. Postill & Pink are perhaps most adamant on this point. Considering the issues they outline, as well as my own experience, I can but agree that “pure” data from Twitter, even seen through filtering and metrics, are in themselves not enough. But I do not consider this as an argument against Twitter as a field, and neither does Postill & Pink. Where I differ from them, is not on the matter of pure Twitter data, but in relation to a focused study on Twitter. While Postill & Pink do raise some valid points, I find that #Ferguson is a great example of how such a focused study may work. As they argue, a study primarily focused on Twitter and an occurrence there would not encompass a full field or setting. In the way they represent it, the only way to go forward with such a study would be to use what I understand as a multi-sited approach. The actors/informants would be the driving force, and following them would be the essential key.

For me, their argument goes beyond recognizing the need for interviews or personal contact, such as Marwick suggests. In highlighting the importance of the physical aspect in Postill’s work, they solidify the need for such physical interaction. The example of #Ferguson, Postill’s own work and, to a certain degree, my case study leads me to partially agree with this. I do, however, also see connections between this idea or mindset and something mentioned earlier. Going back to a recurring idea that also Markham, Marwick and Okely touched upon. A note should be made that since Okely does not directly comment on social media, this is based on how I have represented her writings here.

What I wish to comment on is the idea of Twitter or social media data as second rate. The sense I get is that apart from Markham, who argues for the validity of social media data, they all treat it as somehow inadequate. As I mentioned, in cases such as #Ferguson or Postill’s protestors, this is true. But these studies are based on events or happenings directly related to places or upcoming events. Marwick’s point of the need for interviews is a valid one, but now that DM’s have no limit, there is no reason to add an extra factor such as mail. Regarding Skype I’m less sure, as I can see an argument being made for there to be something to gain from the added face-to-face component. While this may appear similar to the arguments made by Okely for the need of physical presence, I would consider another point. Instead of focusing on physical, I believe it highlights the importance of the participation part of participant observation. If you do, as Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick argue, follow up and stay connected with your informants, I see no reason why a study of something purely through
Twitter should not work. This does, once again, not undermine the importance of recognizing when physical participation, as Postill did, may be required. I have argued for the use of well-established ideas or thoughts from anthropology to be carried over, this does not mean we should twist the platform to further fit the tools. With some recalibration and understanding of the software available, the data and our subjects are readily available. If we accept this idea, then surely there is no need to consider social media data as inadequate. Instead of arguing for understanding events through the addition of social media data, perhaps we should understand social media events through additional data from “real life”. But similarly, there is a very strong difference compared to what is described by Bonilla and Rosa and Marwick, as the actions and performances they observe and describe are directly connected to a person or persons. A thought I often heard some years back was how one could re-imagine or reimagine oneself through interaction on the internet, as one could meet new people or be someone you were not. Now this image has very much changed. The newer argument is more how one can always find a group of people that share ones’ interests, no matter what those interests might be. As I noticed during my study of the Election, the focus was primarily on things said by people that were easily identified, even though some, as the example with the fake poster, were different. Going back to Goffman, I would consider what Kozinets describes as consociation (Kozinets 2015:11-12) as drawing upon a similar understanding of online interaction and social establishment. While he does open for the development of more lasting relationships, I get the sense that online relationships somehow become “second rate”, perhaps akin to contacts or relationships only continued for some benefit. This is a particularly difficult point in my opinion. It also contributes to putting social media data more towards second rate, at least in an anthropological context.

Something that may support the idea of such relationships as second rate would be the share numbers involved both on Twitter, Facebook and as Kozinets remarks, YouTube. When dealing with thousands of retweets and millions of views, is our only option to create more thorough algorithms to find what we need, or can we still interact with the ones that are truly interesting to our work. As many of these platforms and their user interactions are driven by these numbers, will our interaction with them drive them to do more than they usually would? YouTube channels have been driven by the pursuit of “views” and subscribers, even becoming a job for some people. On Twitter the drive is followers, retweets and likes. Interaction through these methods is essential for study here, and I do not here wish to discourage them. But as with our involvement in classic fieldwork, we should remember that
our presence may affect the events and people we encounter and study. At larger scales, this may indeed just become a blip on the radar, with no noticeable effect on the data or how we can use it. A person with a million followers probably does not notice our presence, but for a person with a hundred or maybe even less, it may indeed be noticeable to gain one more follower. As Marwick’s text refers to, the similarities between thoughts on posting between those with many and those with few followers were evident.

I would therefore like to question the practicality and usefulness of pursuing those with larger follower bases. Anthropology is, as all the texts argue, seated in qualitative research. That the data can become a flood is obvious. Gaffney & Puschmann make this clear when describing how we may only have access to 1% of the data flow, and that 1% access is sufficient for most studies. While I previously mentioned this as a positive thing, it is also clearly an issue to find which 1% you need access to. When there is so much data that access to 1% can cover a study, we must rely on the methods described through chapter 2. The further underlying restrictions, such as how may requests per 15-minutes, and the individual restrictions on the individual requests (such as max 5000 IDs), applies limitations we perhaps are not used to deal with. The limitations to access outlined by Okely are more “natural” and easier to understand and accept. As I said earlier, I will not trivialize the importance of shared bodily or physical experience. Okely’s examples clearly show how this can be valuable or even essential to gain insight. But if studying something happening on Twitter, I question the need for this. If posting on Twitter is something a person does alone from their home, having a researcher there would surely be an unnatural element. I do agree with what I consider the main argument for her idea of body and fieldwork. Rather than the anthropologist going to live with someone they observe on Twitter, it could none the less be valuable to interact with Twitter in the same way they do. This, of course, brings its own issues, as both Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick comment that Twitter use differs greatly amongst people. Some of the more classic limitations do reappear when looking at Twitter. During the Election it was clear to me that both historical and political context were often driving factors for the comments. While #Ferguson originated outside of Twitter, it kept going there, still driven by historical, political and racial issues. Limitations on access or availability of data then, is not something new. What is perhaps new, is the obviousness of the restrictions. While the examples mentioned by Okely are different issues a researcher may face in the field, the Twitter restrictions are more “equal” in that most researchers will have the same access. While I find it troublesome that only those with deals with Twitter may have full access, I guess it in a way
is a blessing. Just as the researcher in the field cannot and will not see, observe or participate in everything that goes on, so does the amount of data and the limitations on Twitter force us to find our focus. Going back to the initial question I posed in this paragraph, and accepting that limited data is perhaps what we really want, I will again question the purpose of focusing on those with many followers. Based on my experience from the election and what Marwick writes, it seems to me like the chance of being ignored or “disappear” in the masses is a legitimate risk. Unless we aim to study something directly connected to follower base or a specific person, a Twitter user with fewer followers should provide equally interesting data.

The argument against this idea, from a data perspective, would be that we perhaps miss data which would allow us to generalize or consider what we study in a statistical sense. I admit having gotten somewhat into this frame of thought myself. Through the continued focus of the importance of the data and its convergence into something useful for our studies, have we lost our focus? Anthropology, to me, has been about understanding the contexts of smaller sample sizes to explain larger systems or ideas. The fact that Twitter is a world-wide network, connecting people all around the world, does not mean everything we study has to explain a world-wide trend. We have the ability to see and observe these world-wide trends, but we need to keep the qualitative aspect in mind. Rather than seeing the access to so much data as a need to use it all, we should once again consider Markham. While she did not dismiss the vast amount of data gathered, she questioned why it was not useful in its own right, but it also means it may be useless. Remembering what we wish to achieve with our fieldwork should help us recognise what data we should keep. When these ideas are clear, it should be easier to use APIs and metrics to find the data with the relevant answers.

The Matter of Representation

Representation here refers to not only how we, as anthropologists, represent ourselves and our informants or the people we study, but also how they (the informants) represent themselves. As much of the “pure” data from Twitter or other social media sites may be viewed as statistics or numbers. This is often used for business to target adds or present news they think you find interesting. For us, however, it is more practical to consider the data as what it is when we boil it down, namely people data. As shown in chapter 2, while much of the data we can get through programs and API is statistical data, it still reflects people behaviour. I would
therefore argue that it does indeed resemble the type of data we could gather through a physical “going there” fieldwork. How, then, can we utilize this data to represent our informants/those we study?

In chapter 2 I briefly touched upon this by viewing the question of representation raised by Gaffney & Puschmann considering Burns & Stieglitz. From my own case study of the Election, I recognize the challenge representation poses. As a research question and point of concern for anthropology, this is nothing new. Classically we have had issues regarding representation in anthropology. Both who the anthropologist represents through his or her writing, but also who they had access to, as reflected in the writings of Okely. Even Gupta & Ferguson briefly touch upon it in their text. How would we combat this in “normal” fieldwork? Through regular interviews and face to face interactions we could, at the least, vouch for a person having said what we reiterated, even though they could be lying. The fact that we heard it first hand, and if not through an interview, at least were present, strengthened the validity of our recounts. With Twitter data I believe that, in some ways, this issue became more complex. While tweets themselves are mostly a representation of a person’s comment or statement, I would argue that we run the risk of assuming context without interviews. This is then just like Gaffney & Puschmann warns, namely a risk of loss of context when viewing Twitter data alone. When considering my own experience, and those of Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick, this is a well-founded doubt.

