

Exploring Flemish Muslim children's experiences and negotiation of offline and online group privacy

In privacy research much attention has been devoted to the online privacy practices of adolescents and college youth. Less is known about the privacy management of children and Muslim children in particular. In this study we gave a voice to Muslim children in Western Europe (northern part of Belgium) and how they negotiate information about their Muslim culture and identity using focus groups and interviews. The empirical studies clarify how different privacy management strategies are used to manage and hide Islam related information. Overall, our results illustrate how besides managing boundaries around the self, Muslim children take into account the minority group they belong to as well as the representation of that particular minority group when sharing information. On a theoretical level we argue to move beyond individual-centric conceptualizations of privacy and take into account societal dynamics, groups structures and structural inequality.

Keywords: group privacy, privacy management, children, Muslim, child-centric, qualitative

Introduction

Over the years, much research has been devoted to the online privacy practices of adolescents and young adults (e.g., Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Livingstone, 2008; Christofides, Muise & Desmarais, 2009; Wisniewski et al., 2011; boyd, 2011, 2014; boyd & Hargittai, 2010; boyd & Marwick, 2011; Hargittai & Marwick, 2016). Less is known about the privacy management of children and children of minority groups in particular (Mostmans, Bauwens & Pierson, 2014; Marwick & boyd, 2018). Because privacy is regularly conceptualized as an individual right or as individual control – in line with classic conceptualizations of Warren and Brandeis (1890) or Westin (1967) – the privacy negotiation process of the majority and minority groups seems to be one and the same. However, minorities “experience privacy differently from those who hold semblance of privilege within a given society” (Marwick & boyd, 2018 p. 1159).

Besides the underrepresentation of minority voices in privacy research, other research experiences further shaped our focus and aim of this study. Previously, we investigated how children (ages 9 to 12) experienced the Daesh¹ attacks in Belgium on March 22 in 2016 using focus groups. This research had the aim to look into how children coped with the attacks to further develop educational packages and help teachers to better communicate about this sensitive matter. During the focus groups it was noticeable how many of the Muslim children who participated, articulated how terrorism and Islamic world were often equated. Arguably, the latter creates a situation wherein disclosing Muslim information, as a component of one’s identity, is challenged.

In this study, we delve deeper into the practices of Muslim children and how they negotiate (online) group information by reanalyzing the focus groups with a focus on the 19 Muslim children who participated. In addition we organized 9 more semi-structured interviews

¹ Daesh is an Arabic acronym for ISIS/ISIL referring to “al Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi Iraq wal-Sham”. We prefer to use this term to not acknowledge the group of terrorists to formalize a state or be a representation of Islam.

with Muslim children to investigate their online and offline negotiation of group privacy. We put forward the following research question: “How do Muslim children negotiate offline and online group privacy and what strategies are used?” In our inquiry we pay special attention to how the children negotiate boundaries around the self and the group they belong to.

Theoretical background

Group privacy

Group privacy has different angles and theoretical underpinnings. Overall, we make use of the Communication Privacy Management theory (Petronio, 2002) and Cohen’s (2012) perspective on critical subjectivity and privacy to substantiate our approach.

Altman (1975, p. 24) defined privacy “as the selective control of access to the self.” Later on, Petronio (2002) built upon the framework of Altman to develop communication privacy management theory (CPM). According to CPM theory people believe that they have the right to coordinate and control private information; employ various strategies, or so-called privacy rules, to coordinate privacy boundaries; become co-owners when information is shared and negotiate information mutually; and when they fail to coordinate boundaries a turbulent event is likely to follow. The work of Altman (1975) and Petronio (2002) initiated an approach on privacy beyond individual control. Specifically, Petronio argues how people manage multiple boundaries at once, including the boundaries of the various types of groups one belongs to. Group privacy refers to the coordination of group privacy boundaries, where no one person in particular is in control and the private information belongs to everyone in the group. For example, the boundary coordination of a family hiding to the outside world on how one of its members is diagnosed with cancer. CPM theory underlines the importance of treating privacy as a negotiation process that is highly dependent on others, looking into how linkages

between different relationships are managed, degrees of permeability to coordinate access, as well as rules that stipulate who is responsible for the private information.

