

The role of Facebook in attitude change toward Black Pete



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Abstract

The figure Black Pete as part of the yearly Sinterklaas festivities have been reason for discussion in the Netherlands for decades. However, in the past few years the discussion has intensified with an increasing number of Dutch people rooting for change. Drawing from the theoretical literature on attitude change and through 14 semi-structured interviews with Dutch citizens, this study aims to understand how current Black Pete opponents explain their attitude change from supporting the tradition, with a specific focus on the role of Facebook therein.

The data results show that the process of attitude change toward Black Pete consists out of five stages, namely the initial positive attitude, existing personality, awareness, acknowledgement and the actual attitude change. Within the first stages initial influences for attitude change are proven to be personal contacts, primarily those on an international level and those that invoke empathic perspectives toward other individuals. Facebook's role has proven to be immense in the process of attitude change toward Black Pete, especially in the stages of awareness, acknowledgement and actual attitude change. Facebook helped change attitudes and helped strengthen existing negative attitudes toward Black Pete by providing information and access to others' perspectives quickly and easily, especially through the ability to join topic-specific groups and the newsfeed. This paper contributes to an understanding of the role of social media and in particular the social networking site Facebook in attitude change toward a Dutch cultural tradition.

Key words: attitude change, Black Pete, Facebook, social media, qualitative analysis, interviews

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Over the past few years a discussion about the annual children's festivities around Sinterklaas¹ and his Zwarte Pieten, Black Petes² in English, has intensified in the Netherlands. Although still a small minority, more and more people within Dutch society seem to oppose the idea of painting individuals black for the purpose of an annual tradition and the children's festivities that come with it (Ten Broeke, 2011; Heilbron, 2014; Een Vandaag, 2014), shifting the Black Pete discussion even from a national to a global one (Duurvoort, 2014; Faiola, 2013; Tharoor, 2014a; Tharoor, 2014b).

If the discussion about the figure of Black Pete online was not noticeable for many people in the Netherlands, there is a large chance it became visible a few years ago after the emergence of the popular Facebook-pages 'Pietietie' –supporting Black Pete– and 'Zwarte Piet is racism' ['Black Pete is racism'] –opposing Black Pete– which respectively count 1.913.389³ and 15.514⁴ members on August 30th 2015. Just like in many countries in the world, Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the Netherlands with over nine million registered Dutch Facebook-profiles (Fanrise, 2015). With the Black Pete discussion heating up stronger every year meanwhile given rise to more and more people in the Netherlands opposing the black painted figure (Heilbron, 2014) and with Facebook's proven potential to expand the public sphere (Westling, 2007), researching what role Facebook has played in the process of attitude change would be an interesting matter for inquiry –especially since the number of Dutch Facebook-profiles and log-ins is still increasing yearly (Fanrise, 2015; Oosterveer, 2014) despite previous fallback announcements (Oosterveer, 2014). By using various theories about attitude change as frames of reference, the aims of this study, therefore, are to understand what has caused individuals to oppose Black Pete and to understand what role Facebook has played in the attitude change. The research questions this study aims to answer are:

RQ1: How do opponents of Black Pete explain their attitude change from supporting the tradition?

RQ2: What role has Facebook played in that attitude change?

¹ Sinterklaas is the name of an annual Dutch children's tradition and it is also the name of the festivities' main character. Sinterklaas the character is loosely based on a historical story about archbishop Saint-Nicholas (Boer-Dirks, 1993). Because Sinterklaas has no specific relevance for this research, the Dutch name is left unaltered.

² Although the black painted helper of Sinterklaas is officially called 'Zwarte Piet' in the Netherlands, I made the careful deliberation to translate his name to English so that non-Dutch speakers can also understand the connotation the figure's name brings with it. While 'Piet' is a Dutch name which in its sound is equivalent to the English name 'Pete', the adjective 'Zwarte' simply means 'Black'; hence the translation 'Black Pete'.

³ <https://www.facebook.com/pietitie?fref=ts>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/zwartepietisblackface?fref=ts>

This research focuses on people who have changed their attitude from supporting to opposing the black painted figure, so that an understanding of a total change in attitude toward Black Pete can be comprehended. Within the first research question, supporting Black Pete prior to the attitude change entails that individuals supported the Sinterklaas festivities, including the black painted figure, in such that they had joyful thoughts about and experiences with the Sinterklaas celebrations and Black Pete (like i.e. Duurvoort, 2014). With opposing Black Pete is meant that individuals want to see in a change in the tradition by at least an alteration of its black painted appearance (like i.e. Tharoor, 2014b). To show their support for changing the Sinterklaas tradition's black painted helpers, those individuals have currently even joined an anti-Black Pete-Facebook group.

With this research I aim to answer both research questions based on an elaborative theoretical framework and the qualitative research method of interviewing. The theoretical framework is divided into two sections. In the first section, discussing existing theories about attitude change, I will provide a deeper understanding of the various ways in which a change in attitude can occur with a specific focus on information processing. The theories on attitude change that are discussed in that context are cognitive dissonance theory, the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). The second section of the theoretical framework constitutes existing theory about new media, Facebook specifically, and the processing of information as shared on the social networking site in relation to attitude change. After the theoretical framework the research design will be elaborated on in more detail. First, however, in the remaining of this chapter the scientific and social relevance of this research will be discussed as well as the introduction to the research topic.

1.1. Social and scientific relevance

Concerning the Black Pete discussion various researchers have performed quantitative studies in which they, for example, analyzed specific Facebook-pages, such as 'Pietietie', 'Zwarte Piet is racism' and 'Piet makeover' in an attempt to make sense out of different communal aspects (i.e. Slagter, 2014; Van Es, Van Geenen & Boeschoten, 2014). In addition, Wouters (2014) has qualitatively researched the mediated discourse about Black Pete as a part of the annual celebrations around Sinterklaas. Most of the existing research about the Black Pete discussion has focused on discourse while none of the existing research has focused on attitude change, let alone on attitude change of individuals about the annual festivities in relation to social networking site Facebook. This in contrary to scientific literature about political issues in the public sphere and attitude change through different aspects of web 2.0 (i.e. Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard, 2010; Shirky, 2011; Westling,

2007), so this study can definitely contribute to existing literature by adding knowledge on attitude change in a Dutch digital arena specifically.