A factor that contributed to this in my own work, was the lack of any emerging bonds of trust. As I conducted the case study of the Election as an addition to this thesis, I primarily focused on observing and collecting data. The nature of the thesis as a theoretically focused approach meant I did not focus on creating any close bonds to the “informants”. This is close to something Postill and Pink criticise as providing more of a statistical overview of background data for ethnographic work, rather than being useful for answering specific research questions. In taking this approach, and admittedly not having the grasp and understanding of metrics that Burns & Stieglitz provide, I ran the risk of simply providing data, as Gaffney & Puschmann warn about. Perhaps luckily, I did not think of setting up any programs or algorithms to collect the data for me, and what data I did collect therefore went through a process similar to that of Marwick or Postill, namely personal “grooming”. In hindsight, my thought of the advanced filter on Twitter as a good way of finding and organizing data, through limiting the filter based on timeframes or specific hashtags was not as wrong as I
initially thought when reading Gaffney & Puschmann and Burns & Stieglitz. While it was a very “primitive” approach, it still performed the same basic tasks as some of the more “easy” ways to approach API. Bringing this back around to representation, my point here is that I too, through my case study, attempted to identify the key informants of Okely, or the more active @ tweeters and participants in Burns & Stieglitz work. While I dug through the seemingly endless stream of Twitter data, I attempted to find certain individuals I could “isolate” and study, and thus represent more clearly. I did not, however, find a good solution to the other issue raised by Gaffney & Puschmann regarding vocal minority. Nor did I solve the issue of who uses Twitter and how/which part of the population at large. As such, at best I would have been able to give a recount of the activity of a few users of Twitter, in relation to the Election on Twitter.

This also goes back to what Marwick described in relation to her earlier work, especially with teenagers and Twitter (Marwick 2010). While she had data and knowledge of their statistical use of Twitter, she was unable to move this forward to interviews, and as such they did not become informants, but rather statistics. When she and a research assistant had to comb through 4000 tweets, or when Kwak, Chun and Moon had to set up data from 1,2million tweets, time becomes a relevant aspect. While catching trends may be done through APIs, this is where I believe metrics would help us. As I understood Marwick, it took her time to comb the tweets and, based on them, create an image of who would be interesting/relevant informants. With a set of user-based metrics, such people should have been easier to identify earlier. The relevance and importance of this in relation to representation is evident by Marwick’s own comments. While Marwick highlights the importance of how one could conduct interviews as well as process Twitter data. In her text, using the data by itself does not yield anything she would consider representative of any individual.

To the point of how we wish to represent ourselves, an example of how this can be problematic for the anthropologist, would be the fact that informants may gain more access to the researcher than intended. While we in the classic field may have been able to downplay certain aspects with ourselves, such as political views, we must consider these things perhaps extra carefully when doing online work. Going back to Okely and how the informants’/”natives” view of us can limit our access, I would argue that openness is a key. Doing as Marwick did, and setting up a specific research account to be upfront from the beginning is a good place to start. The reason why I believe that disclosing much may be important, is the
fact that so much information is shared. While we may think that it would be beneficial to hide perhaps race or sexual identity in order to present ourselves as neutral or fitting to a field context, we must remember the simple fact that we are online. This makes it perhaps even more important for the anthropologist to be very open and forthcoming with own opinions on issues or cases one study, as a simple profile search could quickly reveal it if one has a clear standpoint and chose not to disclose this. As an afterthought, a way to somewhat counter this could be the use or creation of new profiles. This is something I did when I went to Scotland. I did of course keep my old profiles, and it was not meant to hide who I was, but rather to make it easier to access the data later. In short it was an organisational choice. I do also wish to note that doing so may let us communicate the aspects of us that benefit our position as researchers. With all the spam mails and messages going out today, we need a way to present ourselves as credible. Considering the amount of spam messages I get to my email account, it would be hard for a researcher to get in contact with me through it.

A key point, then, I would argue is important to remove as much “clutter” between the researcher and the informants. While perhaps difficult due to time zones, work schedules or other aspects of time in general, I believe that getting a message while you are online, actively using the platform, would be the best. Just as face-to-face interactions are hard to ignore, so I believe a direct message while both parties are online could easier open for further communication. But it is also here, in our interaction with the informants the next topic for this chapter arises.

**Informants and source criticism**

The role of the informant is essential to our work. As I commented in the previous subchapter, they are the key to understanding our data. But, in following the theme of this chapter, it’s not a one-sided subject. When considering source criticism, it is important to view how my own data/experience were gathered and obtained, as well as that of Bonilla & Rosa in #Ferguson and Marwick. The focus is not only towards how good the sources are, but also how reliable. I will therefore consider my experiences against both what Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick themselves write about the theme (especially Marwick is critical towards her own work). The previously mentioned “What Would Malinowski Do?” by Markham leads me to question whether more should have been done by me or Bonilla & Rosa. With “more” I
refer to what Marwick as well as Postill tried to emphasize, namely closer follow up outside the sphere of Twitter.

To start it off, I wish to consider my own case study. A statement I, at the time, felt highlighted this issue was a piece written by the internet personality TotalBiscuit in relation to the heated discussions online;

> It’s not because they’re all racist, sexist and god knows what else. You realize that though they may have voted for somebody who clearly is, that’s not necessarily why they did it(...) My reaction over the last few days has been driven by fear and the online face of Trumpism...a disgusting mass of cancerous trolls that infested Reddit(...) They did what trolls do, baited a reaction and they got it(...) But the reality is that group is not 50 million strong, not even close(...) They thought they were doing the right thing, just as we did. I may not be able to the fathom how anyone could vote for somebody who said all the things Donald Trump did but that's exactly how other people must have felt about Clinton. What I think isn't the be all and end all of everything, it's not the be all and end all of anything.28

This statement reminds me that while I may have tried to measure the visible response on social media, and this perhaps mirrored parts of the population/voters, it did not represent all the nearly 129 million people who voted. In short, what I found under hashtags and comments/tweets cannot be said to have reflected either sides voter base fully. Considering the previous discussion on data, this is to be expected. It is important here to remember that what I studied was only a specific part and field. Much of what I use may indeed have been written by trolls, as TotalBiscuit mentions. Trolls, here referring to the online term for people who perform actions to “troll” others. This is a concept/phenomenon I return to and explain in the next sub-chapter. Without the connection Marwick writes about, and which Postill in larger degree obtained, these can be hard to identify. This plays directly to our knowledge of our informants, and our ability to question their validity as sources. This does not mean, however, and as also pointed out in the quote above, that everyone acts as such. This is perhaps only the vocal minority. Again, I wish to refer to Humphry. Here, I would use the quote from her text (as I did in Postill & Pink) to emphasize that what we see or observe

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28 Reduced quote from [https://www.twitch.tv/totalbiscuit/p/d32d949b-d289-47e2-b301-5c2dcce29114](https://www.twitch.tv/totalbiscuit/p/d32d949b-d289-47e2-b301-5c2dcce29114) (warning: link to Twitch, may auto play video)
initially may indeed hold more meaning. This again can provide issues when thinking comparison as well as quality assurance. Going back to the question of if I should have done more, I am still uncertain. Having a closer connection to some of the people I studied would have been great. Considering all the different news that arose in the aftermath of the Election, it would be interesting to get their opinions and reactions. However, as these questions arose, I felt that I was more over in the area that Marwick found herself regarding the teenagers. It was too late to establish such contacts. I also believed there could be a similarity with my Scotland fieldwork. The work of Bonilla & Rosa differs from mine in the fact theirs seems conditioned upon the idea of a “pure” Twitter study. While they argue for the larger context, they also manage to show how representation can be achieved even through focusing on hashtags. Their problematization of which groups and opinions were actually represented through a hashtag, highlights the kind of awareness required when thinking representation on Twitter.

