



“Big brother sees you”

A qualitative study on users' experiences with targeted advertising on Facebook

En kvalitativ studie om användares upplevelser av riktad reklam på Facebook

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Abstract

As a consequence of the exposure of scandals involving targeted advertising and data collection, privacy concerns have arisen among users of social media, in particular Facebook. Previous research studies demonstrate that consumers have little knowledge about online behavioural advertising and hold misconceptions about it. According to a recent study by Internetstiftelsen (2021), 85% of Swedish internet users are concerned about big companies collecting data about them, and most people are unaware of the extent to which their online behaviour and activities are monitored. This study aims to examine how Swedish users on Facebook experience the platform's advertisements that are tailored to them. Moreover, this study also explores users' privacy concerns in relation to advertising on the platform. To implement this study, qualitative interviews have been carried out with eight respondents in the age group 30-50 years of age. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis to answer the study's research questions. The theoretical frameworks that have been implemented in this study are the "Big brother effect", the panopticon effect and the digital panopticon. These concepts about surveillance have been complemented by previous research on algorithmic decision-making technologies, privacy concerns, perceptions about targeted advertising and personalisation. Based on the conducted interviews in this study, the results show that Swedish people between the ages of 30-50 years feel that they are being monitored on the platform and this, in turn, raised concerns about a violation of privacy among some of the users, in particular when they feel that Facebook monitors private conversations or intercept them. Participants in this study are more concerned about how much and what data Facebook collects rather than data being utilised for commercial purposes. The result further showed that most of the respondents do not read Facebook's terms and policies even though they claim that they do not trust Facebook with their personal information. Users in this study experience that there is too much advertising on Facebook, while also finding it more pleasant and preferable to get ads that are based on their interests and behaviour rather than receiving randomised ads.

Keywords: Targeted advertising, privacy, Facebook, big brother effect, panopticon

Sammanfattning

Som en följd av att skandaler med riktad reklam och datainsamling avslöjats har det uppstått oro kring integriteten bland användare på sociala medier, särskilt på Facebook. Tidigare forskningsstudier visar att konsumenterna har lite kunskap om beteendestyrd reklam på nätet och har felaktiga uppfattningar om den. Enligt en nyligen genomförd undersökning från Internetstiftelsen (2021), är 85% av svenska internetanvändare oroliga över att stora företag samlar in uppgifter om de och de flesta är omedvetna om i vilken utsträckning deras beteende och aktiviteter på nätet övervakas. Den här studien syftar till att undersöka hur svenska användare på Facebook upplever plattformens annonser som är skräddarsydda för dem. Vidare undersöker denna studie även användarnas oro för integritet i relation till reklam på plattformen. För att genomföra denna studie har kvalitativa intervjuer genomförts med åtta respondenter i åldersgruppen 30-50 år. Intervjuerna transkriberades och analyserades med hjälp av tematisk analys för att besvara studiens forskningsfrågor. De teoretiska ramverk som har implementerats i denna studie är "Big brother-effekten", panoptikon-effekten och det digitala panoptikonet. Dessa begrepp om övervakning har kompletterats med tidigare forskning om algoritmiskt beslutsfattande teknologier, oro för integritet, uppfattningar om riktad reklam och personlig marknadsföring. Baserat på de genomförda intervjuerna i den här studien visar resultaten att svenskar i åldrarna 30-50 år känner att de övervakas på plattformen och detta i sin tur väckte oro för kränkning av integriteten hos vissa av användarna, särskilt när de känner att Facebook övervakar privata samtal eller avlyssnar dem. Respondenterna i denna studie är mer oroade över hur mycket och vilka uppgifter Facebook samlar in snarare än att uppgifterna används i kommersiella syften. Vidare visade resultatet att de flesta av de tillfrågade inte läser Facebooks villkor och policyer trots att de hävdar att de inte litar på Facebook när det gäller deras personliga information. Användarna i denna studie upplever att det ibland blir för mycket reklam på Facebook, samtidigt som de tycker att det är bättre att få annonser som är baserade på deras intresse och beteende snarare än att få slumpmässiga annonser.

Nyckelord: Riktad reklam, integritet, Facebook, big brother effekten, panopticon

Preface

This bachelor's thesis was jointly written by Marwa Ali and Mikaela Hollgren with equal work distribution and completion.

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1. Introduction

Have you ever noticed how advertisements on the Internet seem to fit your interests and previous searches? How would you feel about receiving advertisements aimed at influencing your voting preference? In 2015, a political consulting company obtained access to 87 million users' personal data on Facebook (Lyon, 2019), which became one of the most widely publicised data breaches in 2018, known as the Cambridge Analytica scandal. The company allegedly utilised the information to construct psychographically targeted adverts in order to sway people's voting preferences in the 2016 US presidential election (Hinds et al., 2020). Consequently, the incident constituted a watershed moment in surveillance research, with the fundamental difference being that the internet is essentially a fluid and liquid surveillance space (Lyon, 2019). Furthermore, living in the twenty-first century, social media has become a fundamental part of our lives, and as a result, a significant part of societal surveillance occurs on these platforms (Lyon, 2018).

Along with the growth of digital platforms, personal information has become one of the most important tools used by advertisers in recent years to reach a targeted audience, and while it has its advantages, personalised advertisements have also raised concerns such as potential privacy and space violations (de Groot, 2022). In Sweden, 95% of the population use social media and 54% of them use Facebook on a daily basis. Accordingly, 85% of Swedish internet users are concerned that multinational companies such as Google and Facebook collect and use their personal data. In terms of daily usage of Facebook during 2021, people born between 1970 and 1990 use the platform the most (Internetstiftelsen, 2021). For this reason, this study is limited to examining the experiences of users that are between the ages of 30 and 50 years.

1.1 Background & research problem

The social networking platform Facebook is currently the most popular platform in the world, and the company also plays a significant role in digital marketing, having developed a variety of online behavioural advertising (OBA) methods. Although it is not unknown that Facebook tracks users' actions on the platform and obtains data from other apps and websites via different technologies, the true scope of Facebook's advertising ecosystem remains unknown. Consequently, some of both Facebook's and Google's targeting tactics have been proven to be discriminatory (Habib et al., 2022), such as the Cambridge Analytica scandal where Facebook allowed the political consulting company to obtain personal information about users without users' consent in order to target them with political ads (Lyon, 2019; Hinds et al., 2020; Habib et al., 2022).

According to previous studies, many users struggle to grasp OBA, and there are worries about the data methods that enable it (Habib et al., 2022). In their study conducted in the United States, Ur and colleagues (2012) found that participants believed that OBA provided benefits to consumers while it also posed privacy risks. Some of the participants voiced concerns about being monitored, and the most general abstract concept defined by participants in the study was a breach of privacy (Ur et al., 2012). Customers gain from personalisation in terms of convenience and efficiency, but personalisation also raises privacy concerns since it entails the collection of personal data. As a consequence, personalisation may create negative feelings when individuals suspect that their private information has been collected and tracked without their knowledge (Lee & Cranage, 2011). Advertisements can have negative effects, one of which is that they might be viewed as intrusive, which can lead to ad irritation and displeasure, which then may result in consumers avoiding the ads (Ying et al., 2009).

Against the discussion above, previous research shows that targeted advertising on social networking platforms may raise privacy concerns, while also providing consumers with benefits. Even though there is a lot of advertising research, several authors have urged studies that focus on actual real-world behaviour and first-hand encounters with advertising on social networking sites (Ying et al., 2009; Maslowska et al., 2016). Accordingly, this study aims to provide an

understanding of how advertising on Facebook is experienced by users. Furthermore, numerous studies within this research area have been conducted in other countries, such as the United States (Roberts, 2010; Zhang et al., 2010; Ur et al., 2012; Ham, 2017; Youn & Shin, 2019; Segijn & van Ooijen, 2020). As a result, we believe it is critical to investigate Swedish users' experiences with advertising and privacy concerning Facebook's advertisements, as user behaviour and experiences may differ depending on where users live. Due to Facebook playing a significant role in digital marketing (Habib et al., 2022), and two-thirds of people born between 1970 and 1990 use the platform every day (Internetstiftelsen, 2021), this study focuses on Facebook.

1.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine how a selected group of users in Sweden between the ages of 30 to 50 years old experience advertising on Facebook that is tailored to them. This study further aims to explore what privacy concerns arise among the users in relation to the tailored advertisements that appear on their feed.

1.1.3 Research questions

The main research question:

- **RQ:** How do users that are 30 to 50 years old experience targeted advertising that appears on their Facebook feed?

Through the main question, we aim to gain a picture of users' experiences with privacy in relation to the tailored advertising on Facebook since previous research has shown that targeted advertising raises concerns about privacy.

In addition to the main research question, this study intends to answer the research question;

- **RQ:** What are users' main privacy concerns in relation to targeted advertising on Facebook?

1.2 Description of the study

The authors of this study have tried to address the research questions and purpose by conducting eight interviews with respondents that are between the ages of 30 to 50 years old who live in Sweden. The respondents live in different cities, half of the respondents live in smaller cities and half of them live in bigger cities. Targeted advertising necessitates the meticulous monitoring of personal data and user behaviour (Fuchs, 2014), and it is based on two user concerns, one of which is privacy (Zhang et al., 2010), hence, this study strives to provide light on Facebook users' experiences. It is a subject that has raised privacy concerns and previous research shows that consumers lack knowledge about it, therefore, it is important to examine the subject from users' perspectives. With this research, we can provide an understanding of how tailored advertising on Facebook is experienced by a selected group of users in Sweden. In section 2.4, we explain what our research is focused on and how it adds to the field.

1.3 Definitions

Facebook is an internet-based social media platform that allows users to create a public profile and identity where they can connect with other users who share the same interests (Facebook, n.d), as well as track their own and others' connections (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). In addition to connecting with others, users can send private messages, comment on each other's wall (a form of pinboard), publish photographs and videos, or use one of the many applications available on the platform (Facebook, n.d).

Surveillance has been defined as “any collecting or processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been gathered” (Lyon, 2001, as cited in Humphreys, 2011, p. 576). The term surveillance has typically been used to characterise institutional frameworks employed by governments or companies to impose control on individual citizens; nevertheless, experts have reexamined the types of surveillance that are unique to the digital age as a result of technological advancements (Duffy & Chan, 2018). This study focuses on surveillance that is due to the collection of data.

Privacy has been defined as “the right to be left alone” (Warren & Brandeis, 1890, as cited in Pierson, 2012, p.106), however, there is no universal definition of privacy (Lukács, 2016). Another meaning of privacy is the power to control what personal information is made visible to others (Humphreys, 2011). In this study, the term is discussed in relation to Facebook and the focus is on what privacy concerns users may have in relation to targeted advertising.

Targeted advertising is an advertising method that delivers advertisements that are directed at a certain audience based on the content of the website, for example, the user's location, browsing history, demographics or the user profile, to increase the performance of marketing campaigns (Farahat & Bailey, 2012).

Personal data refers to any information which can recognize or identify a person. Personal data is made up of several bits of information that, when put together, may be used to identify a specific individual. Information is considered to be identifiable if it can be recognized directly or indirectly to a person's identity, particularly by recognition of a person by name, identification number, geographic data, an online identity, commercials or social identifier (European Commission, n.d).

Algorithms are described as a set of mathematical rules that specify how a set of data operates. In relation to social media, algorithms help to maintain and support the ranking of search results and adverts and on Facebook, an algorithm guides the displaying of sites and information in a certain sequence (Hill, 2015).

Cookies are little text files that a web browser stores on a user's computer in order to keep track of credentials that identify each browser-server session as well as interactions between a user's terminal and specific websites. Users' cookie-enabled web browsers provide information about the sites they visit and the pages they view, which can then be used to provide targeted advertising (McStay, 2012).