This research does not only expand existing theory through the specific dimension of Facebook in relation to attitude change, it also holds social relevance due to its aim to gain a deeper understanding of what triggered individuals to oppose the figure of Black Pete. The study can help give insights into the opposing side of the Black Pete discussion, thereby making a small effort to bring contemporary polarized Dutch society closer together through understanding. Also, through this scientific contribution, I hope to help incite socio-cultural change in the Netherlands:

Understanding how people have changed their minds about Black Pete could have huge implications for changing the minds of the large majority that is still feeling supportive towards the black painted figure. So, by being able to apprehend the attitude change, this study could eventually also contribute to Dutch society in the ability of actually changing the tradition's feature of Black Pete and in changing the normality of black facing overall in the Netherlands.

1.2. Introduction to the research topic

Besides the social and scientific relevance, this study, in its own right, holds some personal relevance for me as well. Just like many qualitative writers who cannot seem to derive from subjectivity due to them being authors with personae while sometimes deploying narrators in their research texts (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), my subjectivity as a qualitative researcher is no different. I could be considered the textbook example of how Facebook helped change my attitude about Black Pete and I am, because of that, quite interested to know how other Facebook users experienced the 'power' of the social networking site in the persuasion process of opposing black facing for 'Sinterklaas'. Approximately five years ago I came across various posts against the Dutch children's tradition on my timeline of the social networking site. The Facebook posts that struck me most were one of a male friend of Surinamese origin whom was born and raised in the Netherlands. He had written posts about the racist features of the figure Black Pete and about his feelings of not feeling comfortable living in the Netherlands due to the yearly –in his eyes– racist Sinterklaas-tradition. My Dutch-Surinamese Facebook-friend eventually even posted on his profile that he restricted his young son from going to school around the 5th of December. As reasons he firstly stated that he did not want his son to be taught that it was okay to dehumanize black people with the portrayal of black-painted whites inferior to their white-skinned boss. Secondly, the boy's father did not want his child to be put in the position that it was okay for others referring to him as 'Black Pete' due to the dark color of the young boy's skin.

Although I at first thought that his posts were exaggerated and missing the point of the joyful characteristics surrounding the children's festivities –after all, what is the harm in indulging children with gifts and candy for an annual celebration?–, the posts of my Surinamese friend triggered me to read the comments to his posts and to various other posts about the feelings of Facebook-friends against the black-painted figures. Reading the comments to the different posts opposing the figurative Black Petes, I was shocked: So many racist comments, so many affiliations were being made between the Black Petes and black people living in the Netherlands... And here I was under the impression that racism did not exist anymore in tolerant, multicultural the Netherlands where so many different ethnicities lived with and next to each other for decades. The enormous amount of reactions to Facebook-posts of the small number of people against Black Pete –whom, in general, were not even against the celebration of Sinterklaas' birthday, but only against the black facing of his helpers– made me realize that I was not able to support a Dutch tradition that brought so much hatred to the surface amongst members of Dutch society and which, despite the fact that Sinterklaas and his Black Petes were part of a Dutch 'festivity for children', apparently did not account for as a joyful celebration for every Dutch child⁵ (Heilbron, 2014).

While my recent personal experiences may make it seem as if the discussion about Black Pete is a rather new one, it is not. Already in the 1960's people were publicly opposing the black painted figure, because it made individuals feel uncomfortable (Helsloot, 2008). Although Helsloot (2008) quickly adds that that simultaneously meant that –from the moment Black Pete was brought to figurative life in the 1860's– for over a century the Dutch were very pleased by Black Pete and did not have a problem with the 'black helper' of Sinterklaas, that could tell us more about Dutch society in the early twentieth century than about the complete comfort people encountered around the black painted figure. Besides the fact that from the 1960's onwards a lot of immigrants moved to the Netherlands to find work (Sanderse, Verweij & De Beer, 2011) who most likely experienced the appearance of Black Pete differently than the predominantly white natives, changing times and innovative technologies have allowed us to communicate more openly about public and political issues (Westling, 2007). Especially the internet –more specifically web 2.0– opened up doors for its users to not only consume but also produce content (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012) making it easier for, for instance, Black Pete adversaries to speak out. The emergence of social networking sites on web 2.0 expanded the dimensions of the internet in such that it made room for cognitive deliberation processes to happen online (Zhang et al., 2010).

This historical overview brought us to the scientific relevance of today in which we want to learn more about the role of Facebook specifically in relation to the social relevant issue of attitude

⁵ See www.facebook.com/Pietmakeover for various examples.

change. In the next chapter the concepts within the research questions will be elaborated on by discussing existing research. Succeeding the theoretical framework a short presentation of the research design for this study will follow. Then, in chapter 4 a detailed description of the data results will be given. In the last chapter I will conclude the research with an answer to the research questions, a short discussion of the main findings and the limitations of this research.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

The research aims of this study are twofold. Firstly, this study aims to understand how individuals came about their attitude change about Black Pete. Understanding what has caused individuals whom were once supportive of Black Pete to oppose the figure now could be scientifically theorized as the understanding of attitude change (i.e. Festinger, 1956; Perloff, 2010). According to Cacioppo, Petty and Crites (1994), attitude change is the “modification of an individual’s general evaluative perception of a stimulus or set of stimuli” (p. 261). Although most theories about attitude change consider a change in attitude to be a process individuals go through (i.e. Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Perloff, 2010), a particular message can cause individuals to involve in rapid transformation of attitudes as well (Lambert, Scherer, Schott, Olson, Andrews, O'Brien & Zisser, 2010). In the early 20th century Allport (1935) described such an influential message as cause for shaping judgment and behavior as ‘power of the situation’. By qualitatively researching the change in attitude people have gone through from supporting to opposing Black Pete through information processing, certain messages as part of an attitude change process could surface as reasons of the transition and could be explained thoroughly.