To the issue of informants and creating connections to them on a social media platform such as Twitter, I believe we should once again briefly look at the multi sited debate. When considering my own work, in relation to this debate and the issue of reliability and informants, it provides arguments for both sides. If I were to consider Marcus, as the one who spoke for multi-sitedness, I would argue that Twitter perhaps fits into his description of following activists rather than the more traditional idea of “one’s people” (Marcus 1995:114). While I in my research did not have the commitment and identity issues he describes, this is something I recognize from my study of the Election. As I viewed the interactions, posts and public appearances of the candidates in light of Goffman, it was clear that they tried to minimize the difference between what he calls frontstage and backstage differences (Goffman 1959). As candidates in a major political election it is important to remember that the management of image, identities and roles is vital to them, and therefore not necessarily a good reflection of the public in general. In my case study the focus was more towards how well they performed this management, and how it resonated with the voters (on Twitter/Facebook). To me this shows that we must consider not only how we change and adapt, but also how the people we follow do so. As I have commented on the importance of the interview and the connection it may help us establish, it should come as no surprise that it is here I find a potential solution. If we establish a connection or relationship with our informants, much of this doubt should disappear.
**Bots, trolls and “fake news”**

In extension of the challenges regarding informants or connections with them I would like to mention bots and trolls. Bots are generally understood as programs running certain lines of code or programming automatically or when triggered. Being programmed scripts that run based on their given code, they are usually not advanced enough to respond to questions outside their given parameters. Trolls, as briefly mentioned earlier, are people who intentionally write something or take a stand purely to mislead or annoy others. They have often been portrayed as “lone wolf” characters who incite conflict or arguments, often play the “devils attorney” simply to upset others. As a phenomenon especially known from online forums, Twitter and social media, it is something that further clutters the idea of connection between anthropologist and informants. It is also highly relevant in relation to the ongoing discussion regarding fake news. I will not here discuss the idea of established media versus alternative, but rather consider how the matter of bots and trolls affect our informants and their understanding of/access to news. In light of this, a further connection between Totalbiscuits quote and anthropological discussion was very recently made clear to me. On Twitter we have the previously mentioned issue regarding bots, trolls and fake profiles. While a fake profile might tell us much about a person, as one elected to create the profile in order to spread a message, the matter of bots and trolls gives this issue much more complexity. On NRK’s “Trygdekontoret” the 17th of April, which I briefly mentioned earlier in chapter 1, they spoke with a former Russian news reporter who described his time working in a “Trollfactory”. The episode of “Trygdekontoret” I here refer to contained a segment discussing how both programs and bots are set up to target the algorithms of sites such as Facebook and Google. As bots are a well-known and established phenomenon, this is perhaps easier to accept than the idea of trollfactories. I will none the less return to the matter of these factories in chapter 4. What I would like to address here, is the fact that if they can target such algorithms, who is to say they can’t target the ones we set up to collect data. If this is possible, they may “flood” us with information favouring one thing or another. The absurd example they used in the same show was a Facebook site who was pro Texas independence, seemingly patriotic, but created by a Russian bot. Previously I mentioned how Kozinets described it as a human research, but with factors such as bots and trolls, can we be certain that it is? In cases such as Marwick’s’ work I would argue that a solution has already been provided. If we consider the added connection, through interviews, I believe it would allow such things to be handled rather easily. As I mentioned earlier, a bot can seldom reply to anything outside its
given programming or coding. They should therefore be easily recognizable in an interview even through DMs on Twitter. Trolls, on the other hand, may be more difficult, simply because they are real people. While they, in my experience, only maintain their façade or contact for a limited amount of time, they may still mislead us. On the flip side, it is possible that such people may become informants themselves, if a connection can be established. What I find more troubling is the consequences of trollfactories. When the media picture is being manipulated to steer us towards interest in certain themes, or belief in certain news rather than others, how do we react?

In relation to my case study and the issue of bots, there was also the discussion that arose following the Election regarding fake accounts and bots. These issues were mentioned during the election, but were highlighted especially in the aftermath. They were connected to the allegations of Russian interference. It is hard to draw a direct comparison between this and anything encountered in the classic texts. A fake account that is not a bot could perhaps be understood as someone taking on a mask to hide their identity in order to forward an agenda or say something they perhaps normally would not have the opportunity to. This was the approach I chose to take, when considering them. On the other side, we have the previously mentioned matter of trolls, who also might use such accounts. The issue then is distinguishing these groups. While the aim of the troll is simply to “troll”, the other group might actually have legitimate opinions or concerns, and as such it would be a mistake to write off the category of fake accounts as misinformation or useless data. Bots, on the other hand, are programs posing as people, posting or otherwise manipulating the flow of things. The bot in itself, has no agency, but through their actions we may be able to discern the agency of their creators. By “the flow of things” I mean for example chain re-tweeting, mass upvoting/liking or otherwise affect the flow of data/popularity of things. As an example from Twitter, bots could be used to change what is “trending”, aka popularly tweeted about. The aim of this would commonly be understood as trying to affect the mainstream understanding of what is trending/relevant. While I would mostly argue that if one could identify these and somehow compensate the data by removing their influence from it, they can still provide some interest to an anthropologist. While they have no agency in themselves, as they are programs set to do a task, they can give us some insight in perhaps underlying interests of parties that are present on the platforms. Tracing the bots back to their origin might this way give us insight into what could be considered akin to Goffman’s backstage or the hidden. This, however, is an entirely different study from that which both I or any other authors I have mentioned have conducted.
This also raises questions in regard to the methods highlighted by anthropologists that have worked with social media earlier. As mentioned, a very common way of gathering data through platforms such as Twitter has been by using programs or codes which filter and save relevant tweets in accordance to a set of algorithms. While, as I said, completely ignoring the bots would be wrong, it is also important to be able to recognize them as to not give them the same agency or importance as genuine users. If, as has been claimed, they did in fact effect not only the Election, but swayed the outcome, they have become part of my source material. The idea of them affecting the Election outcome also relies on a belief that they swayed the way people voted.

This is a discussion I will continue in the ethics chapter, as it is highly relevant for this discussion as well. In this chapter, however, my focus is primarily on the challenges this may present. Is this unique for social media, such as Twitter? According to what was mentioned on “Trygdekontoret” this was more widespread than simply social media. There was none the less a clear understanding that these sites and their algorithms could easier be manipulated on a large scale in order to provide such an effect.

**The sense of “being there” – can it be done none-physically?**

In the sense of understanding Twitter, it would be easy to look to Goffman and his definition of a “social establishment” which he defines as “...*any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly take place.*” (Goffman 1959, p.231). What I like about this quote is the vast opportunities it provides. It can incorporate the ideas of Gupta & Ferguson, as well as ideas of Twitter as a field from Markham or Bonilla & Rosa.

When trying to place Twitter or other social media platforms in the discussion of multisited versus bounded field sites I found it difficult because there was, to me, no clear way to define Twitter within the way the discussion related to field, subjects/cases or the physical aspect. If considering purely Marcus’ point of how one can follow individuals or activists as they move between different places, then indeed Twitter allows this. But Marcus also focuses on how the anthropologist in his understanding of multisited work takes on an agency or activism simply because one has to redefine role/position between each place. This is, naturally something that falls out when using Twitter. As such Twitter does perhaps not fit to the idea of an example of
multisited fieldwork, but to Marucs end point I believe that it fits perfectly. As he writes it “... the mobility of multi-sited fieldwork provide a kind of psychological substitute for the reassuring sense of “being there“ ...” (Marcus 1995:114). This was a thought I myself encountered while working with Twitter. Even though I did not encounter or physically engage with any of the people I observed, I still felt like I was where it happened, where they interacted, which is also true. My initial thought and idea was how it offered an ideal way for me to actively take part on a platform where I could access data without my presence affecting anything. Going back to Markham, this aligns with my previous arguments that what I, Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick observed, all relate to the question of what anthropology wish to achieve. I, and they, were all interested in understanding one aspect or another of human interaction and communication. As a natural step, we followed, perhaps in line with a multi-sited approach, people where people are. Two other authors that problematizing the matter of Twitter or other social media in regard to anthropology or ethnography and data, are the previously mentioned Postill and Pink. They argue for connecting “online and locality-based realities” (Postill & Pink 2012:124). Through this they wish to make an “ethnographic place”, something not bound by territories or groups/communities, but rather viewed as “clusters or intensities of things of which both localities and socialities are elements”. They do, however, firmly believe in the importance of the physical interaction.

As previously mentioned I consider many of the arguments presented in Okely’s text to strongly favours the need for physical presence of some kind. Through her ideas of the physical learning and skills the body may pick up during the anthropologists’ time in the field, it is clear that her image of fieldwork and participant observation does not fit the idea of Twitter. None the less, as I have argued earlier, there are points within her argumentation that equally fit when used to describe interactions in Twitter. But there are also many points to which Twitter, when considered as a field, offers no good solutions. Through my interactions with people online, both via Twitter, Facebook or games, I have more often found myself unwilling or uninterested in finding common grounds with people. The idea that there is always someone out there that share your interests and beliefs does seem to affect my mindset. Where I normally, in a face-to-face conversation probably would put in more effort, it is simply not required nor expected in many forms of online interaction. Regarding the lack of the physical aspect, there is also a need to understand interaction and presentation in a new way. While as I tried to exemplify, certain ideas may be the same as from Goffman, we also have Kozinets smileys and Humphreys avatar. Whether it is the relationships themselves, the
arena/platform or both that keep the similarities or create differences, I cannot say. I simply wish to draw attention to this, as another intriguing aspect of this discussion.