1.4 Delimitation

Several previous studies primarily focused on age groups such as young people, students and/or the elderly (Smit et al., 2014; Hoofnagle et al., 2010; Quan-Haase & Elueze, 2018). Additionally, previous research has also shown that persons over thirty years old are most concerned about their data and personal information (O'Brien & Torres, 2012), hence, this study is limited to users aged 30 to 50. According to the report by Internetstiftelsen (2021), Facebook was one of the three most widely used social media platforms in 2021. Instagram, which was also one of the three most extensively used social media platforms in 2021 (Internetstiftelsen, 2021), could have been investigated as well; but, because Facebook plays such a big role in digital marketing, it seemed more suitable to focus on Facebook. Additionally, when it comes to everyday social media usage, people born between the 1970s and 1990s use Facebook the most (Internetstiftelsen, 2021), hence, this study solely examines users' experiences with targeted advertising on Facebook. Finally, the respondents in this study are Swedish citizens as previous studies in this research area have mostly been conducted in countries such as the United States (Youn & Shin, 2019; Ur et al., 2012; Roberts, 2010; Ham, 2017; Segijn & van Ooijen, 2020).

1.5 Disposition

This thesis consists of eight chapters, from the introduction and background to future studies and implications for society. In the first chapter, we present the background in relation to the study's objective and research questions. The second chapter consists of previous research within the area that is applicable to this study and the chapter concludes with a summary of the previous research as well as what this study adds to the field. The third chapter consists of the theoretical visions of Big Brother and the panopticon, and the chapter concludes with a summary. In the fourth chapter, the method employed in this study is presented along with discussions regarding ethical aspects, validity and reliability and the chapter ends with a discussion of methodology criticism. The results from the interviews are presented together with an analysis in the fifth chapter. This is followed by a discussion chapter where the results are discussed based on the themes created, and the discussion is then followed by our findings and conclusions. Moreover, we offer areas for future research on

the issue that we think is intriguing. In the eighth and final chapter of the study, we discuss the consequences and focus on how the problem area affects society.

2. Previous research

In this chapter, previous research in the area is presented. This chapter is divided into four different sections; *Algorithmic decision-making technologies*, *privacy concerns*, *targeted advertising* and a *summary of previous research*. The research presented in this chapter was discovered through the Google Scholar database by using keywords such as *targeted advertising on Facebook*, *monitoring on Facebook*, *surveillance on Facebook* and *tailored advertising*.

2.1 Algorithmic decision-making technologies

Surveillance has become an integral part of our lives in the twenty-first century, manifesting itself in a variety of ways and according to Lyon (2018), one of the reasons we have ended up in a surveillance society is the rapid growth of social media in recent years, as well as how companies use social media to make money through advertising and marketing online. Yeung (2016) states that digital marketing is based on complicated and powerful tools that allow marketers to affect how customers make decisions. These technology methods are frequently based on algorithmic decision-making technologies and rely on precise links between data from various sources that would otherwise be inaccessible, such as our data history, previous searches, population data, brand information and personal information. Due to this, marketers have the capacity to alter and manipulate consumers' behaviour on a personal level (Darmody & Zwick, 2020) to gain capital and market domination (Zuboff, 2015). This encompasses a wide range of behavioural and attitude measurements that can be aggregated and applied far beyond the environment in which they were developed (Trottier, 2016).

Furthermore, it is evident that advertisements in our feed on various platforms are related to what we have been looking at previously and match our interests (Lyon, 2018). Consequently, participants of the internet society are now being watched more than ever and some Facebook users believe that the social networking site represents a return to a small-town atmosphere, in which everyone knows about everyone else's affairs (Trottier, 2016). Advertisers are increasingly tracking people's internet activities and exploiting the data to show consumers individually customised

advertisements. This phenomenon is called online behavioural advertising (OBA) and simply means that companies track website visits by consumers. Although OBA can be beneficial to advertisers, it also raises concerns about users' privacy as it entails collecting, using and sharing personal data (Boerman et al., 2017).

An algorithm, simply explained, is a phrase for a set of precisely constructed instructions that are performed in a specified order (Bucher, 2017); nonetheless, social scientists are more concerned with the ways in which “software conditions our very existence” (Kitchin & Dodge, 2011, as cited in Bucher, 2017, p. 31) rather than the mechanical term of it. The algorithmic imaginary refers to how individuals think, perceive, and experience algorithms, as well as what these imaginations enable and it is not to be confused with a false belief or fetish (Bucher, 2017). Algorithms are a phenomenon that can be comprehended through personal experience and how they make people feel. In Bucher's (2017) study, one of the respondents instinctively realised that the Facebook algorithm generates ties between her online activity, the apps, and the advertisements that are presented to her. Although the user is aware that she is being monitored, she still has the weird sensation of being classed and profiled in some way by algorithms (Bucher, 2017).

The performance of algorithms may be learned by looking at how they are expressed, experienced, and challenged in the public domain. Several respondents acknowledged that they were unfamiliar with the algorithm; yet, they had complex beliefs about what the Facebook algorithm is and should be (Bucher, 2017). Algorithms are utilised by advertisers to determine which commercials are most relevant to their customers; nonetheless, the lack of transparency of algorithms, as well as their propensity to violate user privacy, results in a reduction in user trust and desire for behavioural advertising. In reaction to algorithms' lack of transparency and their ability to violate users' privacy, a call for algorithmic transparency, or the disclosure of how an ad is personalised to a user, has been made (Eslami et al., 2018). This has led us in the direction of this study, which focuses on a selected group of Swedish users' experiences with tailored advertising on Facebook. Given that a significant portion of Facebook's revenue is from advertising (Facebook, 2013, as cited in Fuchs, 2014), users on the platform are exposed to advertisements on their feed and these algorithms may give users a

sensation of being monitored and profiled in some way. Factors such as algorithms and monitoring users apply well to this study as these factors affect users' experiences with targeted advertising.

By employing mathematical algorithms, marketers can make better use of data such as purchases and other behavioural data, and as a result, they can better understand how to target services, ads, and content. Algorithms enable the creation of a cybernetic link to identification rather than relying on core identity conceptions (Cheney-Lippold, 2011). As a consequence, these produced cybernetic categorization patterns may be at odds with how users feel about and perceive themselves. Some respondents are uneasy with their classification, while others are distant and furious with the algorithm for implying that they would be interested in the content offered to them. People and algorithms have a forced relationship since algorithms do things to people, but people also do things to algorithms, such as concealing items to teach the algorithm to present more interesting information in their news feed (Bucher, 2017).

2.2 Privacy concerns

Previous research studies demonstrate that consumers have little knowledge about OBA and hold misconceptions about it (Marreiros et al., 2015; McDonald & Cranor, 2010; Smit et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, 85% of Swedish internet users are concerned about big companies collecting data about them, and most people are unaware of the extent to which their online behaviour and activities are monitored (Boerman, 2017; O'Brien & Torres, 2012). Consequently, companies know a lot about their customers, however, customers do not know much about what happens to their personal information, and it appears that it is almost impossible for consumers to determine which personal information is collected and what is happening to this data (Boerman, 2017). Due to facing systemic threats of being hurt by others, individuals in modern societies have an intrinsic interest in regulating whatever personal data about them is preserved and made available to whom (Fuchs, 2011). In accordance with the panopticon which concerns disciplinary control, people may change their behaviour as a result of feeling watched and take measures to ensure that companies like Facebook do not acquire as much data about them.

Ads based on personal information have become more popular due to the increase in Internet usage, and there are many apps today that want to know our locations (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2020). This in turn could potentially affect how users experience privacy on the Internet, nonetheless, a social media platform such as Facebook. According to the survey conducted by Statistikmyndigheten SCB (2020), access to their physical location, as well as their profile or information on social networking sites or shared online storage, is frequently restricted or prohibited among Swedish internet users aged 16 to 85. Users were also asked if they are concerned about their online actions being monitored to target them with customised advertising, in which nearly half of the respondents answered that they were unconcerned. Although one in ten people said they were extremely concerned, the majority of those surveyed, and 53 per cent of those aged 16 to 24, are unconcerned about their internet activities being tracked to enable targeted advertising.

Of the Swedish population, 73 per cent of adults aged 16 to 85 are aware that cookies can be utilised to track individuals' online actions, develop profiles for each specific user, and customise adverts to them. Despite the awareness, only 28 per cent are more inclined to adjust their cookie settings to block or restrict cookies (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2020). Similar to the results from this study, a study by Smit and colleagues (2014) conducted in the Netherlands, demonstrated that only one-third of the respondents in the study are motivated to avoid data collection for OBA by refusing to accept any sort of cookie from any website. Moreover, the authors demonstrate that consumers' knowledge is insufficient and that users have a particularly tough time understanding cookies, which is the technique behind it. This is further supported in a study from Internetstiftelsen (2021), which showed that every fourth Swedish internet user does not know how to regulate their cookie settings on their own. This lack of understanding is evident in people's fears of their personal data being misused and their privacy being violated (Smit et al., 2014).

Consumers' concern about their data and personal information also applies to Facebook as the platform allows its users to share information and build their social networks on the internet. Along with the advantages of making it easier to stay in touch with friends and learn more about them, there are risks and issues associated with sharing information with large groups of people (O'Brien & Torres, 2012). In the Irish study conducted by O'Brien and Torres (2012), only 25.3 per cent claimed that they trust Facebook and over three-quarters of users stated that they have tightened their privacy settings, motivated primarily by privacy concerns. However, the users are not fully informed or aware of all privacy-related activities on the social networking site (O'Brien & Torres, 2012). Even though Facebook users have the option of keeping the visibility of their personal information limited, there is still a concern regarding users' personal information and the surveillance atmosphere.

One concern regarding privacy is that even though users are being notified about infrequent access to their accounts, they are not paying attention to their account information, which could lead to a risk to their privacy (Mani & Chouk, 2019). While young people claim to value privacy, they often disclose a lot of personal information on social media, a phenomenon that is known as the "privacy paradox" (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016). Another concern is the difficulty in accessing and monitoring the privacy options that are provided, and those who do not know how to protect their personal data and have little knowledge of the privacy settings on Facebook are not aware of the confidential information that might be exposed. Previous research has further shown that users on social media want to hold their private conversations private, without anyone knowing what they are discussing which seems difficult in modern technology (Sohoraye et al., 2015).

Although only a quarter of people trust Facebook, the majority believe that Facebook and users have an equal responsibility to secure users' information. However, younger Facebook users believe it is more their responsibility to secure their information on Facebook, whilst older Facebook users believe it is more of Facebook's responsibility to protect users' information. Although younger people feel they have a greater duty to protect their data, they are the users who expose the most information, participate in the most Facebook activities, log in more frequently, and do not read the privacy policy (O'Brien & Torres, 2012). The study by O'Brien and Torres was conducted

several years ago and the platform has since then made changes, hence, users' opinions towards Facebook may have changed as well.

2.3 Targeted advertising

Facebook's revenue is largely based on advertising, and without it, or without advertisers, the firm could suffer (Facebook, 2013, as cited in Fuchs, 2014). According to Facebook's own judgement, this risk is linked to capitalism's broader political economy. An advertising-driven capital accumulation model is based on a steady stream of advertising spending as well as corporations' assumptions that particular sorts of advertising in various media could potentially improve profits (Fuchs, 2014). In their study conducted in Finland, Ruckenstein and Granroth (2019) focus on emotional responses to targeted marketing on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, and fear was the most common emotional reaction reported by participants in response to a violation of intimacy. The most common concern expressed by participants was the mystery surrounding what, how much, and how information is gathered, as well as what it is utilised for (Ruckenstein & Granroth, 2019).

According to Gandy (1993), the panoptic sort is a disciplinary surveillance system that collects, processes, and shares information about individuals and groups in order to regulate and control their access to the products and services that make modern capitalism possible. Moreover, the system uses routine measures to categorise and sort people into various categories (Gandy, 1993). Fuchs (2014) expands on Gandy's work and links it to targeted advertising on social media. Users' interests are identified through careful monitoring of personal data and user behaviour, which classifies them into consumer groups and evaluates their interests in contrast to other consumers and available adverts that are then targeted at them. However, advertising is primarily the result of various marketing decisions and powerful economic relationships. While platforms monitor users' online behaviour, advertisements do not always align with what the user needs or wants, but rather a calculated guess at what they might want or need, as advertising is primarily the result of various marketing decisions and powerful economic relationships (Fuchs, 2014). Fuchs' work is relevant in this study to understand users' experiences with personalised advertisements on their feeds: do the ads align with their needs and wants or do they believe they are the result of marketing decisions?