Whereas Petronio (2002) dissects the entire privacy management process, Cohen (2012) demonstrates what privacy is *for*, and more importantly, how its absence impedes “human flourishing”. Cohen defines privacy as an “interest in preserving room for socially situated processes of boundary management to operate (p.17).” She couples the need for privacy to a need for self-articulation and development. An individual cannot achieve privacy by managing access, controlling visibility or refusing interference alone. On a more structural level, privacy is embedded in social practices that allows “the development of a critical, playful subjectivity that is always-already intersubjective– informed by the values of families, confidants, communities, and cultures (p.18).” Indeed, individual and collective interests are at stake. Following this line of thought we emphasize the importance of investigating group or collective information (e.g., ethnic community, social class) besides personal information (e.g., sexual explicit photos, secrets, medical sensitive information) in privacy research.

Although some scholars have investigated the online privacy of minorities, how they negotiate group privacy boundaries and are able to develop their subjectivity and communal values is less explored. Building further on the work of Petronio (2002) and Cohen (2012), we argue how group privacy management is a dynamic negotiation process of managing boundaries within and between groups that shapes and is shaped by the relative position of the particular group one belongs to.

Minority groups and privacy

Privacy is especially valuable for people of color and low SES-individuals because they are more surveilled and dependent on large institutional and structural forces (Marwick, Fontaine & boyd, 2017). Recent research shows the complexity of privacy management among various

types of minority groups. Pearce, Vitak and Barta (2018) found that Azerbaijani dissidents were balancing between being visible on social media, receiving abusive comments, finding likeminded others, and many more other factors when managing privacy boundaries, leading the authors to conclude that “the risks associated with visibility [moreover] are a tremendous deterrent to engaging in dissent or any other stigmatized or minority position (p.1324).” Fritz and Gonzales (2018) investigated the unique situation of transgender-identifying individuals and the privacy trade-offs they negotiate when crowdfunding for cosmetic surgery. Because of their end goal (altering their bodies) they felt a need to sacrifice privacy. Their privacy management is highly dependent on their audience. For example, one of the respondents took an entire day to block approximately 600 people who were connected to his relatives so they wouldn’t notice his fundraiser for surgery he promoted on Facebook. In her ethnography, Eubanks (2018) studied coordinated entry and housing projects for homeless people in Los Angeles. Specifically, an algorithm now calculates the vulnerability of tens of thousands of homeless people to make a priority list.

“The unhoused in Los Angeles are faced with a difficult trade-off: admitting risky, or even illegal behavior, on the VI-SPDAT [the system used for the coordinated entry and social housing] can snag you a higher ranking on the priority list for permanent supportive housing. But it can also open you up to law enforcement scrutiny. Coordinated entry is not just a system for managing information or matching demand to supply. It is a surveillance system for sorting and criminalizing the poor (p. 123).”

The research from Pearce, Vitak and Bart (2018), Fritz and Gonzales (2018), and Eubanks (2018) illustrate the layeredness and complexity of minorities’ privacy management and how they are dependent on larger institutional and structural forces.

Researching Muslim groups in Australia, Sanjakdar (2011, p.2) argued that for youth the “negotiation and reconciliation with opposing Western ideals and conceptions” is especially

challenging. Articulating ethnic culture and values or performing Muslim identity is certainly not evident considering a growing voice of intolerance towards Islam in Western Europe. Take for example wearing a headscarf as a Muslim woman, which is often seen as a signifier of women's oppression by men – despite the claim of those who have deliberately decided to wear a headscarf and resented the idea of the need to be saved (Leurs, 2015). Currently, many right wing politicians in Europe treat Daesh online propaganda and violent extremism par a par with Muslim culture to substantiate their claims about the failure of multiculturalism. For example, in a speech at a Pegida (anti-Islam movement) gathering in Dresden, Filip Dewinter (member of the right-wing populist and Flemish nationalist political party) called the Quran a license to kill and mentioned how Europe is in a war with Islam (Struys, 2018). Arguably, this emotional charged propaganda that connects Muslim culture with terrorism shapes how Muslim identity is felt and experienced, what is considered to be private, and subsequently what is shared and what not.