Secondly, by focusing on how various types of information transmitted on and processed through social networking site Facebook specifically, this study aims to understand how Facebook may have played a role in that attitude change toward Black Pete. Previous research about the role Facebook has played in a subject under study has defined that role as an examination of implications (Fox, Warber & Makstaller, 2013), as an examination of impacts (Skoric & Kwan, 2011) and as the social networking site’s potential to influence (Fox, Osborn & Warber, 2014). While in all cases specific uses of Facebook and the platform’s contribution to the phenomenon under study were examined (Fox et al., 2013; Skoric & Kwan, 2011; Fox et al., 2014), understanding the role that Facebook has played in this research will focus on how various types of information transmitted on and processed through the social networking site may have influenced attitude change toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the figure.

To answer the research questions ‘How do opponents of Black Pete explain their attitude change from supporting the tradition?’ and ‘What role has Facebook played in that attitude change?’ properly, the theory will be elaborated on extensively in this chapter. The theoretical framework is divided into two subsections, each focusing on a particular aspect of the study. In the first section I will elaborate on various theories about attitude change through information processing. In the second section I will present the reader with a deeper understanding of new media, the role of Facebook as a social networking site therein and, finally, attitude change in relation to Facebook.

2.1. Attitude change

Before I research the role that information processing through Facebook as a new medium could have played in the complete process of attitude change in opposing Black Pete, the concept of attitude change first has to be thoroughly grasped. Researching how the opponents thought about the figure beforehand in relation to how the opponents think about Black Pete now and researching opponents' underlying reasons for the transition to occur, can give a complete comprehension of the attitude change.

2.1.1. Information processing

Although changed attitudes appear to be quite difficult to study (Wilson, Lindsey & Schooler, 2000; Perloff, 2010) and can be even more difficult to study based on new media, a theoretical way to understand attitude and behavior change is by focusing on information processing (Perloff, 2010). Understanding how people process information cognitively serves as an important basis for scholars to explain the impact of communications on attitudes (Perloff, 2010). Dual-process models currently dominate the field of attitude change through information processing (i.e. Cacioppo et al., 1994; Wilson et al., 2000; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Perloff, 2010). Dual-process models are models in which it is claimed that "there are two different mechanisms by which communications affect attitudes" (Perloff, 2010, p. 130).

According to this dual-process model principle, attitudes can be shaped and changed through the judgement of communications and the evaluation of messages via attitude accessibility and social judgement (Perloff, 2010), or in other terms, attitudes can be shaped and changed through information processing implicitly and explicitly (Wilson et al., 2000). Implicit attitudes are "introspectively unidentified (or inaccurately identified) traces of past experience that mediate favorable or unfavorable feeling, thought, or action toward social objects" (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 8). Wilson, Lindsey and Schooler (2000) added to this definition that implicit attitudes are automatically activated and that responses implicit attitudes influence can be quite difficult to monitor and control. Perloff supports these findings with the notion that implicit attitudes are habitual, automatic and non-conscious thoughts (2010). The scholars differ in their conceptualization from each other in such that individuals can be unaware of why changes in their implicit attitudes occurred (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Perloff, 2010) and that individuals indeed can be aware of their implicit attitude change (Wilson et al., 2000). Information processing through explicit attitudes, on the contrary, seems to have gained more conformity amongst scholars in such that individuals are aware of their explicit attitudes as well as of their explicit attitude changes (Greenwald & Banaji,

1995; Wilson et al., 2000; Perloff, 2010). Shaped by motivation and opportunity (Wilson et al., 2000), explicit attitudes can be characterized as conscious, deliberative and well-considered responses (Wilson et al., 2000).

In their article on dual-process models of attitudes, Wilson and his colleagues (2000) concluded that, “before researchers make claims about the extent to which they have changed people’s attitudes, they should include measures of implicit and explicit attitudes” (p. 121). That is because of the conceptualization of two different mechanisms within dual-process models, in order for complete attitude change to occur both mechanisms have to be changed (Wilson et al., 2000). Because I am interested in the process of complete attitude change toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the figure and because individuals’ awareness of both their implicit and explicit attitude change has been proven before (Aronson, 1969; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), for this study the focus lies on explanations of both implicit and explicit attitude changes altogether.

Besides multiple theory reviews (i.e. Eagly & Himmelfarb, 1978; Cialdini, Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Bornstein, 1989; Cacioppo et al., 1994), most research about the impact of communications on attitude change has followed the research method of experimenting (i.e. Zajonc, 1968; Hamm, Baum, Nikels, 1975; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). However, as Wilson and colleagues rightfully noted (2000), claims about the extent to which attitudes were changed were either based on implicit or explicit attitude changes instead of implicit and explicit attitude changes altogether. Through experiments, for example, Zajonc (1968) concluded for implicit attitudes as automatic responses how mere, simple exposure to a stimulus “is a sufficient condition for the enhancement of his attitude toward it” (p. 1). A few years later Hamm, Baum and Nikels (1975) tested Zajonc’s finding (1968) of the ‘mere exposure effect’ by exposing subjects repeatedly to photographs of black and white college graduates and they indeed found that interpersonal attractiveness was enhanced on the level of automatic responses. Besides attitudes consisting out of spontaneous, implicit responses, traditional self-report attitude scales like the Thurstone and the Likert scales are measurements that have proven attitudes to consist out of more conscious and explicit responses as well (Wilson et al., 2000). Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006), for example, concluded their experiments with surveys in which they asked respondents about the extent their IT-acceptance changed after taking part in the experiment. Making use of the Likert scale in their survey, the researchers ultimately found that source credibility and argument quality were determining factors for changes in explicit attitude about IT-acceptance (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006).