Lupton and Michael (2017) demonstrate that it is not always the data collection that disturbs individuals, but rather the harmful data movements and uses, particularly those that aren't initiated by the company: frauds and scams that harm both the consumer and the market. Moreover, when humans engage with digital technologies, digital data assemblages are created. This data is used by a wide range of persons and organisations, and people sometimes leverage their data assemblages for personal gain. Although, other players and agencies, including hackers and cybercriminals, use the data more frequently for commercial, research, governmental, or managerial goals. The participants in the study conducted by Lupton and Michael (2017) were frequently aware that firms like Facebook and Google do in fact track their interests, behaviours, and content uploaded to social media. This surveillance was evident in the targeted advertising that consumers see when they visit these websites (Lupton & Michael, 2017).

Based on focus group interviews in the U.S., Zhang and colleagues (2010) outline that the acceptance of targeted advertising is dependent on two user issues. The first is privacy; consumers may be uncomfortable with, and thus unwilling to sign up for a service that requires gathering data about their habits online, TV watching, or phone habits, even if such monitoring is both legal and ethical. The second point of user issue to consider is user approval and trust. On the one hand, personalised advertising that is based on a user's interests will be more relevant to the user, while irrelevant adverts that may bother the user should be reduced. Users, on the other hand, may perceive advertisements that are excessively personal or precisely targeted to be disconcerting or alarming. Participants reported a significant desire to be able to choose what information the system gathers, how long data is gathered and stored, and whether data collection and tracking are enabled or disabled (Zhang et al., 2010). The two user issues identified by Zhang and colleagues (2010) can be used to interpret the primary privacy concerns indicated by respondents in this study.

From a business standpoint, personalised marketing is beneficial as it can better reach customers, while from a consumer perspective, research has shown that the phenomenon is more nuanced. On the one hand, consumer research shows that tailored marketing has a number of benefits, including increased convenience in the form of individualised recommendations. On the other side, with the rise of current data-driven algorithmic forms of personalisation, personal data collecting and processing has become more crucial for consumers, resulting in an increase in perceived privacy costs and hazards (Strycharz et al., 2019). As a result of these privacy concerns, "reactance" may occur, in which customers reject the ad's appeal and act in the opposite manner planned (Tucker, 2014). Targeted advertising and privacy are linked; while consumers may find customised advertising to be beneficial, they may also feel that their privacy is being invaded. This exemplifies how targeted advertising and privacy can occasionally collide.

2.4 Summary of previous research

According to prior studies, marketers can make greater use of user data to better understand how to target advertisements. The previous research shows that advertising based on personal information is growing and this in turn has also raised concerns about privacy. Moreover, the previous research also shows that personal data from users is acquired and then utilised to target and customise adverts. Advertisements on our feeds as we navigate through various platforms are related to what we have been looking at previously, and they also tend to match our interests (Lyon, 2018). As a result, online society members are being observed more than ever before, and some Facebook users believe that the platform marks a return to a small-town environment, where everyone knows about everyone else's business (Trottier, 2016). The previous research chapter provides an understanding of how targeted advertising entails the usage of personal information and while it provides users with benefits, it can also raise concerns such as a violation of privacy. Several researchers claim that consumers may find targeted advertising more enticing and relevant to their interests, however, they may also find it unpleasant. The previous studies presented in this chapter provide a foundation for this study in order to better grasp the phenomena and with the previous research in this study, we can contribute with insights from another group of people. Considering that plenty of studies have been conducted in other countries such as the United

States (Youn & Shin, 2019; Ur et al., 2012; Roberts, 2010; Ham, 2017; Segijn & van Ooijen, 2020), we believe it is critical to investigate how a selected group of Facebook users in Sweden experience targeted advertising on Facebook. We believe that user behaviour differs depending on factors such as location and age, hence, we believe that it is important to examine Swedish users' experiences to add to the field. The results from this study can provide an example of how targeted advertising is experienced by Facebook users in Sweden.

3. Theory

This chapter presents Orwell's vision of Big Brother, the big brother effect, the panopticon effect and the digital panopticon. The concepts of surveillance will be used to strengthen and explain how Facebook users experience tailored advertising that is a result of the monitoring that occurs. Moreover, Orwell's vision of Big Brother raises awareness about surveillance and the panopticon is more concerned with self-discipline. However, the panopticon has become a leading framework for analysing surveillance in order to understand how it has become involved in modern society (Caluya, 2009).

3.1 The vision of "Big Brother"

Issues about surveillance, privacy, and data have been a topic of discussion for decades (Power, 2016) and one leading term for power abuse is George Orwell's vision of "Big Brother." The vision of "Big Brother" was published in 1949 and is a symbolic warning about the risks of governments exploiting modern technology to maintain their power and control over people. "Big Brother" raises awareness of government data collecting, which includes anything from local police departments to traffic cameras to advertising and enormous databases. "Big Brother" is a fictional character that represents totalitarian control over liberty and privacy data in order to spy on people, and "Big brother is constantly watching you", as the expression goes, is meant to warn individuals and make them aware of governmental control and encroachment on people's lives and serves a reminder of "big brothers" omnipresence and authority to all citizens. Orwell's vision of power abuse and surveillance is the most current used metaphor for depicting surveillance and actions that aim to constrain individuals' freedom (Mani & Chouk, 2019). Furthermore, the vision has become prominent in society and in the literature which others have used to theorise and explain certain features of our society since technology has progressed to the stage that George Orwell's dystopian vision of a totalitarian society is now a possibility (Power, 2016).

3.1.1 The Big Brother effect

With the rise of computers in the 1980-the 1990s, the phrases “Big Brother effect” or “Big Brother Syndrome” have been used to describe the concerns of computer monitoring and controlling, and the danger of networked regimes that aim to gain profit and revenue through surveillance (Mani & Chouk, 2019). Furthermore, the rising frequency of scandals involving data leakage of personal information and citizens being surveilled by government or commercial organisations contribute to the mistrust and concerns of a so-called “Orwellian” future, which is named after Orwell’s vision of big brother. With the rise of smart devices, organisations may now access and analyse consumer data to improve their understanding of consumer habits (Wunderlich et al., 2015), which raises privacy issues as it may put consumers in a situation of constantly feeling surveilled (Mani & Chouk, 2019).

Applying this perspective to today’s social network sites, in particular Facebook, there is a clear connection regarding the issues of privacy and surveillance. The recent emergence of social networking services such as Facebook has brought up several interesting and complex security and privacy issues (Shehab et al., 2012). Facebook is constantly refining its advertising methods based on its users’ personal data, which is being collected on a daily basis. Individuals may have lost control of their activities on social media platforms as digital corporations exploit data to track individuals online, and organisations may now access, retain, and analyse customer data in real-time thanks to linked items and mobile applications, allowing them to improve their understanding of consumer patterns (Mani & Chouk, 2019). However, electronic technology has advanced significantly since Orwell published his view, which means that it might have to be updated, although Orwell’s vision is yet not obsolete. Many of Orwell’s points are still valid and deserving of consideration, and with new technologies emerging, customers may regard smart products as a danger to their personal freedoms and right to privacy (Mani & Chouk, 2019). According to Mani and Chouk (2017), smart products “raise privacy issues since that can put consumers under constant surveillance” (p. 80). As the “big brother” effect raises privacy issues, it can be applied in this study since Facebook monitors users on the platform for commercial purposes amongst other things, hence, it may raise privacy concerns amongst users. It is helpful to explore beyond Orwell’s

vision and turn to Foucault and his vision of the panopticon in order to see if it can compensate for the flaws of Orwell's model of dystopia (Lyon, n.d, as cited in Martin, 2022).

3.2 The panopticon effect

In scholarly research, data abuse and surveillance are not new concerns (Power, 2016). In 1977, Foucault released his book "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison", which has become a leading framework for analysing surveillance. In his book, Foucault examines individuals in disciplinary environments and social control mechanisms, and he claims that punishment has shifted from the body to the soul along with a transformation in the social structure (Foucault, 1977, as cited in Caluya, 2009). Foucault further analyses Bentham's panopticon prison, whereas panopticon is defined as "all-seeing." The panopticon prison was designed so that each convict was segregated into distinct cells with little windows. The prison's trademark was that the convicts were not able to see the guards through the windows, however, the guards were able to see the convicts. This architectural design gives the impression of constantly being watched as the convicts did not know if they were being watched or not. Bentham thought that this was the ideal prison since he believed that the convicts would always behave as if they were observed. This is described by Foucault as a "disciplinary control", and the panopticon soon became prominent in the burgeoning field of surveillance studies, which sought to understand how surveillance has become involved in modern society (Caluya, 2009).

3.2.1 The digital panopticon

The panopticon was used by Bentham as a paradigmatic idea that may be altered and applied to a number of social settings and purposes. The panopticon can be applicable to modern society because the presence of watching and being watched is increasing as a result of new technologies. The panopticon concept has moved beyond the jail to places such as the workplace, as well as softer forms, for example, entertainment and marketing. This can be called panopticommodity or participatory panopticon (Galič et al., 2017). According to Abraham (2018), Facebook is a digital

panopticon that not only violates our right to privacy but also makes us continually exposed, affecting our behaviour and identity. As a result of being aware that we are being watched, we tailor our acts to meet the expectations of our audiences. In the same way that we self-regulate or self-censor to control which pieces of our identity are revealed online, Facebook's digital panopticon is similar to Bentham's panopticon (Abraham, 2018). This viewpoint is relevant to this study to examine if users' experiences with targeted advertising affect their behaviour and if they take precautions to protect their personal information.

While Bentham's panopticon refers to prison, the key is visibility, and this is applicable on Facebook as the platform requires users to create their online persona in order to join the platform. The profile that users create consists of a profile picture, a page and other relevant information that they feel like sharing. Every action a user takes on Facebook's network is recorded on the profile page, which includes every "like," remark, and shared link. In this manner, users' Facebook profiles are similar to a user's cell where a person's whole performance or activity may be seen by anybody at any time. Even though Facebook is a digital platform, those who use its interface are just as open and vulnerable as those who live in the cells of a real panopticon. Rather than being monitored by guards, individuals are being watched by the audience or the watcher on the Internet in the digital panopticon (Abraham, 2018).

As Foucault pointed out, it is not the permanent presence of an actual guard that is required, but rather what the tower and guard symbolised, namely that power wielded over people leads to an attempt to govern overall behaviour. The panopticon has an impact not only on persons' physical behaviour but also on their emotional state. In consequence, some claim that a panopticon's surveillance tactics restrict our behaviour to the point that we no longer want to freely express ourselves. Users on Facebook act as if they are being monitored, much like the inmates in the panopticon do. Facebook operates as the panopticon's guard tower, surveying and having access to the activities of various users while remaining invisible, much like the guards in the panopticon are not seen by the prisoners (Abraham, 2018). The main problem is that people are often unaware of who is watching them online or whether they are being watched. The feeling of being watched, which is a constant mediating factor, influences how people develop and enact their online

personalities (Waycott et al., 2017). In our study, the panopticon perspective and digital panopticon is intriguing since it shows that it has an impact on a person's physical behaviour, but also mental state. As a result, it is interesting to see how users' experiences with tailored advertising affect their behaviour on the platform and if it affects their mental state.

Many parts of our privacy have been badly broken in the digital panopticon, forcing us to self-censor and self-regulate in order to maintain as much control as possible (Abraham, 2018), hence, this concept is intriguing as we want to explore what the most common privacy concerns users have in relation to Facebook's monitoring for commercial purposes. The panopticon's impact on numerous social media platforms has been shown to pose a significant risk and threat (Abraham, 2018), and since targeted advertising entails the careful monitoring of personal data and user behaviour (Fuchs, 2014), the panopticon is appropriate for this study to understand how users feel about being monitored for commercial purposes and whether they discipline their social media activity and behaviour.