Children and privacy

In contemporary discussions on privacy and new media minors are often depicted as reckless and unconcerned (De Wolf & Joye, 2019). They are believed to be “people in the process of becoming” and adults are supposedly “finished beings” (Durham, 2017; p.7; De Leyn et al., 2019). In this light privacy is treated as something young people “freely give up” and need to learn to control (Barnes, 2006). In comparison to mature audiences or teens, children are also highly dependent on parents or legal guardians in their privacy management. Even though children are sometimes depicted as “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001) they are often treated as vulnerable audiences that need to be protected (Livingstone, 2003). Contrary to the latter image Livingstone (2006) showed how children value privacy, and, taking into account the affordances of the Internet “manage the boundary between public and private in such a ways as to allow them to experiment with identity, with communication, with peer culture (p.19).”

Moreover, Mostmans, Bauwens & Pierson (2014) found how children were very careful when posting pictures of others online that could be embarrassing or hurtful. In other research Mostmans (2016) showed how children even questioned parental authority when it comes to sharing pictures that is of their concern. To manage privacy Kumar et. al (2017) found three main strategies. The children in their study consulted parents to make privacy decisions (e.g., asking a parent if it's okay to share passwords of online accounts). Children also relied on their own judgements and provided false information as a way to protect their privacy (e.g., using a fake name when setting up a Minecraft profile). Finally, children restricted access to information (e.g. deterring family members or friends from seeing information on certain devices).

Focus of study

Minority voices, and especially children of minority groups, are often left out in mainstream privacy discussions. In this study we aim to understand and amplify the voices of Muslim children and how they negotiate offline and online group privacy. To facilitate the latter, we look at privacy as a boundary negotiation process to manage private information (see Petronio, 2002) and as a condition that allows the development of a critical, playful subjectivity and communal values (see Cohen, 2012). Such an approach acknowledges how privacy management is an interactive process dependent on others and the constraints of the relative position of the group one belongs to. Indeed, we resent a neoliberal rationality in which privacy is conceptualized as a good or property being traded off against other goods – as typically portrayed in mainstream public debate (De Wolf & Joye, 2019).

Method

We initially organized focus groups ($n=48$) to investigate how children coped with the Daesh attacks so to facilitate communication between teachers and their pupils (see introduction). In

the focus groups we noticed how Muslim children mentioned how Muslim culture and terrorism were often treated as one and the same. Although we were able to ask questions on how this influenced their self-disclosure and privacy management, further research and analysis was needed to really grasp their point of view. We reanalyzed the focus groups and additionally organized semi-structured interviews with Muslim children.

Focus groups create an environment in which children can discuss content with their peers, and not only with an adult researcher. Mallalieu, Palan and Laczniak (2005) argue that placing children in small groups facilitates the research process as opposed to face-to-face interviews with one adult. We chose to organize focus groups with children aged 9 to 12 years old. Because of the sensitivity of the content (Daesh attacks) and proximity (the suicide bombings happened in Belgium, Brussels airport and metro station, approximately 60 km from the participating schools) we limited ourselves to the older half of school-age children. Moreover, our research required children to be cognitively and morally capable of discussing such issues. According to Carpendale and Chandler (1996) children from 9 years old onwards start to develop a more complex moral understanding. In total 48 children were involved. In our sampling we included a diversity of experiences in terms of gender and religion. Among the respondents 26 (61%) were girls and 19 had a Muslim background, whereas the remaining 29 children were non-Muslim. One focus group consisted of only non-Muslim children (FG 4), two focus groups were Muslim (FG 7 & 8) and five were mixed (FG 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6).

Nine semi-structured interviews were organized almost one year after the focus groups. Semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity to gather rich data through conversation, with respect to the vocabulary and way of talking of the respondents. Moreover, interviews allow us to understand the meaning making process underlying human interactions (Aldiabat & Navenec, 2011). For the purpose of the interviews and the sensitivity of certain topics (their view on Muslim culture, what is regarded as appropriate to share and what is not, experiences

of privacy turbulence, etc.), however, we found semi-structured interviews to be more appropriate than other qualitative methods. In total 9 new respondents (7 girls) between the age of 9 to 12 participated.

Procedure

Our empirical study was approved by the ethical review board of our faculty. We then contacted schools and teachers in [omitted for peer review] to recruit respondents. Parental consent was granted for all the participating children. We also asked children for their approval to record our conversations by audio means, as well as to take notes. In the beginning of the focus groups and interviews we clarified to the children how they could stop the conversation if they did not want to continue.