Although attitude change has been an interesting inquiry for scientists for over a century (Cialdini et al., 1981; Perloff, 2010), qualitative research on attitude change as a methodology seems still greatly underdeveloped (Aronson, 1969; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Merchant et al., 2014). While researchers are able to observe attitude changes through controlled experiments (Aronson, 1969),

attitude change outcomes can differ when researched qualitatively instead of quantitatively (Petty and Wegener, 1999). Also, research on attitude change traditionally concerned with predictors and processes often seems to have neglected the point “that attitudes are social phenomena, that they emerge from and are embedded in social interaction” (Wood, 2000, p. 561). Since through qualitative interviews “the social actor’s experience, knowledge, and worldviews” can be best understood (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 173), interviewing individuals could give researchers a great opportunity to not only discover how individuals perceive their attitude change themselves but also to understand what those individuals themselves experienced as the most determining factor(s) for their changed attitudes in a social context (Mahaffy, 1996; Aronson, 1999; Merchant et al., 2014). Since with this research I want to explore how individuals perceive their own attitude change about Black Pete for future implications, interviewing those individuals is thus a more valuable method for this study than observing them in simulated environments. Furthermore, because of the highly underdeveloped nature of qualitative research in relation to the concept of complete attitude change (Petty & Wegener, 1999; Merchant et al., 2014) and in relation to information processing in a social setting (Wood, 2000), following this research method serves as a valuable contribution in understanding different theories about attitude change.

For decades researchers have been trying to explain attitude change via various theories, such as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1956), the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Cacioppo & Petty, 1984) and, more recently, the associative-propositional evaluation model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Focusing on these theories about attitude change can help comprehend past and present changed behavior towards Black Pete in a qualitative manner (Aronson, 1999; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Wood, 2000).

2.1.2. Cognitive dissonance theory

Firstly, a deeper understanding of cognitive dissonance theory. A front runner in theoretically understanding attitude change was researcher Festinger (Aronson, 1969) with his cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1956). The theory holds that when an individual experiences cognitive dissonance –or, in other words, mental discomfort– that person becomes motivated to reduce the mental discomfort by changing his attitude or behavior to pursue mental consistency (Festinger, 1956). Although in cognitive dissonance theory a clear distinction is being made between implicit and explicit attitudes (Aronson, 1969), the theory describes attitude change as one mental process in which a change in only the implicit or explicit attitude is required for a complete change in attitude to happen (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). While the original theory holds that individuals can be aware of their explicit attitude to change, individuals cannot be aware of their changed implicit

attitudes (Festinger, 1956). However, as is discussed later, Aronson (1969) and Mahaffy (1996) have proven otherwise.

Within cognitive dissonance theory, mental discomfort can arise in various ways. Firstly, according to Festinger (1956), mental discomfort can occur when an individual has two or more beliefs, ideas and values at the same time that are contradicting one another. The complete attitude that changes then is through the implicit attitude, characterized by habitual and automatic responses based on past experiences (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Wilson et al., 2000; Perloff, 2010). Secondly, the mental discomfort can occur when a person becomes aware of his current explicit attitude when that attitude does not correspond to the image that that person has of himself (Aronson, 1969), also referred to as the individual's self-concept (Aronson, 1969) and ego-involvement (Perloff, 2010). With the self-concept's inclusion of the two important elements 'morally good' and 'competent', mental discomfort "will be aroused because a given behavior reflects negatively on the integrity and self-worth of the person who performed it" (Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992, p. 592). Finally, the mental discomfort can also occur when an individual is confronted with new outside information that conflicts with existing beliefs, ideas and values (Festinger, 1956). Reducing the mental discomfort to pursue mental consistency can then be seen as a motivation for explicit attitude change, because the individual has to go through careful and deliberative consideration of the newly obtained information in order to change his response to match his implicit "favorable or unfavorable feeling, thought, or action toward social objects" (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 8). Important to note here is that with a clear focus on mental discomfort, cognitive dissonance theory, thus, assumes that the individual who processes information has more power over the situation of attitude change than the information the individual is presented with (Perloff, 2010).

In 1959, Festinger and Carlsmith tested the cognitive dissonance theory by doing an experiment in which participants had to perform a boring task in their laboratory. Afterwards, the researchers gave each participant either 1 dollar or 20 dollars and told them to tell another participant that the task they had to perform was an interesting one (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). When the participants were later asked to rate the boring task, the participants who were given 1 dollar changed their attitudes to be more positive towards the task while the participants' attitudes who were paid 20 dollars did not change their attitudes (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). According to Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), the mental discomfort here is demonstrated through the payments: While 20 dollars were enough justification for lying about the task not being boring, participants who were paid 1 dollar really had to change their implicit attitude about the task before they could tell another person that the test was interesting. However, Festinger and Carlsmith's findings (1959) about justification for lying about the task not being boring were merely based on their own theoretical assumptions, since none of the respondents were asked to reflect on their attitude

change after the experiment. Building on Festinger and Carlsmith's work (1959), in her study on Lesbian Christians, Mahaffy (1996) approached the cognitive dissonance theory differently by asking her respondents to reflect on any mental discomfort they may or may not have experienced themselves. Spreading a survey with open-ended questions among lesbian Christians, Mahaffy (1996) obtained 'self-reported cognitive dissonance'-stories from women about their religious beliefs, sexuality and encountered mental discomfort resolutions. After doing a content analysis the researcher found that nearly three-quarters of her respondents reported mental discomfort between their homosexuality and Christian beliefs (Mahaffy, 1996). Resolving the mental discomfort, most of Mahaffy's respondents had chosen to strive for mental consistency by changing their religious beliefs in such that they had abandoned the Christian religion or "reaffirmed their personal relationship with God" (1996, p. 397). Respectively, Mahaffy's research (1996) in which respondents were asked to answer open-ended survey questions shows that self-reports on attitudes can explain attitude change through cognitive dissonance theory. Since this study about attitude change toward Black Pete requires individuals to reflect on and explain their complete attitude change themselves, the ability of explaining any mental discomfort they might have experienced within the process of coming to oppose Black Pete is crucial. Mahaffy's findings (1996) show that interviewees are indeed aware and able to explain the mental discomfort they experienced and how those experiences resulted in a change of attitude.