3.3 Summary of theory

Orwell's vision of Big Brother concerns the risks of governments exploiting modern technology to maintain their power and control people, however, with the rise of technology, the vision can be used to explain the concerns of computer monitoring and controlling. Consumers may be put in a situation of constantly feeling surveilled and this can raise privacy issues amongst users on social media. The expression "Big Brother is constantly watching you" is meant to warn individuals, and if users on Facebook see a clear link between their online behaviour and the advertisements on their feed, it might give them the feeling that they are being surveilled. Consequently, users may regard it as a danger to their personal freedoms and as a violation of their privacy.

The ideal prison was one in which inmates had no idea whether they were being observed or not, and as a result, they would always act as if they were being watched, which Foucault referred to as "disciplinary control" (Caluya, 2009). This is useful in understanding how social media can be

viewed as Panopticon, in which users believe they are being “watched” or seen by, for example, Facebook or other users, and thus try to maintain a certain behaviour in order to avoid having pieces of their identity exposed online. Considering that Facebook collects personal information about users and monitors their online behaviour, the panopticon is essential in order to understand how users experience the advertisements and if they feel surveilled on the platform. The feeling of being watched may result in users self-regulating on the platform. While the panopticon is more concerned with self-discipline and the vision of Big Brother concerns maintaining power and control over people, both visions include privacy issues and can be applied to how digital companies use data to monitor people online; thus, the experiences and concerns of respondents can be interpreted in light of these visions.

4. Methodology

The execution of our thesis will be discussed in this chapter. To start with, the choice of method will be clarified followed by the procedure. We will also discuss validity and reliability, ethical principles and lastly present methodology criticism.

4.1 Qualitative method

The main methodological approaches within research studies are quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Qualitative studies are focused on interpretation and the purpose of acquiring a deeper understanding of the subject, while quantitative studies are concerned with statistics and measurement (Ekström & Larsson, 2010). As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study is to examine how users experience targeted advertising on Facebook, hence, qualitative interviews are a suitable method. To gain a better understanding of people's feelings, experiences, and opinions, as well as to analyse their perceptions and actions, a qualitative method can be used (Ekström & Larsson, 2010). Interviews are a great way to learn about societal concerns, but questions about people's thoughts and experiences are equally intriguing. An interview refers to a two-way exchange of ideas, however, it is more of a way for one person to learn something from another (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne, 2011). There are two main types of interviews within qualitative research, the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2012). We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews since we wanted a list of topics to be covered, yet still, give the respondents space to answer the questions in their own words. Semi-structured interviews include an interview guide which can be used as a script while still leaving space to be flexible (Bryman, 2012). We formulated questions and created topics based on previous research and theory which will be presented in this methodology chapter.

4.1.1 Interviews

Qualitative interviews have been conducted with 8 respondents in order to gain a deeper understanding of users' experiences with targeted advertising and their perception of privacy in relation to tailored advertising. One could argue that qualitative interviewing is the most objective type of study when it comes to qualitative components of human experience, discourse, and interaction. The only way to grasp these aspects of our existence appears to be through qualitative interviews (Brinkmann, 2013). As we are interested in the qualitative features of how users experience tailored advertisements on the platform and what privacy aspects they express in relation to targeted advertising, we conducted qualitative interviews. We have conducted 8 semi-structured interviews with respondents in the age group 30 to 50 years old that use Facebook. According to Eriksson-Zetterquist and Ahrne (2015), six to eight participants can be a good quantity to get enough data. Interviews allowed us to obtain specific information straight from the target group we are studying. As a result, the data collected from this study's respondents can be utilised to validate or reject data from earlier studies.

Semi-structured interviews are a type of qualitative interview that is most commonly used in the human and social sciences. As opposed to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of dialogue's propensity to produce knowledge by allowing the interviewee far more discretion to follow up on whatever topics he or she feels are important (Brinkmann, 2013). This approach allowed respondents time and space to open up about the subject while we maintained little control. Moreover, by conducting semi-structured interviews, we are guiding the conversation so that the respondents stick to the subject while still allowing them to open up about the subject and give information about their experiences. We did qualitative interviews because we wanted to learn more about how people experience a phenomenon.

4.2 Selection

As mentioned in section 2.4, the selection of this study are users in Sweden between the ages of 30 to 50 years. The criteria for the selection group were that they have an account on Facebook and that they are between the ages of 30 to 50 years. We chose the platform Facebook due to two reasons; previous research has shown that advertising makes up a significant portion of Facebook's revenue (Facebook, 2013, as cited in Fuchs, 2014), and Facebook is one of the most commonly used platforms by people born between the 1970s and 1990s (Internetstiftelsen, 2021).

We employed snowball sampling and purposive sampling, where snowball sampling means that we made initial contact with a person who assisted us in contacting people in their area that could be interested in participating in the study. Snowball sampling entails the researcher making initial contact with a small number of people who are relevant to the research topic, and then using those contacts to construct contacts with these people (Bryman, 2012). As a result, snowball sampling is a method in which existing members of the sample recommend new members who can provide further insights and perspectives on the subject, which can create new viewpoints or insights while doing the interviews (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne, 2011). The difficulty with snowball sampling is that the sample is not likely to be representative of the entire population. Snowball sampling is most commonly utilised in qualitative research rather than quantitative research, as external validity and generalizability issues do not have as great influence in a qualitative research method as they do in a quantitative research method (Bryman, 2012).

The first respondent we came in contact with was through one of the authors' sister who recommended her colleague. After the first interview, the respondent recommended a person that would be interested to set up for an interview. Through the first respondent, we got in contact with the second respondent who could provide further insights and perspectives on the subject. The second respondent did not recommend anyone, therefore, we had to employ purposive sampling as well. Purposive sampling is the process of selecting participants in such a way that they are relevant to the research questions being asked (Bryman, 2012). We came in contact with four of the respondents by using snowball sampling and four respondents were through purposive sampling

where we contacted them for the reason that they are relevant to the research questions for this study. We recognise that by utilising snowball sampling, we will take into account that some of the respondents have some level of contact with one another, which could potentially affect the study's outcomes. The respondents live in different cities, both smaller cities and bigger cities. We did not focus on the gender aspect but rather that the respondent is in the age group 30 to 50 years old and that he/she uses Facebook.

4.2.1 Respondent gallery

Table 1. Respondents interviewed in the study

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
R1	48	Female	Operator (at a factory)
R2	47	Female	Marketing Manager
R3	31	Female	Brand Manager
R4	50	Female	Works at an advertising agency
R5	40	Male	Graphic designer
R6	30	Male	Student & self-employed
R7	45	Female	Wood industry factory
R8	38	Female	Works at a furniture shop

Six of the respondents in this study were female, two were male and they work in different professions, however, four of the respondents work in similar industries. More information can be found in Table 1.

4.3 Approach

In this section, we present how we went about conducting the research. This includes the work before, during, and after the interviews, as well as the preparation, implementation, interview guide, and operationalization.

4.3.1 Preparations

Before conducting the semi-structured interviews for this study, we created an interview guide which was first used in a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study was to examine if we got answers to what the study aimed to examine. By performing a pilot study beforehand, we learned what worked well and what needed to be tweaked or altered. After conducting the pilot study, we came to the realisation that the interview guide needed to be re-formulated and further based on the big brother and the panopticon visions. Once the interview questions were developed and the interview guide was established, we could begin conducting the interviews. All the questions in the interview guide are written in Swedish since we are examining Swedish users' experiences, hence, all quotations in the running text in the thesis are translated into English.

4.3.2 Interview guide

The interview guide for this research was divided into four different themes connected to our research question; *media consumption/behaviour, targeted advertising, integrity on Facebook* and *experiences*. The interview guide has been used to conduct all eight interviews in this study (appendix 1). The interview was arranged so that at the beginning of the interview, the interviewee had to answer control questions of the interview guide which included if the respondent had a Facebook account and if they were active on the platform. Afterwards, there were questions about the interviewee as age, and job title/education, which were used to start the conversations. The conversations that took place during the interviews allowed for follow-up questions and discussions with the interviewees considering that we conducted semi-structured interviews. The discussions helped us gain a deeper grasp of the topic and, as a result, we were able to answer the research questions in this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

4.3.3 Operationalisation

In order to answer the study's research questions, an interview guide was created with questions mainly based on the effects of being surveilled (e.g. the big brother effect and the panopticon). A couple of the questions in the guide were also based on previous research. The questions have been operationalised in order to simplify the questions in such a way that they are easy for the respondents to understand and for us to be able to answer the study's research questions.

Accordingly, we worked on formulating questions containing words that are simple and relevant to the study. During the interviews, we used the word "observed" instead of surveillance since we believe that the word surveillance can evoke a certain emotion.

As a result of Facebook operating as the panopticon's guard tower by surveying and having access to the activities of various users, the concept of the panopticon was translated into the question *"Do you feel that the advertisements are adapted to your interests and what you have interacted with before, for example, that you have visited a store's website before and then receive an advertisement from that site?"* We avoided using words such as surveillance and instead used the word observed in the question *"Do you feel that you are being observed on Facebook."* The panopticon has an impact on people's behaviour, hence we included the question *"Are there any measures you take to prevent custom advertising from appearing on your feed?"* to gain insight on whether users feel watched on Facebook and therefore, take measures to prevent it.

It was important to not ask questions that contain too difficult words or research terms during the interviews, hence, instead of using "big brother", we asked, *"Do you wish that it would be possible to regulate exactly what information Facebook can collect about you and how they can use it?"* as the phrase "Big Brother Syndrome" has been used to describe the concerns of computer monitoring and controlling (Mani & Chouk, 2019). We want to emphasize that we are aware that this is already regulated to some extent; yet, we wanted to hear from users and see how they felt about regulating information. Moreover, the perspective of big brother is applicable to Facebook since personal data is collected to refine advertising methods, hence, users may experience the effect of both big brother and the panopticon. All of the interview questions are operationalized using the big brother and

panopticon effects in order to examine and comprehend consumers' experiences with targeted advertising and privacy concerns, as those experiences could be affected by the feeling of being surveilled.

4.3.4 The implementation of the study

The interviews for this study were conducted through Google Meets since the respondents live in different cities. Conducting face-to-face interviews would have been more advantageous as it is more difficult to read body language during internet interviews, and technological difficulties occurred during the last interview we conducted. However, due to the distance, face-to-face interviews were not possible. Even though reading body language during internet interviews can be difficult, we found that the interviews went smoothly and that we acquired all of the information needed to answer the research questions and the study's purpose. We conducted eight semi-structured interviews and we chose to not do focus groups since we did not want the respondents to be affected by each other's responses. During the interviews, we recorded the conversations with our phones with the respondent's consent. We wanted to make the respondents feel comfortable to express themselves however they want, therefore, the respondents are anonymous and have been given the letter R together with a number between 1-8 in this study. Before conducting each interview, we sent the respondent a document with information about the study and where they could give consent to be included in the study.

4.3.5 During the interviews

During each interview, we initiated the conversation with small talk before starting the interview in order to get to know them a little and create a comfortable setting. The small talks we had with each respondent were not recorded, instead, we started recording when the interview began. The interviews were conducted by both of us and we alternated being interviewers and recorders during the interviews. Both authors were present during all the interviews in order to avoid one-sided or personal interviews. One issue in conducting qualitative interviews is that the interviewer may, whether intentionally or unconsciously, try to manipulate the questions and, as a result, the

responses. In order to avoid this, researchers can ask open-ended questions that have no bearing on the interviewees' responses (Ekström & Larsson, 2010). Furthermore, with consent from the respondents, we recorded the interviews in order to verify that the information acquired is properly understood and that both authors can discuss the empirical material and draw conclusions jointly. The interviews were approximately 30 to 40 minutes long. After the interviews, we had short conversations with the respondents where they could express how they felt that the interview went and if they had viewpoints on the conversation, which we did not record.