The focus groups took place in the classroom of the children during lunch time and lasted about 60 minutes. Before commencing the focus groups we highlighted the informal character of the conversation to come. We mentioned the children they were allowed to say whatever they wanted (“this conversation is a not a test”) as long as they respected each other. Two moderators guided the focus groups. We deliberately kept a small number of respondents so that attention could be devoted to each and every one of the children. Overall, we employed a child-centric approach so as to listen to the thoughts and experiences of children (Barker & Weller, 2003). To facilitate participation we focused on local culture and made use of visual probing methods (Gauntlett, 2007).

First, we showed a television fragment of *Karrewiet* – a program that is devoted to tailoring news to children. *Karrewiet* is broadcasted on the public-service television channel for children in Flanders. We showed images of people building a memorial site with flowers, candles and chalk messages (‘Laten we gelukkig zijn’ (Let us be happy); ‘Nous avons pas peur’ (We are not afraid)) in a public space in Brussels. Afterwards we asked questions about what

they had seen. This first phase probed children to reflect on their prior knowledge of the Daesh attacks in Brussels and the shared experiences of the other children. This allowed us to capture children's feelings, and to explore the ways in which they understood or made sense of terrorism and extremism. Second, we asked with whom they had discussed – if at all – what had happened in Brussels on the 22nd of March. Finally, we asked them about their social media usage and what information they posted online.

After transcribing the focus group sessions, two researchers were involved in the data analysis. Both researchers coded the transcripts independently at first. After a first coding phase the initial coding schemes were compared and further categories of information were made. Four main themes were differentiated: 1) children's emotions after the attacks; 2) communication about attacks with parents and teachers; 3) description of Daesh and their motivations; 4) reactions on social media. Afterwards, the material was gathered by theme into one document and explanatory quotations were highlighted. For the purpose of this particular study we only describe theme 3 and 4 in the result section.

The interviews took place on the playground during school hours of a public school and lasted about 35 minutes. Before commencing the conversation, the interviewer introduced himself/herself, the goal of the conversation, and how the voiced recordings were to be employed. The interview started with low key questions on what the children did in their free time and what kind of games they played. Then, questions were asked on their Muslim culture and practices (e.g., Are there specific things you do as a Muslim? Is this something important to you? Do you talk about this with your fellow classmates?). Hereafter, the conversation shifted to online practices and sharing of information. Finally, we also let the children reflect on the alleged connection between Muslim culture and terrorism.

Data analysis

The same two researchers were involved in the data analysis of the interviews and a similar procedure was employed to code and structure the data. Based on literature and prior research we used the following etic codes to comprise a coding scheme: ‘Muslim culture’, ‘privacy management’, ‘social media’, and ‘Islam and terrorism’. After reviewing the transcripts and the etic codes the following three themes were found: 1) Privacy as hiding minority group information (here: Muslim culture); 2) Coordinated privacy management and 3) re-negotiating the societal image of the minority group. All three themes will be discussed in the result section. To guarantee the privacy of the participating children, their real names have been substituted by pseudonyms.

This study analyzes its data from a grounded theory perspective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Glaser & Strauss (1967, p. 79) argued how “formal theory can be generated from data, it is more, desirable, and usually necessary, to start the formal theory from a substantive one. The latter not only provides a stimulus to a ‘good idea’ but it also gives an initial direction in developing relevant categories and properties.” As outlined in the theoretical section we conceptualize group privacy as a highly contextual and dynamic negotiation. In our coding process, we were therefore mindful to privacy tactics, as well as to how external and internal group structures affected the development of privacy boundaries. To facilitate our understanding of group privacy we built upon two key concepts of Glaser & Strauss (1967): constant comparison and theoretical sampling. First, we contrasted the group privacy management strategies with personal privacy management strategies in our analysis. Second, we narrowed down our research focus to Muslim children after reanalyzing the initial focus groups. To generate the previously described themes we first read the entire transcripts and considered multiple meanings. We then identified meaningful units of information, categorized relevant text segments, and built a story that connects those categories into theoretical

propositions. This entire process and our interpretive effort throughout was facilitated using the Nvivo 12 software for qualitative data analysis.