As noted earlier, when it comes to information processing for implicit attitude change, researchers have been divided about the level of awareness an individual can experience (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Perloff, 2010; Wilson et al., 2000). From an early stage on, this division also accounts for the cognitive dissonance theory; whereas Festinger (1956) focused on implicit attitudes as a concept individuals are not aware of, Aronson (1969) theorized that individuals can be aware of their implicit and explicit attitudes and thus of their implicit and explicit attitude changes. Testing his own cognitive dissonance awareness theory, Aronson (1999) decided to interview his respondents on the telephone about their past and current sexual behavior after an experiment about AIDS prevention through condom use. The experiment entailed that despite their own lack of regular condom use at the beginning of the experiment, the respondents had to give convincing speeches about AIDS-prevention through condom use to the audience (Aronson, 1999). He found that his respondents indeed reported to have changed their sexual behavior in such that they now used condoms regularly because 'they had to practice what they had preached' (Aronson, 1999). With her study on attitude change of lesbian Christians, Mahaffy's results (1996) wherein respondents were able to reflect upon their changed attitudes and the reasons for these changes to occur, also show support for Aronson's theory of awareness within cognitive dissonance theory (1969).

Taken together, cognitive dissonance theory entails a change of attitude, because a person becomes motivated to pursue mental consistency by reducing encountered mental discomfort (Festinger, 1956). The mental discomfort can occur through the renewed processing of existing mental information or through the processing of newly obtained outside information, with respectively a change in the implicit or the explicit attitude as a cause for complete attitude change. Since cognitive dissonance theory is the instigator of many theories on attitude change after its development, cognitive dissonance theory remains an important theory to discuss when researching attitude change. What the cognitive dissonance theory lacks, however, is a detailed examination of the level of coherence needed for the implicit and explicit mechanisms in relation to complete attitude change. The associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model, on the other hand, does describe through information processing how implicit and explicit attitudes can change separately and what both mechanisms mean for the level of attitude change for an individual (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). So while cognitive dissonance theory stems from the assumption that a change in implicit or explicit attitude is sufficient for complete attitude change to occur (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), within the APE model the implicit and explicit attitude changes have to be mediated by one another first in order for complete attitude change to occur (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011). Herein the APE model does not only take into account mental discomfort as a reason for attitude change, but other reasons as well (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Another main difference between the APE model and cognitive dissonance theory is that the APE model holds that individuals can be aware of not only their explicit attitude changes but also their implicit attitude changes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Because of this research's importance of individuals to reflect upon the reasons for their complete attitude change toward Black Pete themselves, implicitly and explicitly, I therefore take into account the APE model as an important model of reference as well.

2.1.3. Associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model

In this section I will discuss the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model further. Although coined in other terms –respectively associative processes and propositional processes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011)– the APE model is also a dual-process model that makes a clear distinction between implicit and explicit attitudes. Just like in cognitive dissonance theory (Perloff, 2010), the APE model theorizes attitude change from the notion that when processing information the individual maintains full control, despite the information he is presented with. Different from cognitive dissonance theory, the APE model holds that individuals can be aware of not only their explicit attitude changes but also their implicit attitude changes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Also, while cognitive dissonance theory describes attitude change through implicit and explicit attitudes as

one mental process (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), the APE model stems from the assumption that implicit and explicit attitudes represent “two qualitatively distinct mental processes” (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011, p. 61). Thus, where the APE model differs from cognitive dissonance theory in this respect is that for an attitude change to occur completely, the implicit and explicit attitude change have to be mediated by one another (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011). So, while a change in implicit or explicit attitude is enough reason for complete attitude change to occur in cognitive dissonance theory, according to the APE model attitudes cannot change completely when the implicit and the explicit mechanisms are not coherent.

In the APE model associative processes are explained through implicit attitudes as spontaneous, unintentional and difficult to control (Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010) and are activated through “mental associations in memory” which differ per object or situation, depending on the configuration of stimuli (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011, p. 61). Thus, an implicit attitude is based on spontaneous activated associations in memory regardless of whether that association is factually true or false. For instance, a famous person like Michael Jordan could be spontaneously, implicitly categorized in memory by race –negative evaluation of a black person– or by occupation –positive evaluation of a famous athlete–, depending on the context –for example, on the streets versus on the basketball court– (Mitchell, Nosek & Banaji, 2003).

Propositional processes within the APE model, on the other hand, produce explicit attitudes and are processes concerned with validity of the new acquired information, careful deliberation, conscious and intentional behaviors (Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011). Explicit attitude change can depend on a different associative evaluation of an issue, a change in evaluative judgments due to changed relevant propositions or the need for internal consistency due to cognitive dissonance (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). So, other than cognitive dissonance theory, not only mental discomfort can lead to external attitude change, but also another spontaneous implicit reaction to an object or careful deliberation of new information can be reasons for a change in an external attitude. For an attitude change to occur completely, the implicit and explicit attitude change have to be mediated by one another (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). The value of the APE model for this research is how individuals perceive Black Pete not only explicitly after careful deliberation but also implicitly through spontaneous responses before and after their self-reported attitude change. Referring back to the example of Michael Jordan (Mitchell et al., 2003), if respondents still consider Black Pete to be a positive figure in another context the attitude change about the figure does not account for as complete attitude change. When, however, Black Pete is evaluated negatively in any context, the implicit –spontaneous associations– and explicit attitudes –careful deliberated propositions– as distinct mental processes are coherent which then,

according to the APE model, accounts for as complete attitude change (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