4.3.6 After the interviews: Thematic analysis

Once all the interviews had been conducted, we transcribed the interviews that we had recorded. It is important to both record and transcribe interviews in a qualitative study considering that it sharpens the researcher's memory, makes it easier to conduct the analysis and allows the researcher to listen to the interviewees' answers several times (Bryman, 2012). The study included the process of transcribing the recorded interviews, which entails translating spoken words into written words. There are various methods for transcribing interviews; we chose to undertake reconstructive transcriptions, which entails "polishing" and putting order to the speakers' frequently chaotic utterances (Brinkmann, 2013), hence, we did not include laughter, breaks and other things that are not sentences or words.

To reach higher credibility in this study, it was important to agree on a suitable method for the transitions as we are two people conducting this study. The interviews were transcribed on Google Drive to make sure that both authors could read and edit each other's documents. Once the transcriptions were completed, the documents were printed in paper form in order that both authors could go through them together and find different themes in the empirical material. Due to ethical aspects and the importance of keeping the interviewees anonymous (Bryman, 2012), the respondents in this study have been given the letter R together with the number of the order in which they were interviewed, for example, the first respondent has been given the name R1. The qualitative data in this study were analysed using thematic analysis, with the purpose of identifying themes as categories and analysing the frequency and relationships of the categories (Mayring,

2014). The procedure was deductive-inductive. We started with the topics from the interview guide, meaning that a list of topics based on theoretical concepts and previous studies was created in advance, and after collecting the empirical material from the interviews, new topics were created from the material (Mayring, 2014).

The interviews were analysed separately and during the process of analysing them, themes that had potential were created. We started the analysis with the themes; *privacy concerns, attitudes and feelings, awareness, and self-regulation*. We used pencils to code the interviews, and anytime a respondent's quote was pertinent to a subject, we put the theme name on the quote. During the interactive process, a fifth theme emerged. After the last round, which we performed together, we defined the following five themes; 1. *Facebook usage and consumption*, 2. *experiences and sentiments of users towards advertising*, 3. *users' trust, surveillance awareness and privacy perception*, 4. *concern about being monitored on Facebook*, and 5. *users self-regulating their behaviour on Facebook*. These themes will later be explained in the result and analysis section of this study.

4.4 Ethical aspects

The four ethical principles that this study will follow are from the Swedish Research Council and they are; *The information requirement, the requirement of utility, the confidentiality requirement and the consent requirement*. The information requirement means that the interviewees must be notified about the purpose of the study and their participation is optional. Moreover, the participants can at any moment withdraw their participation (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Each of our respondents have received an information document that contains information about the purpose of the study, that they can withdraw their participation at any time and information about how the material will be used. The requirement of utility means that the information researchers collect about the interviewees can only be utilised for the purpose of the study (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017), hence, the information we received about the interviewees has been kept private and only been used for the purpose of this study. The confidentiality requirement means that the information collected about the interviewees and their personal data must be preserved in a secure manner that prevents unauthorised access (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). The participants in our study have been informed

about who will have access to the information and that the information will only be used for the purpose of the study. The consent requirement means that the interviewees have the right to decide about their participation in the study (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Moreover, it is critical that the interviewee understands that they have the option of remaining anonymous and that their personal information, such as name, date, location, and particular events, as well as other identifiable information, remains anonymous. If the interviewees' identities are traceable, it may have a severe influence on their life in the worst-case situation (Svensson & Ahrne, 2011). In our study, the respondents have been given the letter R (=respondent) and a number.

The study's subject should be notified of his or her status as a research subject and must obtain written consent (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Consequently, we included a section in the information document where the respondent could sign the document giving consent that we are allowed to include them in our study. The respondents have also received information about who has access to the recordings and that the recordings will be deleted once we have analysed them.

4.5 Validity and reliability

Validity is a term that refers to how relevant the data and analysis are in regard to the research problem. Although the term validity has a broad definition, it simply indicates that you measure what you want to measure, whereas reliability relates to the quality of data collection, processing, and analysis, as well as the consistency with which data is obtained (Østbye et al, 2004). In an effort to improve the study's reliability, we recorded all interviews with our phones in order to link the precise words spoken by the respondents, and as a result, analyse them and understand them which also improves the study's validity. Furthermore, having recordings of the interviews allows us in case of inconsistencies to go back and check if everything was transcribed correctly, and this can increase the reliability of the study. In addition, recording the interviews and focusing on the exact words that are spoken can also strengthen the study's validity as well (Østbye et al, 2004). We sought to develop appropriate theoretical concepts and previous research and present these in relation to our research field in order to attain the highest possible validity in this study. The term

"theoretical triangulation" refers to the process of elucidating a problem area using various theoretical traditions (Østbye et al, 2004).

In this qualitative study, eight respondents between the ages of 30 and 50 were interviewed, hence, we are conscious that the sample size for this study is small, which may have an impact on the results when interpreting them in light of the study's theoretical concepts. We have listened to the recordings together to ensure that we have not missed any words that have been said and that we have interpreted them correctly. Moreover, the analysis in this study does not include background on the respondents' use of social media in general which could have an impact on our results because there are aspects that aren't taken into account when interpreting the larger context of their experiences. Another factor that could influence the results is the respondents' opinions and how much they felt comfortable discussing with us; therefore, we have attempted to present an objective picture of their thoughts and experiences.

4.6 Methodology criticism

In this study, users' experiences with targeted advertising and privacy concerns on Facebook have been examined. We have worked hard to ensure that this study is as accomplished as possible; nonetheless, we are aware that issues in the method and approach have arisen during the course of completing this study which will be highlighted in this section. During the interviews, we tried our best to maintain a neutral role and avoid asking the respondents leading questions. We are aware that some questions may be leading, for example, the question "Some say that you are responsible for your own personal data on Facebook, how do you react to that?." A question like this indicates that we are implying something and it may influence the respondent's answer.

Furthermore, we are conscious that some of the questions are geared toward "yes or no" responses, and we have attempted to ask the respondents follow-up questions to allow them to expound on their responses. Consequently, some of the follow-up questions asked were only brought up during the interviews and not included in the interview guide. Given that we used snowball sampling and

purposive sampling, we recognise that the outcomes of this study may be influenced by the fact that some of the respondents know each other. The results and interview questions were conducted in Swedish and translated to English in the running text of this thesis, hence the meaning of the responses and questions might have changed slightly, despite our best efforts to ensure that the translation is as accurate as possible. Given that we only interviewed eight people for this study, we are aware that the results of this study cannot be generalised and applied to the whole Swedish population. Consequently, it is possible to question whether the outcomes of the study would have differed if we had interviewed more people. The degree to which this study's findings may be applied to different situations is low and the results cannot be applied to Swedish users in general but rather provide insights into how a selected group of Swedish people experience the phenomena.

5. Results and analysis

We conducted eight interviews, which provided the basis for the analysis reported in this chapter. The interview questions were divided into four topics; *media consumption/behaviour*, *targeted advertising*, *integrity on Facebook*, and *experiences*. During the process of writing this thesis and analysing the empirical material, we came across five new themes; 1. *Facebook usage and consumption*, 2. *experiences and sentiments of users towards advertising*, 3. *users' trust, surveillance awareness and privacy perception*, 4. *concerns about being monitored on Facebook*, and 5. *Self-regulating their behaviour on Facebook*. All of the interviews were transcribed and analysed using these themes as a guide to answering the purpose and research questions of the study (Mayring, 2014). In order to ensure that a valid picture of the respondents' reflections is presented, both authors in this study analysed and studied the material from the interviews. In this chapter, we aim to provide an insight into how our respondents experience targeted advertising on Facebook and their perception of privacy in relation to tailored advertising. The results from the interviews will be presented together with an analysis that is positioned in relation to the previous research and theoretical concepts presented in this study.

5.1 Facebook usage and consumption

We initiated the interviews by asking questions about the respondents' Facebook usage and consumption. The questions covered how much the respondents use Facebook and how active they are on the platform, and for what reason they use it. The result showed that all of our eight respondents are active on Facebook and they check their accounts on the platform at least once a day. Asking the respondents for what reason they use Facebook, two of our respondents expressed that it is like a diary for them.

(...) Nowadays Facebook is like a diary, where you can remember if you have done something special which has been posted. So you can go back and look at memories, which is almost like a diary (...) - (R8)

“Um, keep in touch with old friends. Diary is the wrong word but I use it quite a lot to save memories you could say. Kind of like the baby’s first tooth and stuff like that.” (R4)

Moreover, all of the respondents stated that they use Facebook to keep in touch with their friends and family and to keep track of people. The results further showed that the interviewees are using Facebook to join groups, to get tips and inspiration, to create and/or attend events and/or for work purposes.

5.2 Experiences and sentiments of users towards advertising

The algorithmic imaginary is concerned with how people think about, perceive, and experience algorithms, as well as the possibilities that these imaginations provide (Bucher, 2017). In the light of Bucher’s concept of the algorithmic imaginary, some of our respondents explained that they experience the algorithms on Facebook to be slow and that it often lags. Algorithms can be used by marketers to better understand how to target services, ads, and content (Trottier & Lyon, 2012), and one of our respondents experienced that specific advertisements usually appear on his feed after he has bought a product.

“(…) but then I had already bought my drone, so it’s like this, it’s what I learned in school, this part of algorithms do not really work. The idea is that you should get this stuff before you have bought it, but usually you buy stuff and then they start to appear in the feed, after you have paid for them and bought them” (R5)

Another respondent explained that she experiences targeted advertising on Facebook to be quite static and that there is no variety in the advertising. Even though marketers employ mathematical algorithms to make better use of purchases and behavioural data in order to gain a better understanding on how to target ads (Trottier & Lyon, 2012), some of the respondents experience that targeted advertising on Facebook does not keep up with their purchasing behaviour. Respondent 2 explained that several of the ads that appear on her feed are repetitive, hence, she

believes that the advertisements are not in line with her behaviour, but rather that the system hooks up.

“Then I might also need to buy a rain rack but I still get the same boots over and over again, I've bought the boots, I've even gotten to the point of buying a rain rack, I've bought my rain rack and an umbrella, but the rubber boots still come up. That advertising doesn't catch up with my behaviour, it hooks up.” (R2)

When asked how she felt about advertising on her feed, the respondent indicated that they no longer fulfil their purpose but are rather bothersome, and if she is bombarded with them too much, she becomes anti. Both respondents 5 and 2 work in the marketing/advertising profession, and respondent 2 even stated that because she is knowledgeable in this field, she has never purchased anything through these advertisements. Another reason why she does not buy anything through these ads is that the purchase is more than just an impulse for her and she puts much value in doing research about the company behind the products. According to the quotations above, the Facebook marketing algorithms are slow from the respondents' perspective, as the same adverts appear multiple times even after they have purchased a product. The respondents' profession may have an influence on how they experience advertising on the platform since algorithms may be comprehended through personal experience (Bucher, 2017).

When we asked our respondents if they believe the advertisements on their Facebook feed are tailored to their interests and previous interactions, the majority of them stated that the advertising that appears on their feed is primarily based on their online activities, such as Google searches, and less on their actual interests. This indicates that our respondents, like those in Lupton and Michael's (2017) study, are aware that companies such as Google and Facebook track their behaviour such as what they search for on Google's search engine, and that this information influences the types of ads they see on Facebook. Cookies can be used for commercial purposes to track individuals' online actions and tailor advertisements to them (SCB, 2020), and when we asked our respondents if they could give examples on what type of ads they receive, some of them mentioned that ads on their feed are linked to their visits and actions on other websites.

“But I think it was earlier, clothes and also skincare because I googled skincare quite a lot. And then it's these big sales sites that are direct to consumer, everything from when Amazon launched to Lyko running promotional drives or Skin city or something else like that. And that's because I'm very into them.” (R2)

“Shopping. It often feels like I've been on Mytheresa or Net-a-Porter or something and looked like this, the same thing on different sites and then it sees it and so it often comes I think. Mostly for me I think it's shopping, so products” (R3)

Even though previous research demonstrates that advertisements match users' interests, it may be difficult to distinguish interests and what users have searched for. As a result of her exhaustive Google searches, one of our respondents claimed that a lot of renovation materials and nail kits had appeared on her Facebook. Although they are not personal interests of hers, she believes that Facebook assumes it is because of her Google searches, and that because she interacts with it, they conclude that it is an interest. Connecting the big brother effect to Facebook who refine its advertising methods based on users' personal data (Mani & Chouk, 2019), this could be the result of Facebook monitoring her online behaviour in order to understand her patterns since the respondent experiences that the ads on her feed are based on her actions on Google. The respondent expressed that she felt that advertising on Facebook has become too much, while also explaining that sometimes good things appear and she appreciates the ads.