Results

Multiple Daesh attacks took place in 2015 and 2016, the children in the focus groups were able to draw memories from several assaults in Western Europe (e.g., attacks on Charlie Hebdo as well as in cafés in Paris) and beyond (e.g., attacks in Istanbul and Syria). The attacks at the railway station and at Brussels Airport made a deep impression on the children. Especially the school lockdown on March 22, the day of the attacks in Brussels, is printed in their memories.

The children were frustrated and angry because of the attacks, but also wanted to understand the underlying motivations of extremists and explain their behavior. In his reasoning, a boy, named Isam, compared the attacks with a situation he experienced earlier that week. Specifically, a classmate of his dropped his fruit but, so he argued, he did not react with violence.

Focusgroup 7, Isam, boy: [...] you don't kill someone just because you're angry.

For example, on our school children regularly get into fights. When I was angry with Diwan who accidentally dropped my banana I didn't do anything back. That's an example. You don't just pick up a gun and start shooting people ...

Overall, children labeled terrorists as bad people committing dangerous actions that hurt innocents. *"I wouldn't call them people anymore"* mentioned Nathan (F2, boy). Later on, however, he was more moderate in his description. *"in fact [I think] they are normal people, because they want to take revenge for something that happened to them."* Another child stated that terrorists are not normal and referred to how they radicalized because of hate speech on social media (Julie, F2, girl). The focus groups also clarified a difference between Muslim and

non-Muslim children when describing Daesh. Non-Muslim children labeled terrorists as the ‘*other*’, whereas the Muslim children especially explained why the terrorists are not Muslims; “*they are aggressive people, and yes most people say that they are Muslims, but in fact they are Zehma [fake] Muslims*” (F8, Jamil, boy).

In the interviews we had the opportunity to delve deeper into how Muslim children experienced their Muslim identity. It was noticeable how all respondents we interviewed were cognizant of Muslim culture and practices. They explained the meaning of Ramadan, Sugar Festival at the end of the Ramadan (Eid al-Fitr), Kaaba, Mosque visits, chapters in the Quran (e.g., surah), etc. Throughout the interviews it became clear that Muslim culture allowed how identities were to be felt and experienced. A’dab initially stated that she didn’t really feel like a Muslim because she wasn’t born in a Muslim country.

“Maybe, If I was born in a Muslim country I would feel like a real Muslim. But I was born here and I have Catholic friends. So, I don’t really feel like a Muslim.”

After explaining how she participated in various practices, like praying, fasting, and going to the Mosque each Sunday the interviewer asked her again.

“Sometimes, when I go to the Mosque I share [pictures] of my Quran book [on social media] so others can see I’m at the Mosque.”

Interviewer: “So you feel proud?”

“Yes”

Interviewer: “In the beginning of the interview you said that you didn’t really feel like a Muslim.”

“Not a real Muslim. But if they would insult Moslim people I would step up. I am a Muslim, my parents are Muslim. Even though I don’t pray every day or read the Quran every day I am a Muslim. That’s the truth.”

Regardless of what a ‘real’ Muslim entails, its presence in both their offline and online realm was notable. On the playground they would sometimes use Arabic greetings (e.g., As-salāmu ‘alaykum), talk about what clothing is appropriate, or differences between Arabic and Asian Muslim traditions. Expressing themselves and Muslim identifiers, however, cannot be taken for granted. This became clear when Jamila talked about where and whether it was appropriate to pray.

“I pray 5 times a day. When I am at school that’s not always possible, so I say my prayers at home.”

Interviewer: “Ok. So during school hours you don’t pray?”

“No. In some schools you can take a break, but here it is not allowed. The high school that I’m attending next year doesn’t allow this either. Catholics don’t pray at school either, so I guess we’re not allowed too.”

Interviewer: “Do you think it’s important to pray and go to the mosque?”

“Yes, I do. When you believe, you have to be good at it [referring to praying].”

Besides school policy, the respondents also mentioned differences or even conflicts at the school playground. Sufia explained that sometimes she gets the feeling of being misunderstood because of her religious believes.

“At school we have a ‘squad’ with only Muslims. Get it? Other children who aren’t Muslim also play with one another. They don’t want to sit together with us.”

Interviewer: “Who doesn’t want to sit together with you?”