In attempting to be a bit controversial, I wish to discuss the example of Kwak, Chun and Moon from Marwick’s text (Kwak, Chun & Moon 2011). To a certain degree, I view their focus on an aspect of Twitter use, combined with a geographical limitation (Korea) to clash with one of Twitters key aspects. When thinking social media, some of the first concepts that spring to mind are worldwide and global. My immediate thought was therefore that it was backwards to study a global phenomenon on a local scale. While I found their study and their findings interesting, it was geographically restricted to the country the tweets were from. In their case, considering what they studied, I think it was probably a wise choice. It made it possible for them to conduct their interviews, and know it was related to the data they had. If we take tweets about a global phenomenon, but only use part of our own (home country) population for personal interviews, how can we say it is representative of the data? But if the only solution for using Twitter is to consider it based on such geographically bound and defined groups, what is the point? Going back to Malinowski and earlier anthropological work, this is more in line with how we have “usually” done fieldwork. If we consider the idea of “being there”, this is perhaps one of the ways we can approach it. By limiting ourselves to a setting where the surrounding factors such as state, laws and culture are familiar, the need to encompass these things into our primary study may lessen.

While face to face interaction in a classic fieldwork would allow you to know a person simply because you had met and seen that person, interaction online somewhat changes this. Names and images can be ever changing and may not even be remotely representative of the person you observe. While there on Twitter is less changing in usernames, as they are used to @name mention someone in tweets, pictures may change. But another side of profile pictures, or as they are sometimes understood, avatars, has been covered by Humphrey. Once again referring to what an informant told her; “The avatar is not designed to demonstrate the person’s face. It should convey the inner state of the person, his soul, one might say, or the condition of his soul” (Humphrey 2009:40-41). While this is not as relevant for Twitter, I choose to mention it here because it raises a point I myself recognise and can relate to. As I mentioned, I have used or changed my avatar or picture for several different reasons. On social media that are actually related to me in everyday life, I’ve changed them to try to highlight sides of myself. This usually takes the form of something I would like to be
associated with (For several years my Facebook picture has been of me snowboarding, despite
the fact that I haven’t done this in the last 3 years). In a game I used to play I changed both
my username and picture to “trigger” a negative response or otherwise annoy other players.
This contrasted with what I used for an online forum I was part of, where we discussed
different series we watched. Here my avatar was more in line with what Humphrey describes.
On this forum both I, and the other users, chose characters from shows to represent ourselves.
What made this an option was the collective understanding of the characters amongst the
forums users. This, to me, exemplifies how the being there and observing gets a new context
on social media. As these are the premises for how interaction occurs here, I would argue that
it could be wrong to dismiss or attempt to alter it. I have previously argued that the platforms
importance cannot be ignored, and I wish to reiterate this. When thinking of the idea of “being
there” I do not think anthropology should be the create of the premise for what dictates being
there or participation, but rather adapt itself to what these things mean on Twitter.

**The Relationship Conundrum**

While I would argue that the continued debate and description of online connections as lesser
than “real world connections” is in itself problematic, and perhaps somewhat self-affirming, I
cannot deny that I myself have encountered this several times. The easiest example would be
from online games and Guilds. In my interaction with people in these settings, I am only
interacting with them during a set period of time to achieve a set goal, after which most
interaction ceases until the next set time we meet. While this perhaps would fit into an
understanding of a new phenomenon or online community, it can also be seen as a revamp of
the known workplace community. My interactions with these people online is very similar to
my interactions with my workplace colleagues within the health service. We meet to a set
time to do our set tasks, after which I have little contact with most of them until the next time
we meet at work. While the motivation is, of course, very different, as I play the games to
have fun, and work primarily for the money, the similarities are still striking. Kozinets also
draw some of these parallels (Kozinets 2015:22-23,48-50), but to me this perhaps contrasts
somewhat to his earlier ideas of the differences between face-to-face ethnography and
netnography.
An issue, and perhaps a grey area, that I encounter in extension of this, is the continuation of relationships today. While as I said most of my interactions both at work and in the game ends and resumes at set times, there are also individuals whom I have developed more of a “regular” friendship with. However, in many cases this does not mean that I’ve had face-to-face interactions with any of the people from the game. But my face-to-face interactions with the people I know better from work have also not been driven by face-to-face interaction outside of work. Factors such as me going abroad for my fieldwork in Scotland, as well as living in Oslo for the majority of my time working on this thesis and my workplace being in Drammen contributed to this. The physical distance has made online interactions the primary tool in both sets of relationships. There is of course a significant difference in the fact that I do meet my work colleagues face-to-face when I go to work, but the “maintenance” of these relationships are very similar. I did also have the previously mentioned meeting with some of my game friends while I was in England.

It is also here that I see perhaps one of the largest differences between online interaction and face-to-face interaction, namely the matter of status. By status I here refer to the online status, usually seen as “online/available” or “offline/unavailable”. While an anthropologist can use this to perhaps hide their presence and observe without being observed, as mentioned in chapter 2, this also creates some rather critical issues. From my own experience I can say that the opportunity to put yourself as “offline” while online is often tempting to avoid unwanted interactions. An extension of this would be how people sometimes do not reply to instant/direct messages until perhaps hours after they receive them. While these are parts of online interactions we all perhaps are aware of, the issues for anthropology and ethnography should also be clear. While we believe, and in many cases, we have access to all the data, there are also ways on open platforms to do hidden things. The odds of someone you are talking to face-to-face in the field ignoring you for several hours when you ask them a question, and then replying as if nothing out of the usual also seem rather slim.

This then, goes back to something Kozinets calls “consociation” (Kozinets 2015:11). This concept revolves around interactions and group activities as defined by the members and accepted in its own context. In short, it’s ok to not respond online or break all ties with your guild/game contacts until the next time you see them, because your interactions are based on your agreement of what you wish to achieve. Further examples of how relationships on social media can seem strange can be found on YouTube. This is something I heard years ago on a
podcast between YouTubers. They reflected on how they had a responsibility because their followers/fans sought to be part of a believed belonging. To them, it was frightening to consider how much they felt people wanted to belong, and as such grouped up as “fans” of one person or another.

**Summary of the Challenges – Viewing Critically**

Several of the issues outlined in this chapter are as equally connected to ethics as they are to logistical or practical issues for anthropology. The effect of the media, Twitter or otherwise, on not only the anthropologist and his or her stands in the field, but also on the informants/sources cannot be ignored. While the issues are certainly many, I have also strived to find issues and create discussions in order to really stress the issue of Twitter and anthropology. Just as this chapter sprung out of chapter 2, so could chapter 2 have sprung out of this. While the issues are many, I hope that I have also shown that the opportunities are equally numerous. Showing the difficulty of actually doing the process of using API’s to get data (from chapter 2), I would like to refer to https://developer.twitter.com/ where there are different scripts for Twitter use. The complexity for someone not familiar with coding should be clear when looking at their “search Tweets published in the last 7 days” request, which returns over 500 lines of code. But the most problematic point of Twitter study was one I originally did not factor in. As highlighted in chapter 2, the sheer number of tools for working with the Twitter API that has disappeared since the writing of Gaffney & Puschmann was shocking to me. While I was prepared on some being outdated, as codes must be updated frequently, I had hopes or expectations that more of them would still be active. If we have relied on saving our work on databases or platforms that “go out of date” and cannot be retrieved, this seems rather risky. Having each individual researcher keep track of such amounts of data, too, seems impractical. This may be a folly of thinking about online research and the idea of everything being available. A solution may be that research centres or universities save the data collected and used in their own databases, although I cannot speak to the legality or actual practicality of this suggestion. It is, of course, possible that this issue is a thing of the past. While not expressed directly, the sense I’ve got is that developer.twitter.com has taken over many of the functions previously held by the other sites or programs. If this is the case, then this change might be a blessing in disguise. If everything
accumulates on a single, uniform platform, where several tools and approaches are gathered, it makes it a lot easier to introduce people to.
Chapter 4: The Ethics

My focus in this chapter will be to consider the different ethical aspects of Twitter. More specifically, what issues arise through Twitter that may affect how we as anthropologists work with it. When talking about both the advantages or opportunities provided by Twitter to anthropology, as well as the problematic sides, I feel the matter of ethics quickly becomes central. While one can, as I have attempted, problematize how the data should be collected and what data is useful, we must also consider what data it is right to collect, and what is right to use. Again, these are not new issues for anthropology, but they get a new context when viewed through a platform such as Twitter. Through the lack of, perhaps, the bodily experience, the consideration and connection to the data as something personal may disappear. Can we, then, stick to the general ideas of source criticism, source protection and anonymity? Are even the ideas of sources/informants and anonymity the same on social media? Throughout the previous chapters I have tried to show that the foundational ideas of anthropological concepts are recognizable even on new fronts such at Twitter. As such, one would perhaps expect that some guidelines for ethics could also be recognized. In this chapter I will discuss the different ethnical issues both I and the authors I have referred to have encountered. Kozinets’ “Netnography: Redefined” will, as previously mentioned, be a part of this discussion. Especially interesting are the different questions he feels researchers should consider when doing netnography. I will also look at Twitters position and perhaps role in light of the legal aspect, as discussed by Michael Beurskens in “Legal Questions of Twitter” in “Twitter and Society” (Weller et al. 2014). Beurskens discuss the effects of Twitters rules and guidelines, as stated through the “Terms of Service” (TOS), “Rules of the Road” and “Privacy Policy” (2014:123-124). Furthermore, current events such as the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal and the previously mentioned episode of Trygdekontoret will be used to exemplify the concerns I raise.