“Sometimes I think it's too much and I'd just be like, damn, it's sad that there's so much advertising. Facebook was a bit different in the past, when you saw your friends' posts and what they did in a completely different way than you do today, now there's a lot of advertising for different things instead.” (R8)

“(...) but sometimes it can also be very good stuff that comes up there, oh damn these maybe (...)” (R8)

All of the respondents expressed some sort of negative sentiment towards targeted advertising on the platform; some of them found it to be very annoying, some found it to be unpleasant and some expressed privacy concerns in relation to targeted advertising. Marketers aim to deliver relevant ads to users on social media platforms like Facebook and while some may find it pleasant at times, such as respondent eight, who believed that good stuff sometimes comes up on her feed, the most common sentiment towards advertising on Facebook was annoyance. One respondent explained that these ads can even affect a person's mental well-being, depending on how it is targeted and in what way it is targeted, hence we asked "*Could you give an example of a way that is wrong to target advertisements?*" in which she replied:

"Yeah, but that's, we take this thing that if you exercise and you eat right, you're going to look like this in six months, and that's bullshit. (...)" (R7)

Algorithms enable the formation of a cybernetic link to identify (Cheney-Lippold, 2011), and advertisements that appear on users Facebook feed, like the one highlighted by our respondent, may influence how individuals feel about and view themselves. An ad that promotes weight loss and that working out can result in looking a certain way can have serious consequences on a person's health, according to our respondent. In the light of the panopticon effect (Abraham, 2018), monitoring users and distributing advertisements such as this one may affect users' mental state. Some of the respondents expressed that they feel as if they are being intercepted because there is a link between advertising and the things that they talk about. One of the respondents expressed that he feels as if Facebook also monitors private chats. An event that evoked this emotion was that he had sent a picture of dish soap to his friends in a group chat, and the same product appeared in an ad on his feed later. When asking him if the targeted advertising has an effect on him, he expressed that it is very annoying that these ads appear.

"Oh no, but I get really annoyed when an ad appears and it's so obvious that it's personalised. It really has the opposite effect on me, I would say, I get so that now because you are targeting the advertising I'm not going to buy anything. It really has the opposite effect because I think it's a system error or something that I think shouldn't be allowed to the extent that it is." (R6)

Another respondent explained that sometimes she feels that it is enough to just talk about something in order for an ad to show up on her feed, and she had mixed opinions about it.

“Well, it’s both. On the one hand, you have yourself to blame, I think. But then it can also be a bit disturbing, I think. It’s almost like being stalked.” (R1)

Our respondents’ responses are noteworthy from both the panopticon and the big brother vision because they express a sense of being watched since they see links between the advertising on their feed and their online actions such as Google searches and website visits, and some of them believe they are being intercepted. Although, the majority of our respondents pointed out that targeted advertising is not only annoying but can also be pleasant if relevant ads appear on their feed. One respondent stated that it is preferable that Facebook display the advertising that is relevant to her rather than showing her things that she is not interested in. The respondent did not find it concerning that the ads are adjusted to her online behaviour but rather finds it annoying when Facebook delivers ads from sites she has just visited, and sometimes even made a purchase at since it is not relevant anymore. This can be related to Zhang and colleagues’ (2010) study, which found that personalised advertising can be relevant to users, but that there are ads that are irrelevant and should be minimised.

“But a lot of times you receive the exact same shoes you got last week and you’re like, but I already have a pair, I don’t need another pair - give up.” (R4)

Facebook advertising is tailored to users’ preferences and behaviours, and the goal is frequently to deliver relevant ads to users, and there are various elements that influence how people perceive and react to ads. To summarise the remarks above from our respondents, aspects such as the ad’s delivery, frequency of appearance, and the message sent out have an impact on their experiences with and sentiments toward advertising.

5.3 Users' trust, surveillance awareness and privacy perception

The rising frequency of scandals involving data leakage of personal information and citizens being surveilled contributes to mistrust and concerns among the citizens (Wunderlich et al., 2015). Our results can be interpreted in accordance with Orwell's vision, as they revealed that our respondents had a tendency to distrust Facebook with their personal information. One of the reasons for them to not trust Facebook is due to all the monitoring that occurs on the platform. One of the respondents claimed that he does not trust the platform since it is a multinational corporation with the goal of making as much money as possible, which makes him more critical of the platform as he believes their goal is not to protect their users, but rather to earn money. When one of our respondents answered that she does not trust Facebook, we asked "*What makes you feel that you don't trust them*" to which she replied that:

"Yes, but all the tracking and stuff that they do, it's like we said before, as soon as I talk about something, it pops up. So well, I bet all this stuff is stored somewhere, I guess. It's not hard to get to them if they want to get to me." (R1)

Even though the respondent stated that she does not trust Facebook, she was not concerned about Facebook collecting data about her. Previous research showed that 85% percent of the Swedish internet users feel concerned about multinational companies collecting data about them (Internetstiftelsen, 2021), however, most of the respondents in this study expressed concerns in relation to their own experiences or things they have heard or read about Facebook not protecting their users' personal information rather than Facebook collecting data about them for commercial purposes. Furthermore, our respondents' remarks on not trusting Facebook supports the previous research from O'Brien and Torres (2012), where only 25.3 per cent of the respondents from their study stated that they do trust Facebook with their personal information.

"No, but then somewhere Big Brother sees you. When it comes to these multi giants that are international, there are so many games behind the gallery." (R2)

“No, but I think it's built on exactly what I said before, that you feel that they are snooping on data that is private, in private chats and so on. That it has curtailed my privacy and when they crossed that line, they lost all confidence in me in that aspect.” (R6)

Our results demonstrated that most of our respondents do not read Facebook's terms and policies, however, a few of them stated that they have either read a little bit of it or only read it when it appears on the feed in relation to possible updates of their terms and policies. Consequently, none of the respondents have read the whole terms and policies at any point, not when they signed up or when it appears after possible updates. Asking the respondents about the reason for not reading the terms and policies, they stated that it is due to the fact that the text is long, boring and time consuming.

“Who reads that stuff? Can you find someone who reads them? No, but I don't know, I have no idea. It's like when you buy a phone and then you get 40 alerts like yes yes I just want to get into the phone and then they kind of own it yet you don't know about it because you haven't read it.” (R5)

This finding can be explained in light of previous research by Mani and Chouk (2019), who claim that despite being notified about infrequent access to their accounts, users may have lost control of their social media activities because they are not paying attention to their account information, potentially jeopardising their privacy. Respondent 5 explained that the information Facebook gives its users in their terms and policies is similar to reading legal papers and that even if you would not agree with the information, one would not give up using the platform anyways.

One of our respondents pointed out that he just scrolls down to “approve” the terms and policies since he does not feel that it is useful to read, while later when we discussed targeted advertising, he expressed that he feels surveilled. Even though he is concerned that Facebook monitors him on the platform, he does not put in the time to read through the information. He explains this “privacy paradox” (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016) by saying that in some way he feels happy about not knowing exactly how much they are monitoring.

“I probably haven't reflected and have been a bit blissfully unaware of exactly how much they actually keep track of and how much they track (...) And I don't know, maybe it's unconsciously that I don't choose to find out because it becomes an obstacle then and I have to take a stand and remove it.” (R6)

The quotation above indicates that the advantages of using the platform outweigh being fully aware of what Facebook collects and how much they collect. When we asked our respondents about their knowledge regarding cookies, our findings showed that it was common that the respondents are unaware of what it is. Our findings can be interpreted in the light of the previous study by Statistikmyndigheten SCB (2020) as some of our respondents were aware of what cookies can be utilised for. Although, the respondents who had some knowledge about what cookies are and what it is used for work within marketing/advertising, hence, their occupation may have influenced their knowledge.

“Because when I accept cookies, I also give companies more insight into what I am doing and I do not think they need to know that. I agree that for them to receive a lot of data from me, it is also stored for a certain period of time, in a certain place and that it is used to be forwarded to other companies, so there is, in some way the limit for me on what I am willing to accept” - (R5)

Despite the fact that some of our respondents had knowledge of cookies, it was common among them to not adjust or even reject them. This can be explained in light of the previous study by Statistikmyndigheten SCB (2020), which found that only 28% of people are more likely to adjust their cookie settings to block or restrict cookies even though they are aware of cookies. Two of the respondents pointed out that depending on which site they are on, they may adjust and only accept necessary cookies.

“(…) If it's suspicious, let's say I were to click on an ad on Facebook that's a bit half suspicious, but interesting cleaning stuff or something that I would like, then I might not accept cookies

because I feel I'm on a bit halfspooky page. But if it's on maybe Aftonbladet or something that to me is well known as a great site, that this is a serious operator, then I accept (...).” (R4)

One of the respondents who explained that he had no knowledge about cookies also expressed that he feels that his privacy is being violated on Facebook. This can be supported by Smit and colleagues’ (2014) study, which found that people’s anxieties about their personal data being misused and their privacy being violated are fueled by a lack of awareness about cookies. The respondent explained that he recently discovered that he can decline cookies and still be able to visit the site whereas previously, he thought it was required of him to accept cookies in order to enter the site.

“(...) Because I've always thought that you have to click approve to get on the page, but now I've started to click decline and then you get on the page anyway, and then you wonder, what happened now? And so I've started to do it a bit lately but I have no idea what I'm doing or what it means.” (R6)

As the remarks above demonstrate, the majority of the respondents choose to not read the whole terms and policies on Facebook, and there was a tendency among the respondents to not trust Facebook with their personal information due to previous scandals that have been flourishing on social media, and/or their own experiences of feeling monitored or intercepted. It is interesting that the respondents stated that they do not trust Facebook, yet they do not read the platform’s terms and policies nor do they adjust their behaviour on the platform. Furthermore, it was common among the respondents that they did not know what cookies were, and the respondents who did know are working in marketing/advertising which could be an indication that the respondents’ profession has an impact on their knowledge.

5.4 Concerns about being monitored on Facebook

As mentioned earlier, a previous study showed that the majority of Swedish users are unconcerned about their online actions being monitored in order to target them with customised advertising (SCB, 2020). This was confirmed in our study considering that the majority of our respondents felt that they do not care so much about Facebook monitoring their online actions for commercial purposes rather than finding it annoying sometimes. By contrast, some privacy concerns arose as well, such as the feeling of violation of privacy when they monitor private chats or intercept their users. The respondents frequently expressed concerns regarding their personal information and that they feel worried about who has access to it and what happens to that data. Our respondents feel monitored on Facebook, and precisely like the panopticon effect, users are open and vulnerable on the platform while Facebook remains invisible just like the guards in the panopticon are not seen by the prisoners (Abraham, 2018). When asking our respondents if they are concerned about their privacy on Facebook, one of our respondents explained that the concern has more to do with not having his account being hacked by someone.

“Yes, absolutely. I think that’s probably something everyone does. It’s always like “someone hacked my account” or “someone did this”. What can I say, it’s your social media that you spend a lot of your life on. Somehow you want it to be for those you share it with and not others.” (R5)

Other concerns that arose had to do with what Facebook does with the information they collect about users and what information they collect. As respondent 4 and respondent 6 stated when asking them if they feel any concerns about their personal information on Facebook,

“When it comes to what shoes I’m going to buy, it doesn’t matter, but when it comes to whether I vote red, green or blue (in the election), I think it matters.” - (R4)

“It’s hard to say exactly what I’m worried about, but it just feels very uncomfortable. Just this thing that you don’t have any real control over how much they collect, like private chats for example, what happens to that data? How long is it stored? What do they do with that data? I

don't know anything. I don't know if it's something specific that I'm worried about but it just creates a lot of unease that I don't even know. " - (R6)

As Lupton and Michael (2017) revealed, it is the damaging data movements and uses, particularly those that are not initiated by the company, that irritate consumers. The quotation above from respondent 4 indicates that she is not concerned if Facebook collects data about her and uses it to target ads at her but rather if Facebook were to interfere with her political values. Respondent 6 expressed concern about not having control over how much data Facebook collects, and he believes it is personal data such as private chats that concerns him, which is consistent with the findings of Sohoraye and Gooria's (2015) study as they found that social media users want to keep their private discussions private.