For this research about attitude change through information processing, the APE model with its two distinct mental processes individuals can be aware of serves as a valuable addition theoretically to the cognitive dissonance theory wherein the implicit and explicit attitude mechanisms serve as one mental process. What both theories have in common is the mental ability of information processing. Through encountered mental discomfort, careful deliberation of new information and/or different spontaneous reactions (Festinger, 1956; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), attitude change can occur. What both theories underestimate, however, is the power of the information that has to be mentally processed. Undermining the influence of information on people while overestimating people's careful deliberation of information mentally led to the development of new models which were more based on the process of attitude change through the power of information (Perloff, 2010). Attitude change whereby individuals process certain information with outside influences can be seen as a form of persuasion (Perloff, 2010). According to Perloff (2010), persuasion can be defined "as a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice" (p. 12). Thus, attitude change through information processing could be instigated mentally but also through persuasive messages. As a third and last model of reference for attitude change, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) can help understand how the influence of outside information played a role in the complete attitude change toward Black Pete. Since this research aims to understand the role of Facebook through which various forms of information can be transmitted and through which different information can be processed, the ELM specifically serves as a valuable contribution to this study as well in understanding the process of attitude change toward Black Pete.

2.1.4. Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

One of the ways in which information can be transmitted is through messages in the media (Perloff, 2010). A model that is often used to study the effects of media messages on attitude change is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (i.e. Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Petty, Briñol & Priester, 2009; Perloff, 2010). In other words, the ELM is prevalently used in scientific research about changes in attitude to gain a deeper understanding of the role of messages in cognitively processing information (Robert & Dennis, 2005).

The ELM constitutes as a newer model of attitude change with a clear focus on the persuasive influences of information processing. Like the other discussed theories on attitude change, the ELM also accounts for as a dual-process model in which it is theorized that individuals

process information in two separate routes (Perloff, 2010) –or mechanisms (Wilson et al., 2000; Perloff, 2010). Where the ELM differs from cognitive dissonance theory and the APE model, however, is the influence of outside messages within attitude change through information processing. In the ELM, the implicit and explicit attitudes within the dual-process model are referred to as respectively the peripheral route and the central route. Whereas the implicit attitude is explained through the peripheral route as a quick examination of new messages by focusing on simple cues before deciding to take on the persuasive information within the message (Perloff, 2010), the explicit attitude is explained through the central route whereby messages are processed on the basis of “considerable cognitive deliberation” (Perloff, 2010, p. 133). Contrarily to the APE model, the ELM stems just like cognitive dissonance theory from the idea that both mechanisms result in one mental process of attitude change (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Whether an individual processes information transmitted through messages implicitly or explicitly depends, according to the ELM, on two factors: Motivation and ability (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995; Robert & Dennis, 2005; Perloff, 2010). Through survey questioning as part of an experiment, Alvarez and Brehm (1995), indeed found that motivation and ability are core factors on how information about abortion policies are processed by individuals when implicitly or explicitly reading or viewing messages. When a person is highly motivated and able to process the information, that person will consider the contents of the message by taking the explicit central route (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995; Robert & Dennis, 2005). Because of the careful deliberation about the new acquired information through the message, attitude change on the long term about, for instance, abortion policies is more likely to occur (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995). When, however, an individual is not motivated or able to process the information, that individual will quickly examine the message through the implicit peripheral route by focusing on, for example, the source’s credibility or characteristics of the communication channel (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995). Such a quick examination of the message is “unlikely to change attitudes or behavior, and if so, rarely induce long-term change” (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995, p. 1059). The factors motivation and ability that determine how an individual processes information through message depends on various issues (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995; Perloff, 2010). The factor motivation can cause a person to process messages implicitly or explicitly by, according to Perloff (2010), an individual’s involvement on the issue, the argument quality, the source’s level of expertise, one’s willingness to expend cognitive effort to thoughtfully process a message and “the need for cognition” by wanting to understand how the world works (p. 140). Whether a person is able to process information through a message, on the other hand, depends on his cognitive ability –or, in other words, knowledge– and the situation wherein a person finds himself (Perloff, 2010). Shu and Scott (2014) tested Perloff’s theoretical factors of motivation and ability (2010) by focusing on the influence of social media messages on students’ choice of an

overseas study destination in relation to argument quality and source credibility. By distributing surveys among Chinese students, the researchers' quasi-experiment resulted in findings that "social media content is an influential factor in determining destination attractiveness, and may [...] facilitate high elaboration and generate corresponding positive or negative impressions of the study destination from students (Shu & Scott, 2014, p. 286). Shu and Scott (2014) also concluded that in choosing a study destination that involves students' high perceived risk of 'having to make the right decision', social networking sites are more suited for explicit attitude change in which messages are carefully deliberated upon than for implicit attitude change by focusing on quick, simple cues surrounding the message.

While traditional research about the ELM has followed the method of experimenting (i.e. Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Alvarez & Brehm, 1995; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Petty, Briñol & Priester, 2009; Shu & Scott, 2014), qualitatively researching attitude change through the ELM can give more in-depth information about the influence process than quantitative research (Petty & Wegener, 1999; Farrow & Yuan, 2011; Merchant et al., 2014). In examining participant engagement with attitude change campaigns for weight loss on Facebook, Merchant et al. (2014) experienced how interviewing participants resulted in more information about the process of attitude change than a quantitative content analysis on Facebook posts and participant-level. Where the quantitative information stopped, the interviewees' answers gave more insights, namely that –although the interviewees showed less visible interaction on the Facebook page– they did indeed passively engage with the Facebook posts by merely reading them which ultimately resulted in a change of attitude toward eating patterns (Merchant et al., 2014). Thus, this study of Merchant et al. (2014) shows not only an implicit and explicit attitude change, but also the role that Facebook can play in attitude change toward a certain issue.