Michael Beurskens: Understanding the legal framework

Before I move on to discuss Twitters position, I will refer to Michael Beurskens and “Legal Questions of Twitter Research” (Beurskens 2014). As it discusses the legal framework surrounding Twitter, I feel it gives important context, just as Gaffney & Puschmann did in chapter 2. Beurskens’s text is, however, less technically written, and thus an easier read.
Beurskens starts by discussion the concept and idea of “ethical” and “legal” being the same thing. While primarily correct, as he says, there are occasions where they separate. This is especially true when considering social media such as Twitter. The primary issue here is the idea that Twitter can have one general set of rules. As he comments, this cannot be done. The lack of a global, legal framework for questions such as data protection, privacy laws or copyright makes this a minefield. The recent discussion in Norway regarding the installations funded by American intelligence is an example of such issues. More recently, and closer connected to Twitter, is the previously mentioned Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal. This case was taken up in America, as it is where Facebook have their headquarters. While there were offended parties in countries all over the world, it would, according to Beurskens’s explanation, be hard to pursue legal actions in other countries. As each country can only enforce their laws within their own borders, it makes it hard to enforce them. Furthermore, Beurskens comment that while these laws do indeed apply to Twitter, they do not apply to researchers or Twitter users. As there are different sets of rules in every country, Beurskens argues that a complete overview would be impossible to provide. He therefore chooses to focus on some “fundamental issues” who are common.

The first thing he wishes to address is the role of the users. As he shows, Twitter “...acknowledges that users retain their rights to any content, making Twitter a mere licence, who is allowed to (inter alia) make content available to others.” (Beurskens 2014:125). This, he argues, creates a difficult understanding of copyright and who actually owns a tweet. While the implication of the clause is that the user owns it, this does not fit to a general understanding of copyright law. The terms he puts to claiming ownership, or right, to a tweet is based upon requirements for either “originality” or “sweat of the brow”, the latter implicating a degree of effort. Funnily enough he comments on how Chinese or Japanese may express more through the 140 characters, as a single character can represent a word or an expression. This goes back to what I referred to regarding Twitter expanding the characters to 280, as they too used this argument. Beurskens does stress the fact that length does not define creativity, however, and uses a haiku as an example. A setting where I would argue the same would be in regards to so-called banners or signatures used on forums. While there are now several “frameworks” you can simply put letters or a quote into, I remember when I first saw these. The clever use of signs, letters and numbers to create images would surely qualify as both creative and taking some effort. Viewing, again, the matter of tweets, Beurskens says that enforcing copyright on a tweet would be difficult, not only based on different laws, but
simply because of the work one would have to put in to verify its originality (2014:124-125).

As we see retweets of news and events, he further explains how these are governed by a somewhat different set of rules, where the general idea is to protect the newsagents from having their work used commercially by others. A retweet or sharing from a private person then, does not fall under these rules.

Following this, he discusses the role of Twitter, Inc. As he puts it, their position, legally, is a bit difficult to define. Beurskens comments on the licencing of availability of data, mentioning GNIP (2014:127), as also Gaffney & Puschmann did. They are an example of a company that has the “firehose” access, and thus based their business upon the reselling of Twitter data. Since Twitter does not directly produce anything sales worthy, their only source of income is the use of data. As he explains it, the free release of all Twitter data would make it difficult or impossible to Twitter to make any real money with targeted advertisements (adds) or commercials. For anthropology, or researchers in general, this means that through obtaining data from the approved channels by Twitter, we do in fact not need to negotiate terms of use with the individual users.

As Twitter’s system for allowing access to the APIs was changed over to a “only registered accounts” system, they can easily control this. Of direct interest to this thesis is what Beurskens calls the factual power Twitter has over its users (2014:129). As he describes this, Twitter does not have to share its data, nor allow anyone to open an account on their service. Since the enforcement of agreements such as Rules of the Road and Terms of Service might be difficult, he argues that the ability to shut people or companies out from their service and data is their strongest power. There is currently a case in the making, where a person who got banned from Twitter is suing the company. Their argument is that “[Our lawsuit] It's about whether Twitter and other technology companies have the right to ban individuals from using their services based on their perceived viewpoints and affiliations” (Comment by attorney Noah Peters) 29. According to Twitter’s own rules however, this should be an easy case. As stated on their site “Enforcing our Rules”, the behaviour which was conducted broke the rules. 30 For us, as anthropologist, Twitter’s power is relevant through their right to “…suspension of all access to the API or even any content on Twitter at any time” (Beurskens 2014:129).

29 http://dailycaller.com/2018/02/21/twitter-censorship-should-terrify-everyone/
**Twitters position**

Twitter limitations on accounts, while fairly large and in most cases not an issue, they are still present, and should therefore be considered. As Kozinets said, we affect the technology, and it affects us. But there is more to this then a simple symbiotic relationship. While in broad strokes I might agree to the idea of us affecting it, and it us, there are also the matter of how platforms like Twitter operate. As previously mentioned, those with agreements with Twitter may get access to the full 100% of the data. Twitter as a company is also run by people, and those people may affect both it and us differently from how we affect Twitter. This was made especially clear during the recent Facebook scandal, where what I would consider questionable relationships between social media sites, and industries they provided data to was highlighted. I am, of course, referring to the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal again. As I do not know the case very well, I will mainly refer to what has been written about it in media. The heart of the problem is how Cambridge Analytica, through an app on Facebook, got access to data they were not supposed to. According to The Guardian, this affected about 87 million Facebook users. This resulted in Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, having to explain himself to the US Senate. It is worth remembering, perhaps, that while the data we do not have access to may not be interesting for our study, it holds interest to others.

The question, then, is how much do we really understand of our relationship to these platforms? As it has been presented, we offer them data freely, which we do not fully understand how they use. Is this then simply covered by our agreement to the Terms of Service and User Agreements? An interesting text here is Jonathan A. Obar & Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch’s “The Biggest Lie on the Internet: Ignoring the Privacy Policies and Terms of Service Policies of Social Networking Services” (Obar & Oedlora-Hirsch 2016). Through their study, where they set up a fake networking service in order to see just how many people actually read TOS or POS, they showed how only 15% of participants in their experiment noticed their “gotcha” clause. In this clause the participants agreed to give up their first-born child and allow all data to be sent to the NSA (2016:17). Even the 15% who had concerns agreed to the TOS. As we can read from the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook has changed their TOS in order to combat such issues reoccurring. If we can prove that users have such a relaxed or none caring approach to their own personal data, I suppose an argument could be made for it being even more ok to use it. However, the outrage and legal actions
taken after the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal suggests otherwise. Facebook’s defence, as well as the ambiguousness surrounding Twitter’s responsibility, as highlighted by Beurskens, worries me. If the social media’s will claim no fault unless actively confronted with it, and the users themselves do not actively care, who will protect their rights? Will it be the anthropologists job to “save them from themselves”, or do we then step outside our role? While perhaps dangerous, the lack of concern regarding TOS, but strong sense of privacy when confronted with misuse of our data, suggests the need for a different approach. While it would be tempting to suggest something new entirely, perhaps it would be adequate to use the older standards. As anthropologist, we are used to getting consent before using certain pieces of data. Hiding behind legal questions of TOS’s should therefore be unnecessary. I believe that the position of Twitter in regard to our work should be considered based on their guidelines. As proven in chapter 2, their change in terms sometimes render our tools obsolete or illegal. Furthermore, what I discussed in this sub-chapter has been done to question and warn against writing off responsibility as easily as Beurskens description of Twitter covering terms of use.

A final point to Twitter’s role in the ethical discussion I wish to make is the matter of power. The balance between who has the power, Twitter or us, the users, was something I initially thought about during my case study of the Election. It became apparent to me how certain users, such as Trump, seemingly gained power and took control over Twitter. Something which contested this idea, where Twitter became a one-way communication channel for the candidates, was for example the emergence of fact checking sites such as http://www.politifact.com/. I admit that I thought such sites would have a larger impact on social media such as Twitter. In my mind the internet functioned as such: If you say something wrong, there is always someone who will call you out on it. I can only speculate as to why this did not seem to have much of an impact. One point, as shown on the sites, was that both candidates were frequently lying, another point is that they, as mentioned earlier, seldom replied, so comments about their lies were either ignored or drowned in other comments. Regardless of this, Twitter’s position as a primary platform for communication during the election was not diminished by this. While Twitter, in a blogpost31, are adamant that “No one person’s account drive Twitter’s growth…” I find myself wondering how many would follow Trump to a new platform if he moved. But just as with most TOS, Twitter is

also the only one with the power to shut people out from their service. While maintaining that they do so in accordance to their open guidelines for what is allowed and what is not, a case could be made to argue that these lines can be fluent. As many argued for a ban of Trump from Twitter, Twitter responded to this in January this year. In the blogpost I referred to earlier, they say that “Twitter is here to serve and help advance the global, public conversation.” Furthermore, they argue that

> Blocking a world leader from Twitter or removing their controversial Tweets would hide important information people should be able to see and debate. It would also not silence that leader, but it would certainly hamper necessary discussion around their words and actions. -Twitter (2018)

I can agree with the idea that a leader’s expressed opinions should be known, but it seems rather contradictory to then go on to argue for this would not stop this leader from making said opinions known. I also question Twitter’s view of itself. If we follow the arguments of Postill & Pink and Kozinets, the idea of a social media as being interacted with alone is wrong. As shown in the election, happenings and events outside the Twitter sphere still sparked debates there (ref. #MuslimsReportStuff). I therefore doubt that removing world leaders would have any significant impact on the discussion around their words or actions. None the less, as I referred to in the introduction to this thesis, the importance of Twitter in the Election cannot be ignored. If Twitter did not allow Trump during the Election, I could not answer if Facebook would have the same impact. This is therefore more a comment on the current position, rather than a consideration of a “what if” idea.