“Children who aren’t Muslim. They play different games. There’s a girl, Maya, who comments on our behavior. We tell her we can’t do certain things because of our religion. She then answers ‘Allah, Allah, what’s the matter with you. It’s like he prohibits you to live.’”

It should be noted that later on in the interview Sufia further explained how they sometimes do play games with one another. That said, this example is illustrative to how reconciliation of minority practices and beliefs can be challenging (cf. Leurs, 2015). It became clear that school policy and the practices of non-minorities shaped their group privacy. For example, Sufia mentioned she doesn’t like it when the school prohibits here to fast during school hours so she does it in secret.

Interviewer: “You don’t like it when the school prohibits you to fast.”

“Yes. At school we always fast, but we do it secretly. Nobody knows, except my friends who also fast.”

Coordinating what can and cannot be disclosed about Muslim culture is not limited to the offline environment, but extends itself online. In addition, both external and internal structures affected how they developed privacy boundaries. A’dab exemplified how her Muslim friends sometimes advised her *not* to post information online about her home country.

“I previously had comments on my posts when I shared things about my home country. They then tell me ‘stop posting this. This isn’t fun. We also want to understand what you’re posting.’”

Interviewer: “Understand what?”

“Some people don’t understand. For example, I posted a picture of our president [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan]. But some people don’t know he was elected. But I can’t

help that, now do I? Or when I go to the mosque and post a picture of the Quran.

They tell me that this is Haram [acts that are forbidden in Islam].

Interviewer: "Who tells you that?"

"People from school. My friends. They tell me not to post such things. They tell me that people who aren't Muslim will start calling me names because they don't understand."

In addition to negotiating content or consciously not posting any information about Muslim identifiers to avoid negative feedback, they also kept in mind the networked nature of audiences in social media. During the interview Yara told us how she sometimes had to ask permission of her parents before posting information. For example, her mother doesn't like it when she posts pictures online about her family. At a certain point during the conversation she talked about her nieces and aunt. The interviewer asked her whether she thinks her aunt would dislike her online sharing behavior.

"I don't know. I don't put anything about my family online. You never know they don't want certain friends of friends to see. I have pictures with our headscarves on and pictures of my aunt without. So sometimes you have pictures with no headscarf that are only appropriate for friends. I can't put these online."

Interviewer: "Why can't you do that?"

"My dad wants women to wear headscarves because then men do not gaze at women anymore."

The above example shows how cultural norms guide Yara's everyday privacy practices, whilst being cognizant of the social media dynamic of invisible and potentially unwanted audiences.

Besides previously mentioned privacy management strategies, we found two other practices on how they treated Islam related information when being confronted with the alleged association between ‘Islam world’ and ‘terrorism’, that is ignoring or actively denying the linkage. In the focus groups children argued to mainly lurk on social media. They mentioned to read posts and comments and followed YouTubers and famous people on Instagram, but rarely posted themselves. Overall the children reported that they did not comment on negative online content. Multiple children stated that they ignored such messages, *“because this only causes problems”* (F6, Marie, girl). More often children reinforced positive posts regarding their culture and religion, rather than reacting on hate speech. For example Diwan (F7, boy) liked and commented on a video by YouTube vlogger Kastop.

F7, Diwan, Muslim: *Kastop [vlogger on YouTube] made a video about the ISIL attacks, when it happened, but that was real. He explained everything in detail.*

Instead of not disclosing information or even hiding Muslim information, the children added more granularity and rectified incorrect information about Muslim culture. These results are in line with what we found in the interviews.

First, it should be noted that not all children we interviewed were confronted with a negative image of Muslim culture in the past, although all were cognizant that such a representation is pertinent. In the very beginning, when interviewing A’dab, this became clear when the interviewer merely asked about school activities and friends.

Interviewer: “So you have a lot friends here at school. Are all your best friends Muslim?”

“No, no. I’m not that kind of person. You do have certain people who only have Muslim friends. I don’t live in my home country and there are many people here who aren’t Muslim. I think it’s important to get along with everybody. It’s not because I’m a Muslim that I’m a bad person.”

Interviewer. "Why would you say that?"

"Some people really see Muslims as bad people. So to speak our culture dictates us that we HAVE to wear a headscarf or that we HAVE to fast. But, that's not true.