Even though some respondents expressed concerns in relation to their personal information on Facebook, most of our respondents declared that they don't care too much about it. Even though our respondents say they don't trust Facebook with their personal information, they don't seem to mind because they've agreed to Facebook's terms and policies, which can be connected to O'Brien & Torres's (2012) study as they state that users are not fully informed or aware of all privacy-related activities on social networking sites. Although, the majority of our respondents believe it is up to them what they choose to share on the platform, and that it's all part of the "game" if you choose to use Facebook. Moreover, most of the respondents state that they are unconcerned about Facebook collecting data, and one of the reasons some of them are unconcerned about data collecting on Facebook is that they do not believe they are "important" enough or have anything to hide.

"I feel that if someone were to watch me, they might see me picking my nose or whatever haha, there's nothing secret going on here haha. It's on that level. I don't have any skeletons in my closet" - (R2)

"I'm probably more the kind of person who thinks, what are they going to do with my personal information? Who are they going to give it to? I'm not that important as a person." - (R3)

The results further showed that our respondents are generally not concerned about Facebook targeting them with advertisements more than that they just find it bothersome with all the advertising on Facebook; nonetheless, some of them feel worried about their personal information and private conversations on Facebook, and what would happen if it was leaked to the public. Furthermore, they all agree that it is as much their own responsibility as Facebook's to protect their data, considering that they did agree to their terms and policies, most of them without even reading it. The main concern expressed by the respondents who are worried about their privacy on the platform has to do with what Facebook can do with the information they collect rather than being too concerned that their online activities about them are used for targeting advertisements. This connects with Tucker's (2014) study where he demonstrates that consumers may find tailored marketing material relevant to their interests, however, if they believe the firm has violated their privacy, they may find it off-putting.

5.5 Self-regulating their behaviour on Facebook

In accordance with the big brother effect and the panopticon effect, individuals may adjust their behaviour as a result of feeling monitored, hence, they may take measures in an attempt to ensure that companies like Facebook do not gather as much information about them. Previous research shows that individuals in modern societies have an interest in managing personal information about them that is preserved and made available (Fuchs, 2011). Consequently, we asked our respondents if they have self-regulated on Facebook, for example, turning off location services. The result showed that it was common among our respondents to turn off their location services, and asking them why or why not they had turned it off, three of the respondents claimed that they did not think that Facebook had any interference with their location.

"Because I think it's a bit scary, it's part of the surveillance society that just hangs on you (...). But I myself just don't want my phone to be pinged all the time (...) But it's also about someone being able to see where the hell you're going, there's kind of no privacy in that. (...) But no, I don't want to be watched like that, I'd rather take it away. I just don't want them to see how I move." -

(R5)

The respondent argues how having location services is alarming because it is a part of the surveillance society, in accordance with the big brother effect (Mani & Chouk, 2019). This explanation can be supported by Mani and Chouk's (2019) argument that these devices, such as the cellphone, create privacy concerns because they may subject consumers to continuous observation, hence, our respondent chooses to turn off location services. Some of our respondents are adjusting settings on the platform as a result of feeling monitored/tracked by Facebook and they do not believe Facebook needs to know where they are.

"(...) It was more like that, then they don't know where I am and neither does anyone else when I post because then it usually says you where you made a post, so it can be like that too."
(R8)

"No, but I just don't think they have anything to do with where I am." (R1)

"(...) But it's kind of the only time I'll put up a post where I'll show where I am somewhere and then you turn it on for that particular time, but tracking everything else about where you are feels very unsettling I think." (R6)

The quotations above can be viewed in light of Abraham's (2018) claim that Facebook's digital panopticon is analogous to Bentham's panopticon in that we self-regulate to control which aspects of our identity are revealed online. Access to their physical location is one of the things that is frequently restricted or prohibited among Swedish internet users aged 16 to 85 (SCB, 2020), and most of our respondents stated that they have turned off location services. Although, we found that it was common that the respondents who had turned off location services did not know why they had turned it off and did not care much about it and one respondent did not know if she could turn it off.

"Hm well, I don't know. I think someone told me once that you should do that. But I remember that I have done it at some point, but I can't remember today exactly why I did it. Maybe it's because you don't want them to know everything, where you are and so on." - (R3)

As mentioned earlier, it was common among the respondents in this study to not have a lot of knowledge about cookies and to not bother to regulate their settings in order to not be tracked for commercial purposes. Although, some of the respondents mention that they at some point have regulated the advertising on Facebook by clicking the button that says “Hide ad, never show this ad again”, due to that they do not find it interesting or suitable for them. Furthermore, some of our respondents found it more important to have settings on Facebook that make their account more private for the public, rather than regulating the settings to ensure that Facebook does not collect too much information about them.

“Yes, but I do look a little bit at who can see, whether it's friends or friends of friends, I know I've been in those settings. But just in terms of what Facebook can see and share, I have a little bit of a bad grasp on that honestly.” (R4)

One respondent who has adjusted settings to make her account more private claimed that she is not so much worried by Facebook monitoring her behaviour on the network, but that if these tools to make your account private were not available, she would most likely stop using Facebook.

“But so far it's possible to choose some settings like what you want everyone to see, maybe Facebook still sees but I can still choose that so far only my friends can see my posts and so on. Would everything be open to everyone then I probably wouldn't have it anymore, no.” (R8)

As previously mentioned, Trottier (2016) argued that some Facebook users believe that the platform site signals a return to a small-town mentality, where everyone knows about everyone else's business. Due to concerns about her history, R8 is very keen on having a private Facebook profile, and she pointed out that she does not want individuals she went to school with to be able to easily find her on the platform because she does not want them to see what she does or how she lives. One of the respondents who did not adjust any settings on the platform explained that she

does not think about having a private profile or taking measures to ensure that Facebook does not collect much information about her. The same respondent also stated that she did not know if she could turn off location services as mentioned previously.

“I wish I was more like you young people and had more knowledge and understanding, then maybe I wouldn't have been an easy target like I think we older people are.” (R7)

The remark above comes from a respondent who believes that due to a lack of information and awareness, older individuals are easier targets than younger people. The same respondent also indicated that she has never felt monitored on Facebook and is unconcerned about her privacy. According to the digital panopticon (Abraham, 2018), individuals customise their activities as a result of being aware that they are being watched, and R8 may not self-regulate on the platform because she does not believe she is being watched, whereas another respondent who stated that a part of the surveillance society just hangs on you had taken steps to limit Facebook monitoring.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how users in Sweden between 30 and 50 years of age experience advertising on Facebook that is tailored to them. Additionally, this study aimed to explore what privacy concerns arise among users in relation to the tailored advertisements that appear on their feed. In this chapter, the findings based on the study's five themes are discussed.

6.1 Facebook usage and consumption

According to the findings of our study, all of our respondents are active on Facebook, visiting the network at least once a day. The respondents in this study ranged in age from 30 to 50 years old, which backs up prior research by Internetstiftelsen (2021), which found that when it comes to everyday social media usage, persons born between the 1970s and 1990s use Facebook the most. All of our respondents stated that they use Facebook to stay in touch with friends, and some of them said it is like a diary, and others said they use it for things like joining groups and attending events.

6.2 Experiences and sentiments of users towards advertising

Our findings demonstrate that several of the respondents experience advertisements on their Facebook to be adapted to previous actions online such as Google searches, but also based on their interests. Similar to the respondents in Lupton and Michael's (2017) study, our respondents were aware that companies such as Facebook track behaviour since they saw links between the ads on their feed and previous online actions. Some of the respondents' remarks indicated that they feel a sense of being watched on the platform, and this can be linked to the "Big Brother effect," which raises privacy concerns since access to and analysis of consumer data can make people feel watched (Wunderlich et al., 2015; Mani & Chouk, 2019). Two of our respondents pointed out that their experience with advertising is that Facebook's algorithms are slow and the ads are not in line with their behaviour. These experiences with algorithms on Facebook are interesting from Bucher's (2017) concept of the algorithmic perspective which suggests that algorithms can be understood through people's thoughts, perceptions, experiences, and imaginations. Both of the respondents work within similar industries and their knowledge of marketing/advertising may influence their algorithmic imagination. One common sentiment that several of our respondents expressed was annoyance in regards to targeted advertising, and while the reasons differed, the main reason was

either that Facebook delivers too many ads nowadays and/or that similar ads appear too frequently. Even though Facebook refined its advertising methods based on its users' personal data and organisations analyse customer data in real-time (Mani & Chouk, 2019), some of the remarks from our respondents indicate that they do not experience the advertisements on Facebook to be so real-time but rather slow or repetitive.

Facebook can be viewed as a modern version of the cells of a real panopticon (Abraham, 2018) and our findings demonstrate that several of our respondents feel either watched or that they are being intercepted because they see links between their actions and/or what they talk about and the advertisements on their feed. This in turn caused worries among some of the respondents who suspected that their communications were being intercepted and actions being monitored, with sentiments of stalking and invasion of privacy stated. Our findings support Abraham's (2018) argument that Facebook functions as a guard tower, with access to the activity of individual users while staying invisible to them, much like the guard tower in the panopticon. Some of our respondents also stated that tailored advertising is preferable to receiving advertisements for things they are not interested in seeing, which can be linked to Tucker's (2014) argument that consumers may find tailored marketing material on sites more appealing and relevant to their interests (see also the study by Zhang et al., 2010).

6.3 Users' trust, surveillance awareness and privacy perception

A study from Internetstiftelsen (2021) showed that 85% of Swedish internet users feel concerned about multinational companies like Google and Facebook collecting data about them.

Furthermore, the Irish study conducted by O'Brien and Torres (2021) stated that 25.3 per cent of Facebook users declare that they do not trust the platform. The claim of mistrust among users towards Facebook is supported in this study as the result showed that six out of eight of our respondents did not trust Facebook with their personal information. The respondents in this study stated different reasons for not trusting the platform, and two common reasons were that they believe Facebook is a multinational company with the purpose to make a profit rather than taking care of its users, and the other reason for not trusting the platform is due to all the monitoring that

they do. This shows that the respondents from this study do not trust Facebook with their personal information mostly due to their own experiences of feeling surveilled or from what they have heard from other people. Our findings may be understood in light of the prior study by Wunderlich and colleagues (2015), who found that the rising frequency of incidents involving personal data leaks and users being tracked on platforms has contributed to people's worries and mistrust. These findings are also in line with Orwell's Big Brother vision, which tries to emphasise the dangers of electronic spying and the risk of regimes profiting from surveillance, which is why Facebook collects data on its users.

Even though most of our respondents claimed that they do not trust Facebook with their personal information, the result showed that most of our respondents did not act to gain more knowledge of Facebook's collecting and monitoring of their personal data. The majority of our respondents stated that they do not read Facebook's terms and policies, and the ones who did only partially read it if it appeared in their feed correlated with new updates. The most common reason for our users not to read Facebook's terms of policies is due to that the text is long, time consuming and boring. Consequently, our respondents do not know exactly what data Facebook collects about them and what it is used for. Therefore, even though they do not trust Facebook with their personal information, they do not act to get more knowledge about what Facebook actually does with their personal information and data. This finding supports what Mani and Chouk (2019) explain in their study, namely that users may have lost control of their social media activity since they ignore account information while receiving notifications about it.

The findings in this study demonstrated that only some of the respondents had knowledge about cookies and therefore are not aware of what data is collected if they accept cookies. In contrast to Smit and colleagues' (2014) study, which found that people's anxieties about their personal data being misused are fueled by a lack of awareness about cookies, the findings in this study showed that even though there was a tendency among the respondents that they did not have knowledge about cookies, most of the respondents did not feel concerned or anxious about it.