**Is this public? Posting on Twitter**

The debate regarding the degree of private and public is a huge ongoing debate regarding social media. Kozinets argue that one cannot directly assume a connection in peoples’ minds about what they post as publicly owned, and therefore fair to use (Kozinets 2015:163-165). He also points out the fact that not asking means not being told no, but ultimately argues that human research should respect human opinion. Regarding my own experiences mentioned in this thesis, I’ve attempted to circumvent the matter of asking other involved parties. When I refer to my own experiences, I have done so by speaking from my own experience with general observations of situations or events, where the identity of the other participants...
irrelevant. My case study on Twitter during the election largely brought me to a conclusion that asking permission to use what I found would be unnecessary. I have however, during the course of this thesis, changed my view of this. While I on principal still agree that things posted on open Twitter pages should be considered fair use, I also see that my initial stands on this was coloured by a detachment to the people who posted the tweets. Trump and Hillary, whom I’ve already discussed considering ethics, fall into a different category. During the election, their profiles were more public and publicly focused than personal. Having both been already public people, their status as presidential candidates on strengthened this. The use of their Twitter accounts by the campaign teams, constant updates on speeches and debates all contributed to building them as public profiles.

Another argument Kozinets brings up is how personal and private interaction online can be. As he points out, private messages or skype calls can be very private, and as such I agree that we must constantly be aware of the changing environments of which we interact with informants. But then again, this is nothing new to ethnography or anthropology. The same differentiation should be made between a private one-to-one conversation and a general discussion overheard. Kozinets uses the understanding of how we must communicate through mail, Skype and so on to emphasize how this is all part of research with human beings (2015:170). He further raises the ethical question of what we include. When we cannot find the original poster, or come across something sensitive, should we share it? Thinking anthropologically an argument could be made for doing just that. As the authors Bassett and O’Riordan that he refers to, writes it: “Academic research ideally endeavours to reflect the range and versatility of the media that it concerns…” (Bassett & O’Riordan 2002:244-245). Kozinets, however, points out something I myself considered when doing my case study. As he puts it, we risk doing harm to the people whose posts or comments we highlight. For me this issue presented itself through questions of how much digging was ethically correct to do, in order to identify a person.

As I eventually ended up not using the data directly, but rather referring to my experiences, I somewhat circumvented this issue. The question does, however, still remain. When a person has chosen to post something anonymously or through a fake account, are we duty bound to find the person behind it, or are we obligated to accept their choice of anonymity? Just as with anonymizing a quote from a person form a geographically limited area, how much does it help to remove the name of someone who posted a tweet? In both cases it would be possible,
perhaps even easy, to identify the person behind the comment or post. I do not believe there is any one answer to how we should approach any of these situations. Rather I would, like Kozinets, argue for a framework that allows for adaption and creative solutions as the ethical issues arise (Kozinets 2015:174). I would once again argue that the framework and basic ideas for this are still present in how we think of the classic fieldwork. Considerations of representation and anonymity, as well as what to include and what not, are not new emergent problems.

Issues of Truth, representation, bots, trollfactories and “fake news”

return

My primary concern here, again, is how we can be sure that we correctly represent our informants in our writings. As I in chapter 3 discussed the issue of representation, this is something I return to here. While chapter 3 focused on the more practical aspects of this question, I here wish to raise the moral questions. For, when we know or believe that bots, fake profiles or fake news affect our informants, should we interfere and inform them? As I have argued that the platform should make the premises, would this not be going against that idea? The discussion that arose following the Election regarding fake accounts and bots is one example I mentioned. The, perhaps more interesting example to this part of the text would be the matter of trollfactories.

What further links the quote of TotalBiscuit to an anthropological discussion here was very recently made clear to me. The discussion regarding trollfactories on Trygdekontorert was enlightening. Through an interview with a former Russian journalist that claimed he had worked in such a factory, we got an insight into how they work and what they do. While he did not have first-hand experience or knowledge of how these factories may have affected the American Election, the stories he told should be discussed also by anthropologists. According to what he said, they were paid to purposefully alter people’s opinion and the news they received. He also claimed that after giving an interview he was harassed by Russians impersonating as Italians. If we are to believe what he claimed, then I feel that there must be consequences regarding how we relate to the Twitter data. If, on the other hand, it isn’t true, then we must consider how we respond if such allegations come up regarding our work.
Being sceptical in such a way, may in general be advantageous to us. In this explanation of trollfactories we also see the emergence of fake news. The Russian journalist had an example where they would make news favouring Russia regarding the Ukraine conflict. To give this legitimacy, they then posted these to links with Ukrainian names. While I in the previous chapter opened for the possibility of this being a fake story, the evidence for backing him up seems overwhelming. Looking at Twitter’s history of banning or suspending accounts, we can see that they in late 2017 banned 2752 accounts for being Russian troll accounts.32

As I said earlier in this sub-chapter, I feel like this must have consequences for how we view Twitter and tweets. When trying to represent our informants and their opinions, it is imperative that we can at least believe that what we discover and observe is people expressing their own opinions. My initial thought is to, as suggested previously, use interviews or direct conversations in order to unmask both bots and trolls. But if using larger data samples, this is no longer a realistic option. While 2752 are not that many in the context of millions of people using Twitter, how can we know what impact they have? If 2752 people tweet about something, how many will see this, retweet it or otherwise be affected? People forwarding their own agendas is nothing new, but a group of people forwarding a state’s agenda through false accounts sounds more like a conspiracy theory than the concern of an anthropologist. A final note I wish to make here, is a comment from a fellow student. As the student put it, posting something on Twitter can be compared to telling it to a whole village. Sooner or later word will get around to others as well.

**Echo-chambers or cross-communication**

An idea often used when referring to how people interact online is the concept of an echo-chamber. This is the idea that we surround ourselves with news, sites and people that will affirm our established opinions. While the internet and social media to a degree certainly allow for such chambers to be constructed, I have also touched upon several examples in this thesis that show an opposite effect. Closed or secret groups who only allow people who share their opinions join may work like echo-chambers. But when considering Twitter, as the largely publicly available platform it is, an argument can be made for a different view. If following the idea of echo-chambers, then surely our selection of Tweets, who we follow and

therefore what we interact with should all be opinions we agree with. This goes back to issues raised by both Bonilla & Rosa and Marwick. Both these texts consider effects that may lead to constructing or removing echo-chambers. In #Ferguson the example I wish to refer to is the divided use of the hashtag #Ferguson. Bonilla & Rosa emphasize how it was used by both sides in the debate. Both those supporting the protest of black youth, and those supporting the police. Marwick’s concern is more directly connected to how one might imagine echo-chambers would appear. In her text, she questions the use of one’s own followers for data. While not directly connecting this to echo-chambers, her argument for using own followers as “obvious bias” is probably well-founded (Marwick 2014:111). When used in such a way, social media may indeed create self-affirming groups.

I believed this would also be the case during the Election. I strongly believed that I would need to identify key users on both political sides, excluding the candidates themselves. While the use of hashtags such as #StrongerTogether and #MakeAmericaGreatAgain seemed to generate exactly the type of pattern I expected in relation to echo-chambers, the most interesting hashtags were of a different nature. As previously mentioned, hashtags such as #NastyWoman had the same mixture as #Ferguson. While the majority, who also got most of the media focus, used this hashtag to show support for Hillary, there were also those who used it just as Trump meant it, namely to shame Hillary. While I do not wish to generalize too much based on one single case study, I will also address how the comment fields on the candidate’s tweets were. While both could instigate debates in the comment fields, this occurred more often on Trump’s tweets. This, even the negative comments, added to his popularity and status on Twitter. As a very public person that eventually became the man who represented the entire country, it is perhaps logical that he sparked debate rather than created an echo-chamber. But this goes to show that people, in certain situations, will actively search out opinions that differ from their own.