By asking individuals to reflect upon messages they deemed important for their attitude change about Black Pete, the ELM can help understand the influences the reported messages could have had on the information process within the attitude change. Before I elaborate on this research's methodology, however, I will, after a short conclusion on attitude change and its various theories, theoretically analyze the role of new media in the information processing process.

2.1.5. Changed attitudes about Black Pete

The theories above all focus on attitude change through information processing via the dual-process model in which implicit and explicit mechanisms can be activated mentally. While they all share these commonalities, the theories all differ in some ways as well. Firstly, as one of the oldest theories on attitude change, cognitive dissonance theory considers a change in attitude as the need to reduce mental discomfort for the pursuit of internal consistency only (Festinger, 1956) in contrary to the

other two models which take into account other factors for a change in attitude as well. Secondly, while cognitive dissonance theory and the ELM describe the behavioral outcome of the implicit and explicit attitudes as one mental process, the APE model considers the behavioral outcome as “two qualitatively distinct mental processes” which individuals can both be aware of (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011, p. 61) whereby both the implicit and explicit mechanisms have to be mediated by each other in order to achieve complete attitude change. Thirdly, whereas cognitive dissonance theory and the APE model primarily focus on the individual’s mental ability of information processing, the ELM focuses more on the persuasive influence that messages as a form of information can have on individuals (Perloff, 2010).

Considering these three theories for this research about attitude change toward Black Pete beforehand acknowledges the idea that, due to the historical imbedded children’s festivities in the Netherlands (Helsloot, 2008; Tharoor, 2014a) and the intensified opt for change of the controversial figure (i.e. Ten Broeke, 2011; Novaes, 2013; Duurvoort, 2014; Heilbron, 2014), individuals could have been motivated to change their attitude toward Black Pete for various reasons. By interviewing individuals about their attitude change toward Black Pete, not only their underlying motivations can be reflected upon (Mahaffy, 1996; Aronson, 1999), but also the level of attitude change they experienced can be touched upon (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Furthermore, with a specific focus on social networking sites as a tool through which information can be exchanged, this research also acknowledges the importance of new media as an influential form of information in the era we are currently finding ourselves in. In the next section new media, social networking sites and Facebook as the most popular social networking site in Western society will be further elaborated on.

2.2. Attitude change through Facebook-messages

After theorizing the various models for attitude change through information processing, this section shifts its focus to information processing through messages specifically thereby aiming to understand how social networking site Facebook may have played a role in individuals’ attitude change toward Black Pete. Understanding the role that Facebook has played in this research will focus on how messages transmitted on and processed through the social networking site may have influenced attitude change toward Black Pete. In this section I will first discuss new media as the technological innovations Facebook belongs to. Then, after a discussion about social networking sites as forms of new media, I will elaborate on attitude change in relation to social networking site Facebook specifically.

2.2.1. New media

In the last two decades the way in which the media are commonly viewed has drastically changed (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012). Traditional media forms like television and newspapers quickly expanded to forms of new media like the internet –as a web of connections (Ackland, 2010)– and smartphones. Within a short time period people were not only spectators to information that was given to them anymore by traditional mediums, now global information was easily and quickly accessible through the worldwide web (Fuchs, 2008). Around 2005, the internet fully evolved (Fuchs, 2008) from web 1.0 as a source of information to web 2.0 on which content can be created via various public postings (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012), like blogs and profiles on social networking sites. “Online users can interact with others through Web 2.0 tools and make sense of information they are exposed to using contextual cues (e.g., Facebook “likes,” blogs comments, etc.) they encounter” (Brossard, 2013, par. 11). Web 2.0 is increasingly used by more and more people to communicate their opinions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012), resulting in more information other users are able to encounter and process in various ways.

It is clear that the digital revolution is embraced by information seekers (Brossard, 2013). Now “individuals can access massive amounts of information about virtually anything, from anywhere, and without much cognitive effort” (Brossard, 2013, par. 11). While traditional mediums like the television and newspapers present the audience with information their producers mostly deem important (Fuchs, 2008), new digitalized media like the internet mostly works the other way around (Fuchs, 2008). Mainly because new media allow informative messages to travel quicker and freely (Fuchs, 2008), the internet as an example of new media allows its users to be informed about the topics they find interesting and to focus on the messages they wish to read or view (Van Dijck, 2011). As a result over 80 percent of the Americans in 2012 reported to make use of the internet as a new medium regularly for information purposes (Brossard, 2013). In 2015, the Dutch have surpassed that large number of American internet users in 2012; based on research of the CBS, 90 percent of the people in the Netherlands make use of the internet as a new medium on a daily basis (Sleijpen, 2015). One of the most dominant reasons for going online amongst the Dutch is the search for information (Sleijpen, 2015). According to Brossard (2013), this accessibility of information is what drives the digital era. About a wide range of topics, the potential of online environments lies in increasing public knowledge due to information being easily accessible amongst its users (Brossard, 2013). With a longitudinal study about knowledge gaps in science, Cacciatore, Scheufele and Corley (2014a) found through telephone surveys that the internet helps reduce the knowledge gap between educated and less-educated individuals in science by helping the less-educated individuals gaining more science-specific information in an easy and accessible manner. While Cacciatore and colleague’s research (2014a) was about the topic of science specifically, information about the Dutch

festivities of Sinterklaas is easily at hand digitally as well. So, while many people in the Netherlands grew up with the tradition (Helsloot, 2008; Tharoor, 2014a), the vast majority of Dutch internet users is now able to increase their public knowledge about, for instance, the background of the festivities and its typical features like Black Pete.