6.4 Concerns about being monitored on Facebook

The majority of the respondents from this study are unconcerned about their online activities being monitored for commercial purposes, and these findings are similar to those of a previous study by Statistikmyndigheten SCB (2020), which found that the majority of Swedish citizens are unconcerned about commercial monitoring. Although there were some privacy concerns that arose among our respondents, they had more to do with what Facebook monitors and how they monitor users. One of the respondents expressed concern about what and how much data Facebook collects, and when he notices that an ad was based on a conversation he had in a private chat, he believes it is a violation of his privacy, which is similar to the sentiment expressed by the participant in Ruckenstein and Granroth's (2019) study. The respondent's remark is intriguing in light of the "Big Brother effect" that can be applied to new technologies since customers may regard smart products as a danger to their right to privacy (Mani & Chouk, 2019). Even though the respondent expressed privacy concerns, he did not take measures to disclose personal information on social media, and this can be explained by the phenomenon known as the "privacy paradox" (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016).

The findings in this study further demonstrated that our respondents are generally not concerned that Facebook monitors their online actions to target them with customised advertisements but rather that it gets annoying sometimes with all the advertising on the platform. Some of the respondents stated that they do not believe they are "important" or famous, so they are unconcerned about Facebook collecting information about them since they do not believe their information is useful and/or that they have nothing to hide. According to Bentham, the ideal prison was where the convicts did not know whether they were being watched or not (Caluya, 2009), and Facebook can be seen in a similar way where users do not know if they are being watched or who the watcher is. This in turn has broken many parts of our privacy and forced us to self-censor and self-regulate in order to maintain as much control as possible, but in contrast to Abraham's (2018) argument, some of our respondents do not self-regulate due to different reasons such as thinking they are not important enough or the lack of knowledge on how much and what Facebook monitors.

6.5 Self-regulating their behaviour on Facebook

In accordance with the big brother effect and previous research, users may adjust their behaviour so that platforms like Facebook are not able to gather as much information about them (Fuchs, 2011). Most of the respondents from this study stated that they had self-regulated on Facebook as six out of eight respondents claimed that they had turned off location services so that Facebook could not access information about their location. Three of the respondents who had turned off location services stated that Facebook should not have any interference in their location and that if they have, it constitutes a loss of their privacy. Using location services for targeted advertising can be connected to Mani & Chouk (2019), as they highlight the danger of networked systems that aim to make a profit through surveillance. Furthermore, previous research shows that one of the things that are regularly limited or disallowed among Swedish internet users aged 16 to 85 is access to their physical location (Statistikmyndigheten SCB, 2020).

In contrast to the results from Statistikmyndigheten SCB, only three of the respondents suggested that they do not think Facebook has any interference with their location, which means that five of the respondents either did not have an explanation to why they had turned it off or had not turned it off at all. Our results demonstrate that the majority of our respondents are not that concerned about Facebook accessing their location services for commercial purposes, and this further confirmed the previous study by Statistikmyndigheten SCB (2020), which claims that the majority of Swedish users are unconcerned about commercial monitoring.

The results further showed that our respondents are more concerned about having settings that make their accounts more private on Facebook, rather than having settings that decline Facebook to collect information about them for commercial purposes. Most of our respondents state that they like to have their profiles private, however, they do not feel that it is equally important to decline cookies or read Facebook's terms and policies.

As mentioned earlier, only eight respondents were interviewed for this study, and therefore it is not possible to generalise the whole population of Sweden regarding their experiences of targeted advertising on Facebook. Hence, it is possible to question whether the outcome of the study would have had different results if we had interviewed more people or if the same study would have been conducted again. Moreover, the results could have differed if we had interviewed people from different social classes or levels or education as the result showed that the respondents that worked with advertising/marketing generally had more knowledge about cookies and tailored advertising on Facebook. The findings of this study showed that the selected group of users have contradictory opinions about the phenomena, however, most of them are not too concerned about the careful monitoring that firms like Facebook do. Even though previous research in this area has highlighted privacy concerns in relation to targeted advertising, our respondents' experiences with targeted advertising have more to do with the advertising not being in line with their behaviour or needs or that they find it annoying. This was surprising as some of the respondents expressed that they suspected that Facebook intercepts them and/or monitors them and this was a violation of privacy according to them, yet they were not that concerned if it only was for commercial purposes.

7. Conclusion and future research

7.1 Conclusions

In this chapter, the conclusions of the qualitative analysis of the study will be presented in relation to the purpose and the research questions. The purpose of this study was to examine users' experiences with targeted advertising on Facebook, and the conclusion will be presented in relation to each research question.

7.1.1 Research question 1

- *How do users that are 30 to 50 years old experience targeted advertising that appears on their Facebook feed?*

The results from this study show that people between 30-50 years old experience that the targeted advertising that appears on their Facebook feed is related to their previous online searches on Google and visits to other websites. The findings further show that the users found it more pleasant and preferable to get advertising based on their interests and behaviour, rather than getting random ads that may not interest them. Although, the findings indicate that users have contradictory opinions about it because while they prefer receiving relevant ads, they also find it annoying and/or unpleasant, mainly for three reasons. Firstly, due to that, they experience that there is too much advertising on Facebook and that it is bothersome. Secondly, the respondents experience that the advertising that appears on their Facebook feeds is not in line with their behaviour in the sense that the same ads can appear on the feed even though they have already bought the product that is being advertised. Lastly, the respondents experience that Facebook advertising is linked to what they have been talking about and/or linked to conversations that are in private chats, which raises concerns such as violation of privacy and that it is unpleasant.

7.1.2 Research question 2

- *What are users' main privacy concerns in relation to targeted advertising on Facebook?*

The main privacy concern expressed among the respondents, as mentioned above, is that they feel as if they are being monitored on Facebook due to the link between what they have been talking about and the advertising that appears on their Facebook feed. The respondents point out that the feeling of being monitored on the platform through their devices raises privacy concerns. However, even though the respondents express concern as it intrudes on their privacy, they mainly feel as if they are not as important as persons, and therefore are not worried about their privacy as they cannot see any reason for their data to be interesting to someone else other than for advertising purposes.

The findings further showed that the respondents in this study are not as worried about Facebook monitoring them for commercial purposes but rather when they feel that Facebook monitors private conversations or intercepts conversations. Even though users do not trust Facebook with their personal information, the main privacy concern was how much and/or what Facebook does with the information they acquire from users; using it for commercial purposes is less troubling than targeting individuals with advertising about sensitive topics such as politics.

7.2 Future research

This study focused on Facebook users' experiences with targeted advertising and their feelings about privacy in relation to the ads. The subject is very relevant in today's society as living in the twenty-first century, social media and surveillance are now a fundamental part of our lives, along with the targeted advertising that appears on these platforms which could intrude on one's privacy. As the results showed, people generally don't read terms and policies and it could lead to a loss of people's privacy, which is an important subject to research in.

When it comes to further research on the subject, we believe that it would be interesting to make similar studies in Sweden on a larger scale of people. Moreover, we believe it would be intriguing to interview different age groups and compare the differences in perceptions, experiences, and knowledge since the younger generation has grown up with social media. Consequently, examining how aware the younger generation is of data collection on social media and privacy in relation to advertisements that are tailored to them is an important subject.

As a conclusion, we believe that more research in this area is needed about users' knowledge and experiences regarding targeted advertising and collection of their personal information to make people aware of what data multinational companies are allowed to collect from them. For future research, we suggest researching the perceptions of targeted advertising among the younger generation as they have grown up with social media. Although studying minors faces ethical issues, we believe it would be interesting to see what awareness they have in the subject area, and it may also create awareness among minors if they are allowed to discuss the topic, which we believe will be important in the future given the digital society we now live in.

8. Implications for society and professional life

As the result of this study showed that people generally do not know what information Facebook collects about them, and that users do not trust Facebook with their personal information; nonetheless, they make very little or no effort at all to gain knowledge about it such as reading terms and policies. This in turn could lead to a loss of privacy for users, consequently, we believe that this study could perhaps provide an insight for the users of social media and an eye-opener about their lack of knowledge in data collection and multinational companies' usage of their personal information for advertising purposes. As the majority of the Swedish population uses Facebook and most of the population uses social media, we believe that the results of this study is important to make people more aware of data collection and more thoughtful about the terms and conditions that they agree on using social media. For advertisers, it is useful to know how consumers experience the advertisements so that they can improve their marketing methods in order to deliver better ads.

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Appendix - Interview guide

Kontrollfrågor

- Har du ett Facebook konto?
- Är du aktiv på plattformen?

Grand tour

- Hur gammal är du?
- Vad har du för sysselsättning?
- Har du någon utbildning? Om ja, vad?

Mediakonsumtion/beteende

- I vilket syfte har du ett konto på Facebook?
- Hur mycket tid spenderar du på plattformen?
- Läser du Facebooks "villkor och policy"?
- Om ja eller nej, hur kommer det sig?
- Om det visar sig att Facebook samlar in data om din plats, dina sökningar och spårar vad du gör både på plattformen och utanför plattformen, skulle du fortfarande använt dig av Facebook då?
 - Om ja, hur kommer det sig?
 - Om nej, varför inte?

Anpassad reklam

- När var första gången du la märke till personlig reklam på Facebook?
- Vad är det för annonser och reklam du får upp på ditt flöde?
- Upplever du att det är anpassade till dina intressen och det du interagerat med tidigare, exempelvis, att du besökt en butiks webbplats tidigare och sen fått upp reklam därifrån?
 - Om ja, hur känner du angående det?
 - Om nej, hur skulle du känt ifall du fick upp det på ditt flöde?
- Kan du ge exempel på en annons som du fått upp på ditt flöde som varit baserad på dina tidigare intressen, tidigare surf historik, etc.
 - Om ja, hur upplevde du annonsen?
 - Om nej, hur upplever du annonser som är anpassade till varje individ (ex baserad på tidigare intressen, tidigare surf historik)?

- Har du någonsin köpt något via annonser/reklam?
 - Om ja, vilka faktorer var det som fick dig att göra köpet? (ex, relevans, hur annonsen var utformad, behov)
- Finns det några åtgärder du vidtar för att hindra att få upp anpassad reklam på ditt flöde? (Visa exempel på funktioner man kan lägga in)
- Anser du att det finns fördelar med att du får upp reklam på ditt flöde som är anpassad utifrån dina intressen och det du interagerat med tidigare?
- Känner du att anpassad reklam på Facebook har en påverkan på dig som användare?

Integritet på Facebook

- Vad innebär personlig integritet på Facebook för dig?
- Känner du någon oro över din personliga integritet på Facebook?
 - Om ja, vad är det för oro du känner?
- Skulle du kunna berätta om din uppfattning och kunskap om vad cookies är och vad det används till?
- Brukar du acceptera cookies?
 - Om ja, hur kommer det sig?
 - Om nej, vad gör du då?
- Litar du på att Facebook skyddar din personliga information?
- Vems ansvar anser du att det är att skydda användares personliga information?
- Är du mer mån om att ha inställningar som gör ditt konto mer privat generellt eller inställningar som gör att Facebook inte kan samla lika mycket information om dig?
- Har du vidtagit några åtgärder som exempelvis att stänga av location services?
 - Om ja, av vilken anledning?
- Önskar du att det vore möjligt att själv välja exakt vilken information Facebook kan samla in om dig och hur de får använda den?

Upplevelser

- Upplever du att det är det något som Facebook gör som stör dig eller som du ogillar när du använder plattformen?
- Upplever du att du blir iakttagen på Facebook?
-Om ja, på vilket sätt?
- Upplever du att Facebook ger ut tillräckligt med information till dig som användare om vad för data de samlar in om dig och vad den används för?
- Vad innebär personlig data för dig?
- Känner du någon oro över din personliga data, vad den används för och av vem?
- Om ja, varför?

Avslutande

- Vissa säger att man har ansvar över sin egen personliga data på facebook, hur ställer du dig till det?
- Finns det något du vill tillägga?