My reasoning for including echo-chambers in this chapter is because I think it raises an important ethical question with our use of data. Without a closer study, through what Bonilla & Rosa describe as “read between and go beyond the digital lines” (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:11), the fact that two sides used the same hashtag could go unnoticed. If we are to, as they tried, study social media through studying hashtags, then we must look beyond the majority of statistics, and try to show a broader picture. Going back to representation, it would be a disservice to use the number 8 million tweets by the end of the month (2015:4-5) to highlight
the incredible support that arose for black youth. While accurate, it would follow a pattern that risks giving the power solely to the vocal majority.

**Notes on the current standing of law**

At the time of writing, there are certain changes regarding the legal framework that will come in effect later this year (as of late May 2018). From Michael Beurskens text we saw how the lack of an international framework of law became a continuing argument for enforcement of TOS or other use agreements was. As he put it, the difference in law made some terms enforceable in one country, but not in another. This is, to some extent, visible through Twitters TOS, as they have one for American users, and one for European Union and “otherwise outside the United States”\(^{33}\). Through the new “The EU General Data Protection Regulation” (GDPR)\(^ {34}\) we can see how steps have been taken to address some of these issues. In regards to the matter of Twitter only being liable in the US, as its HQ are located there, the GDPR states that it (the GDPR) “applies to all companies processing the personal data of data subjects residing in the Union, regardless of the company’s location.”

\(^{33}\) [https://twitter.com/en/tos](https://twitter.com/en/tos)

\(^{34}\) [https://www.eugdpr.org/eugdpr.org.html](https://www.eugdpr.org/eugdpr.org.html)
Chapter 5: Summary

Through my fieldwork and case study I saw both advantages and challenges when trying to use Twitter anthropologically. My agency is not to plead a case for Twitter in anthropology, but rather show that it should be as natural a thing for us to study as any other field. To consider it something new and difficult that needs to be argued for, rather than about, would be intentionally crippling ourselves. As many of the texts I have referred to mention, there is no need to consider “classical” face-to-face anthropology as opposed or in contrast to Twitter studies. In a time where the use of social media becomes a regular part of people’s day to day life, it would be weird to ignore it. While I must admit to being more sceptical regarding “pure” Twitter studies, we must also face the fact that certain interactions and phenomena only exist/occur in this space. Still, it is equally important to recognize the events that do not occur in such a “vacuum”. Debates sparked by the American Election, or the tweets surrounding #Ferguson are to me prime examples of how certain events or occurrences must be viewed in relation to ongoing events outside of Twitter. There are, in short, perhaps few easy and straight forward answers to how we should deal with Twitter. The only thing I am certain of is that we must. As people who study how other people interact, live and communicate, we cannot afford to ignore such a popular, available and fascinating area. Whether used as a field in its own right, or as an extension of the field, Twitter or social media should have its place. To ignore it would be a disservice to ourselves, as well as risk making us outdated.

As I have discussed in the three last chapters of this thesis, there are many challenges that seemingly emerge when thinking anthropology and Twitter. But as shown by Markham, Bonilla & Rosa, Marwick, even Okely and my own experiences, very few of these challenges are new. Most of them exist in some shape or form throughout anthropological work, dating back to Malinowski, and probably earlier. As Markham especially helped show, the ideas of classical anthropological work, what Malinowski wished to find, can still be done. The challenges, while many, are mostly the same as anthropology has struggled with before. While some are new, or take new forms, the essence is often the same as before. Despite, as I asked in the introduction, there being certain unique traits with Twitter or social media, and these traits leading to us having to develop or use new methods for certain things, the essence of what we do remain the same. Using computer programs or strings of code, then, is a new way of conducting participant observation. While I will not draw a definitive conclusion on the matter of Twitter as a field in the sense of classical fieldwork thinking, I believe I have
shown that a fieldwork can be done here. As such, it is somewhat irrelevant how it fits an idea of field. It is a field.

I have earlier criticized Kozinets. Netnography provides a lot of information and views on most of the issues I have brought up. While he takes an anthropological approach, I none the less recognize that the text has a certain economical context to it. It’s approach to how our work can be related to business and commercial understanding somewhat devalues it for me. His sub-chapter on “Social Media between the Communal and the Commercial” is an example of this (Kozinets 2015:43-47). While an economical approach is interesting, and certainly relevant for finding a job, it made me constantly second-guess choices and comments he made. As explained earlier, this is part of the reason why his text is mentioned rather sparsely here. The idea of researchers being mistaken for market researchers or market spam, as Marwick suggests happened to her, could perhaps be solidified by his approach. However, I do understand and sympathise with the fact that research also must be funded. It is also obvious that Kozinets has given a lot of thought to his idea of netnography. What I do not approve of, is the idea of a direction of social study rooted in ideas of marketing or commercialisation.

The debunking of the mystical

Going into this thesis, I had expected that the gaps between “classical” fieldwork and Twitter fieldwork would be huge. In some cases, I thought it would be near impossible to unite Twitter fieldwork and classical fieldwork theory. While studies such as Bonilla & Rosa showed that it could be done, my own experiences with fieldwork had me somewhat on the defensive. Hung up on ideas of participant observation and fieldwork as tied to “going there” held me back. Twitter as a field, then, became the idea and embodiment of the mystical and unknown, perhaps akin to how fieldwork has classically been thought of. What presented itself as the glaring problem, was of course the physical aspect. Through my work in this thesis, I’ve concluded that the concept of physical cannot be removed. The arguments for physical participant observation have been made clear through the advantages and challenges it presents, as explained by Okely. Examining her arguments for the physical was what started my “debunking” of the idea of the mystical. While there are settings where the physical may be replaced, a part of the ethnographic experience, and the aspect of participation, are
unequivocally bound to it. Many of these experiences are not gone with the removal of the physical. Instead I would argue that my examination of participation through interviews, and creating relationships with our informants, preserve the fundamental theoretical arguments for physical presence. Markham’s description of her own reaction to people wishing to add more to their data is perhaps the best example. As she writes;

“But you have already elicited so much information from involved individuals about how they feel about the phenomenon. Why would you need to conduct face-to-face interviews with them?” or “Why doesn’t 50 hours of in-game recorded conversations with your guild about their socialization process as a community count as a focus group?” -Markham (2013)

The understanding and acceptance of this, where social media data is not questioned as second rate, but rather questioned as why it is thought of as such, is what I wish to emphasize. To my point in chapter 3 regarding the importance of also doing interviews, I feel this especially highlights how Twitter, when considered not as something brand new, but rather in context of the work we do and what we wish to study, still serve a purpose. As became a recurring point in my discussion, the importance of the interview, a person-to-person talk, seems perhaps even more vital when doing Twitter studies. But person-to-person does not mean face-to-face. I agree with the concern Marwick raises that we as anthropologists can be ignored, considered spam or pure marketing research. Just as we have always had to explain our role in the classical field, so should we do it on Twitter. (Social)Anthropology is not, in my experience, a very well-known field of study amongst people. When I say it’s my subject, I must usually follow up with an explanation of what it is. While we could assume that people online could always “just google it”, we should consider the opportunity the lack of knowledge about our subject provides. As Marwick played ignorant to have people tell her about their perception of technological aspects with Twitter, so can explaining anthropology act as an “in”. It could, of course, also be that the people I spoke to have turned this around on me, and themselves feigned ignorance in relation to anthropology. While I presented this as an anthropological tool, it is also a pretty common conversational tool.

By approaching Twitter not as something mystical or strange, but rather as a new iteration of old concepts, I believe it is easier to accept Markham’s argument: The idea that one’s data (from social media/online) is valid ethnographic work. Although just mentioned briefly, Gupta & Fergusons ideas of field also did not offer any hinderance for considering Twitter as
a field. Rather I found that this text, written one year after my birth, aired ideas that were open for incorporating even Twitter. As this framework of different anthropological ideas fell in place, the image of Twitter as the natural part of anthropology that I now consider it, emerged. While perhaps boring or slightly anticlimactic, I end up agreeing with my original hypothesis. Twitter, as an example of a new social media, challenges anthropological method, but even so, many of the classic ideas and concepts for fieldwork still very much apply.

**Placing myself in the thesis**

Throughout the thesis I have relied on my own experience as well as that of the authors of the texts. While I have commented on the weaknesses of these experiences before, I still found them highly valuable. In a sense, they are what give me my unique view of this whole discussion. When explaining how I think and understand both anthropology as well as online interactions, these are the experiences that have helped define me. Looking back has been interesting, because it has shed new light on old experiences. What was natural to me then, is interesting anthropologically now. The readings of Gaffney & Puschmann, as well as Burns & Stieglitz, are however indicators of how shallow, or perhaps “homemade” my approach in the case study truly was. The fact that I imagined tweets simply as free, legally open to use, data show the naivety of the endeavour. While I still maintain that there was potential in the idea of using Goffman to find some similarities between the classical texts and modern fieldwork, my understanding of the tools I used was not up to date. In a sense, using my own experiences has been a way for me to attempt to introduce the ever-important empirical aspect of anthropological writing.