Most of the time the children answered to ignore such a representation of their culture, offline and online. It could be argued that ignoring negative comments, although not a group privacy management strategy per se, does prevent the linkage between the self and the already made association. Unfortunately, this practice does not question the alleged association. Besides ignoring content, children also claimed to 'report', 'dislike' or 'comment' on negative posts. We argue that these practices renegotiate the societal image of the minority group they belong to, and thus the status of Muslim related information as information that needs to be hidden or not disclosed. The conversation with Naia illustrates this.

Interviewer: "How do you react to people who say that all Muslims are terrorists?"

"Sometimes bad. Because I really can't stand it. They sometimes say that Muslims are terrorists who only want to kill people and control the world. Then I react by saying that we only want to help people and that we don't like it when people call us names, like being members of ISIS-army.

In the focus groups a similar discourse was noticed on how incorrect information about Muslim culture was rectified. Rather than disassociating themselves with being Muslim they questioned the link between Muslim culture and Daesh.

F7, Researcher: *What is a terrorist according to you?*

Sam, boy: *They state being Muslims, but in fact they are a little bit mad in their head.*

Zeba, girl: *They aren't Muslims!*

Discussion

Main results and reflections

In this study we investigated how Muslim children negotiate offline and online group privacy and gave a voice to minority groups who are often left out of mainstream privacy debates (Marwick, Fontaine & boyd, 2017). We argued how privacy management is not a fully autonomous and individual process but dependent on the group or collective one belongs to and its position in society. After all, the latter shapes what can and cannot be shared and the very definition of private information.

At first glance, it should be noted that the Muslim children respondents in this study show many similarities to other general children of their generation: they are active on (different types of) social media like WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat, play similar games and have similar interests. During the empirical studies it became clear that Muslim culture and traditions are an important part of their group and personal identity. Sharing Muslim information can be seen as announcing one's identity and identification to the group they belong to. Hence, the alleged association between Islam world and terrorism or simply the negative discourse towards Muslim practices in Western societies (e.g., women wearing headscarves) impedes the disclosure of Muslim related information. Although not all participants experienced direct discrimination, they were aware of this general representation of Islam.

Using a privacy lens, the study further showed different types of privacy management strategies children employed to hide/negotiate Islam information: looking for separate spaces, not posting any Muslim related information, negotiating the appropriateness of certain information with other Muslim children and keeping in mind the networked and collapsed nature of online audiences.

Theoretical advances

On a theoretical level we employed CPM theory to be mindful of the group privacy negotiations processes, and Cohen's (2012) perspective on critical subjectivity and privacy to take into account the relative position of minority groups. Employing both privacy lenses we argue that privacy is not an individual property that needs to be preserved, rather it is a boundary coordination or negotiation process that is dependent on others.

Based on the results we further generate group privacy theory and differentiate between external and internal structural factors that shape the group privacy management of Muslim children. In this research, school policy (e.g., a school that prohibits praying during school hours), the general representation of Muslim groups (e.g., non-Muslim children who don't understand the importance Muslim children's devoted interest in Muslim culture and traditions), as well as the affordances of social media (e.g., invisible audiences on social media) are examples of external structural factors. Family members or friends that recommend what is appropriate to share and what is not are examples of internal structural factors. These results illustrate how minorities experiences privacy differently than dominant social groups. In addition, it shows how privacy among minorities includes the negotiation of boundaries around the self, the minority group they belong to as well as the societal image or representation of that particular minority group. Indeed, added layers of complexity are necessary to understand group privacy among minorities.

Strengths, limitations and future research

Our child-centric approach (Barker & Weller, 2003) provided children with the opportunity to voice their thoughts and experiences. Because children are often treated as a vulnerable audience that needs to be protected it is difficult to highlight children's agency and privacy management (Livingstone, 2003, 2006). Even though children's voices are used to highlight

their notions and experiences we cannot underestimate how our own position as researchers² is of influence when moderating focus groups and interviewing children, as well as the structure of childhood (Spyroo, 2011): children will speak from their position of a child and researchers will interpret this from their position of an adult researcher. At the very least researchers should be aware of their own privileged role when interacting with minority groups. Diversity among interviewers is therefore highly recommended.