I have tried to walk the line between explaining through sharing of my own experiences, while still maintaining validity for the arguments through referring to the texts of others. In sharing my personal experiences, I hope to have created a stronger connection to the reader than a “simple” argumentative text would do. These examples are not used simply to affirm my points, but also to give an understanding of why and how I view certain things. The writing of the thesis itself, as a literature-based text, provided me with some challenges. As both the previous iterations did not work out, a change was clearly needed. Not only did I lack the empirical data which was planned to be the foundation of my original fieldwork, I also had to rethink my approach to literature. I did however, as stated in the introduction, gain valuable experience. As I explained, my own experiences have been used with some thought
to empirical evidence. These experiences were important, but they are not what I would consider the primary empirical data here. The main part of my empirical data is that of the authors I have referred to. While I would have liked to have my own empirical fieldwork experience to draw upon, I cannot be sure it would provide me better or more relevant data for this discussion.

The final barriers

My general thoughts on the matter of Twitter and anthropology are, as shown, rather positive. However, as in the thesis itself, there are still some challenging aspects. While I feel I have argued well for the aspects covered in the other parts of this summary, there are a few points which still bother me. Firstly, is the approach to explaining theoretical terms and ideas related to Twitter. In the case of Marwick’s text, it is understandable, as it was part of the same book as both Gaffney & Puschmann and Burns & Stieglitz. As I read Marwick, I then expected these chapters to enlighten me on the matter of API and metrics. But reading Gaffney & Puschmann did not offer an explanation of API in the way I believed. My assumption was that it would be written in a way most people would find very informative. What I ended up with was an understanding based on my previous knowledge of coding and a decent understanding of how databases work. What adds to the confusion is that such a technical and difficult reading argues that it takes on the responsibility of giving “an in-depth knowledge of the tools and the type of data available through them” (2012:56). This is done to address the technical and methodological requirements that “may seem daunting at first glance” (2012:56). When this is their expressed desire, I wish their explanation would be more, for a lack of a better term, beginner friendly. This is not a place I feel require a “trial by fire” introduction. The same is also reflected in Burns & Stieglitz text in relation to the idea of metrics. While the word is familiar to me, its use in this setting was new to me.

As two of the earlier chapter in the “Twitter and Society” (Weller et al. 2012), these two texts, combined, created the technical understanding of most of the texts in the book. I none the less stuck with them and presented them here. The argument from their introduction still stands, as I feel it exemplifies the framework of which we think social media anthropology in. When coming in blind, these are the sort of texts that are used to explain fieldwork theory on social media. For better or worse, it highlights my argument from the end of chapter 2. Had this been covered more thoroughly in our obligatory subjects, the bar to entry might have been
lower. While one may argue that I should have taken subjects which affirmed such knowledge, I had a basic understanding of how coding, programming and these aspects work. In hindsight this was not enough, but there was also nothing to prepare me for what I’ve read and learned working with this thesis. I have already argued for the importance of social media study, and the unlikelihood of being able to “ignore” it. As such, knowledge and understanding of these things should not be required searched out, but rather provided. While I disagree with some parts of Kozinets writing, there can be no doubt that netnography, especially “Redefined” has its place in anthropology. It raises interesting questions, problems and solutions I wish I had better knowledge of, but I was made aware of its existence late in the process. This led to, as explained, me not being certain enough of his work or the authors he referred to for me to give it more space in this thesis. The idea of a student not being prepared for how the fieldwork in their master’s thesis would play out, is something we were told early on. Expect the unexpected and be ready to alter your focus as new things catch your interest or are the interest of your informants. Through my, more or less, failed attempts at finding the focus for this thesis, I had to do just this. As I ended up finding several texts on anthropology and social media, even just Twitter, I’m surprised that I did not encounter more of them earlier on.

Twitter’s ethical implications are harder to summarize. The ethical aspects were, and still are, perhaps what I struggle the most with. Beurskens’s text, and the example of how loosely we consider TOS, makes this perhaps the biggest issue. When the platform, as well as our engagement in scientific study are based upon agreements/terms of service, general understandings of fair use and so on, it’s difficult to lack a general, global set of rules. While understandable, when viewed in light of Beurskens’s comments on state/country law and the near impossibility of enforcing Twitter’s rules, it remains an unsolved challenge. The image we end up with, based on Beurskens’s writing, is that of a platform where users may or may not always follow the rules, and this may or may not result in them being excluded from the platform. The emergence of bots and troll accounts are also problematic, although the banning of the Russian accounts does point towards a positive change in Twitter’s handling of these. As I said, I cannot see a solution to how we, as anthropologists, should react to them. The example of the Russian trollfactory, and the disagreements regarding its influence on the Election are factors that add to the confusion. The best is perhaps simply to acknowledge their existence and make room for error in our data. Alternatively, a study could be made with
focus on this, but as it was explained, these factories are not something I expect we would gain access to.

The final “barrier” I face when considering anthropological, or social media study in general on platforms such as Twitter, is the idea of “second rate”. As I started writing this thesis, I had no issue referring to Twitter or Facebook data as online data or social media data. But the more I worked with it, the more the question Markham asks started to bother me. Terms such as “second rate”, “real life”, “real world” or simply “real” suddenly did not sit as well with me. Bonilla & Rosa are careful when discussing this. They refer to the difference between hashtag activism and “real” activism by putting real in quotations (Bonilla & Rosa 2015:8). With this simple move they show that they do not consider hashtag activism any less real than physical activism. It is exactly this I too started to consider. When arguing for the use of Twitter data as ethnographical data, and when showing how it could be used to examine the same things as anthropology has seen for years, the idea of it as lesser just didn’t seem right. Our interactions and experiences online are just as real as anything we experience offline. Just as movies can move us emotionally just as much as going to the theatre, so can Twitter posts affect us in the same manner as a conversation. Relationships and friendships may occur here, and who is to say that they are less valuable than your relationship with your neighbour? As a person that has moved a lot the last years, I have pretty much no connection to my neighbour. My online relationships, however, followed me every time I moved.

Earlier I argued that breaking down the barrier of viewing Twitter or social media as something mystical or different was the way forward. But to get there, perhaps we need to start by acknowledging the reality and impact of our online interactions. The opportunities for anthropological work are there, we have the tools to overcome most challenges, and those that remain should intrigue us to solve. Just as we(people) adapted to ways of expressing ourselves on social media (smileys to convey emotions and so on), so must anthropology adept to ways of studying the same things we always have. And just as people did not necessarily express new emotions, so do we perhaps not need to study new things, but rather new emergences of the same.
Bibliography:


Postill, J. (2013): “Spain’s Indignados and the Mediated Aesthetics of Nonviolence”, Melbourne: RMIT University, cited as PDF
http://www.academia.edu/4019165/Spain_s_indignados_and_the_mediated_aesthetics_of_nonviolence


Online Links - Links to sites referred to (not press/media):

Definition of anthropology:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/about/social-anthropology

Data on the growing use of Social media:
http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/


On nettvett:
https://nettvett.no/

On Twitter:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter
https://twitter.com/en/tos

On Kozinets:
http://kozinets.net/about
On Twitter Code:


Resources used by authors working with Twitter:
https://github.com/540co/yourTwapperKeeper

https://github.com/WebEcologyProject/140kit

http://14okit.com/

http://support.gnip.com/

https://developer.twitter.com/


https://datasift.com/

Quote by TotalBiscuit (opens Twitch and may auto play video):

https://www.twitch.tv/totalbiscuit/p/d32d949b-d289-47e2-b301-5c2dcce29114

On fact checking:

http://www.politifact.com/

On changes to the legal aspect:

https://www.eugdpr.org/eugdpr.org.html
Media/press links to sites referred to:

The American Election:
http://www.wired.co.uk/article/twitter-bots-democracy-usa-election

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/03/donald-trump-internet-success-twitter-us-election-media


https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/muslimsreportstuff-trump-debate_us_57fba1b4e4b068ecb5e03aac

Trygdekontoret (specific episode):

https://tv.nrk.no/serie/trygdekontoret/MUHU06000718/17-04-2018
Attachment:

In this attachment I’ve added pictures and links of certain Tweets related to specific hashtags I or other authors have mentioned.

**Trump Jr.’s Tweeted campaign poster:**

![Trump Jr.'s Tweeted campaign poster](https://twitter.com/DonaldJTrumpJr/status/771858220864434181)
Tweet from Trump on Women:

https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/713747213801938946

Three examples of Tweets made with #MuslimsReportStuff during the Election:

1. https://twitter.com/mrcommoncents/status/785332716501884928
2. https://twitter.com/TinyMuslimah/status/785307539198058496

Donna Auston
@TinyMuslimah

Terrorists. #MuslimsReportStuff
4:34 AM - Oct 10, 2016
4,976 2,286 people are talking about this

3. https://twitter.com/ostadjaan/status/785453499710603265

omid safi
@ostadjaan

I'd like to report a presidential candidate who's stolen millions from the American people by not paying taxes. #MuslimsReportStuff #debate
2.14 PM - Oct 10, 2016
192 41 people are talking about this
Tweet used and referred to by Bonilla & Rosa regarding #IfTheyGunnedMeDown:

https://twitter.com/OGAtkinz/status/498637765790019584