From a privacy perspective we consider our research to be exploratory. Our data provides valuable insights into group privacy but is relatively weak in terms of rigor. Moreover, to understand the larger privacy management process, rules that center on linkages, permeability and ownership should be thoroughly studied (Petronio, 2002). Building further on CPM theory we place great emphasis on the centrality of others. It would be valuable to include other actors involved in the negotiation process of group privacy (e.g., parents, friends, teachers) in future research endeavors.

In a recent article considering private information Petronio & Child (2020, p.80) argued how “one of the patterns emerging is fluidity in what constitutes the meaning of private information. The conditions of private information can change across ownership of information, life span, the kind of information, and more.” Based on this study we argue how privacy of minority groups includes a) the negotiation of boundaries around the self; b) the minority group they belong to; c) as well as the representation of that particular minority group. We think longitudinal, in-depth research with multiple conversations will help to further understand how group privacy boundaries are developed.

² All the researchers involved in the empirical part of the study (focus groups and interviews) were non-Muslim. Arguably, the latter influenced the position and stance of the Muslim children and the way they spoke about their Muslim culture.

Rather than putting forward a defined set of techniques or methods we would like to put forward an ethnographic attitude “that seeks to find meanings of cultural phenomena by getting close to the experience of these phenomena (Markham, 2013, p. 654). In general, more research is necessary that amplifies the voices of minority groups and their experiences of privacy. Intersectional research is recommended that takes into account how an individual may belong to multiple minority groups with different group structures and dynamics.

Over the years, much attention has been devoted to the online privacy management of users. Unfortunately, by treating privacy as a ‘monolithic’ concept research regularly ignores the privacy management strategies and experiences of minority groups (Marwick & boyd, 2018 p.1157). We would like to underline the importance of investigating group privacy and that of minority groups in particular. If not, one could assume their situations and that of the majority to be alike. With this study we intend to highlight the intersection between privacy, social structures and groups (cf. second-order effects (see Anthony, Campos-Castillo, & Horne, 2017)). The presence of group privacy management strategies among Muslim children found in this study and the ways they hide Muslim related information or identifiers, we argue, also illustrate how they position themselves in relation to dominant social groups. Certain strategies allow them to have privacy (e.g. fasting secretly at school if it’s not allowed) but also reflect, and to some extent even legitimizes, structural inequality. It might therefore be valuable to further examine how the presence of group privacy among minorities relates to discrimination and facilitates the status quo.

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Topic Guide – Interview

1. Questions about identity and Muslim culture

We'll start with introducing ourselves. I'm [interviewer]. I teach at our university, I like to play football and games on my PlayStation. Can you tell me something about yourself?

Do you have friends at your school? What kind of games do you like to play?

Are there other Muslim children in your class/ school?

If you could describe what it means to be a Muslim, what would you say? To what extent do you feel Muslim?

Can you say a little bit about Muslim Culture? Is that important to you? Do you talk about this with other children in your class?

2. Questions on their sharing behavior

Are you active online and on social media? What kind of social media do you use?

What do you share on social media? Do you share everything about yourself or are there things you'd rather not share? What kind of information is ok to share?

How do you ensure that certain things remain private?

Do you post information about your Muslim culture? [if yes, Can you give an example?]

Are there things you'd rather not share about your Muslim culture? Have you ever hesitated to share certain things about your Muslim culture? [if yes, Could you describe such a situation?]

Do you ever worry about your privacy when you share information that is related to your Muslim background?

[In light of the Daesh attacks, the public-service television channel in [omitted for peer review] informed the children about the attacks, by showing parents and children building memorial sites with flowers, candles and chalk messages (e.g., "let us be happy", "we are not afraid). In the third section we asked questions about what they had seen.]

3. Questions about the daesh attacks

Do you still know what this movie is all about?

What do you remember about Daesh?

Can you still remember what happened on the day of the attacks?

Did you talk about this with others?

What do you think about people saying that all Muslims are terrorists? Have you ever been confronted with this?

4. Questions about social media and online content about Daesh

Did you talk about the Daesh attacks with others on social media?

Did you still remember some of the content that was shared on social media?

I brought two examples with me. In the first example a girl expresses how she feels sorry for the people in Paris and Brussels. In the second example a boy posted on Facebook: “Again those Muslims? I hate them.” Another boy further commented on this post: “What do Muslim people have to do with it. They didn’t hurt anyone. They are not part of ISIS”. What do you think about this?