New media environments are, apart from digital access, also characterized by mobility (Brossard, 2013). Not only are people able to access any type of information they want to, thanks to new media devices like smartphones, tablets and wireless internet connections people are currently also able to access that information when they want to and how they want to (Brossard, 2013). Based on their self-reports, mobile users consume more information now because of the abilities of their mobile devices than before the digital revolution's mobile possibilities (Mitchell, Rosenstiel & Christian, 2012). In the Netherlands, more than 60 percent of the population in 2013 made use of the internet on a mobile device (Korvorst & Sleijpen, 2014). Young adults in the Netherlands in the age of eighteen to twenty five turned to a mobile device for 95 percent of their internet use (Korvorst & Sleijpen, 2014). The possibility to be digitally mobile, thus, makes information even more accessible and gives a broader perspective on information processing. Now that information in the form of digital messages can be encountered whenever wherever, individuals are not only exposed to some form of information processing constantly, they can also choose to process certain information more explicitly than other types of information. New media not only provide individuals to supplement the information they acquire from traditional media (Cacciatore, Yeo, Scheufele, Xenos, Choi, Brossard, Becker & Corley, 2014b), new media also allow users "to selectively expose themselves to biased information that fits their predispositions" (Cacciatore et al., 2014b, p. 656). These new ways of information processing through continuous accessibility can give a broader perspective on implicit and explicit attitudes.

The expansion from traditional media to new media wherein digitalized access to information and the mobilization of that access are, based on the user numbers (Brossard, 2013; Korvorst & Sleijpen, 2014; Sleijpen, 2015), 'the new normal', thus, also has its implications for research on attitudes (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The way people process information transmitted through new media is researched in multiple studies with a particular focus on the ELM as a model of reference (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Chu and Kamal (2008), for example, quantitatively analyzed how information about brands transmitted through blogs as a new medium is processed by its readers. The researchers set up an experiment wherein the interaction effect of the blogger's trustworthiness and the argument quality of the text were used as motivational factors within the ELM (Chu & Kamal, 2008). The results of this research showed that argument quality positively affected the blog readers' attitudes towards brands when the perceived blogger's trustworthiness was high instead of low (Chu & Kamal, 2008). Aiming to understand attitude changes through

information processing online, Tang, Jang and Morrison (2012) researched the communication route of destination websites. In their research, participants had to answer a survey question about their involvement in the destination under research as a first step, then the participants had to visit the destination website after which they had to complete the survey consisting out of four other steps (Tang, Jang & Morrison, 2012). In step three of the survey the respondents had to outline their cognitive processing for all their thoughts and feelings they encountered about the subject; these thoughts and feelings were later divided into two categories –namely destination-related thoughts and website-related thoughts– and quantitatively analyzed (Tang et al., 2012). The results showed that the ELM served as a valuable model in understanding the communication route of destination websites: while highly involved individuals processed information explicitly via the central route, individuals with low involvement focused on simple cues on the destination websites for implicit attitude changes thereby taking the peripheral route (Tang et al., 2012). While the cognitive processing of the participants' attitudes was analyzed quantitatively instead of qualitatively by the researchers, Tang, Jang and Morrison's study (2012) shows that participants are indeed able to reflect on their attitudes and that they can be aware of their own attitude changes based on information transmitted through new media. Since new media cover a broad spectrum within the digital revolution of information accessibility, the next section focuses on social networking sites as a form of new media specifically.

2.2.2. Social networking sites

With “Web 2.0 as the platform for the evolution of social media” providing their technological and ideological foundation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61), social media constitute, according to Henderson and Bowley (2010, p. 239), as “collaborative online applications and technologies that enable participation, connectivity, user-generated content, sharing of information and collaboration amongst a community of users.” Examples of such digital collaborative applications and technologies are virtual communities, blogs, wikis, websites whereon media files can be shared, collaborative tagging and social networking sites (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social networking sites as forms of social media on Web 2.0 integrate tools like instant messaging, e-mailing, blogging, texting and the sharing of digital information in various formats in very user friendly individualized formats (Wink, 2010). On those easy-to-individualize formats users are able to determine with whom and how they wish to share information (Wink, 2010). The countless possibilities of social networking sites as forms of new media of the consumption, participation and production of information whenever wherever users want have opened a window of opportunities for members of society. Like all social media formats, individuals are increasingly provided through social networking sites with mobilized information and non-traditional news and are given the opportunity to exchange opinions with other users

(Valenzuela, 2013). Through the ability of mobilized interconnectivity, social networking sites have thus broaden the spectrum of access to information by shifting information provision on a wired device from media professionals only to information provision on various wireless devices from all internet users of whom the majority are non-media professionals.

These new ways of opinion expression and connectivity have not only changed the information landscape but also the ways in which information is processed. In a study done by Anderson and his colleagues (2010), the tools for expressing users' opinion online contribute to attitude formations of others. Through an experiment in which particular comments under an online news article were shown to participants, the participants who were exposed to non-civil comments saw more bias in the news story than those expressed to civil comments (Anderson, Ladwig, Brossard, Scheufele & Xenos, 2010). Thus, information about a topic online can be cause implicit or explicit attitude change to occur differently depending on the comments that follow it.

This exposure to different opinions on social media could obviously have consequences for changed attitudes toward the topic of Black Pete as well, because of different perspectives on information encountered online. When researching the influence of social networking sites as social media on political attitudes through telephone surveys, Zhang and colleagues (2010) found that political information, others' opinions and interpersonal discussion fostered civic participation, especially among young voters. The results did show, however, that social networking sites like YouTube, Myspace and Facebook positive relations between social media use and civic participation but not directly between social media use and political participation (Zhang et al., 2010). According to the researchers, the results were expected because those particular social networking sites are mainly setup to maintain relationships with family, friends and acquaintances with the potential to stimulate community involvement (Zhang et al., 2010). In other words, although attitudes can be changed online through new encountered information and other user's opinions, explicit attitude change in the form of actual action in the political field by, for instance, voting can be a step too far. While Black Pete as part of the Sinterklaas festivities are currently not a political but a social issue in the Netherlands, the findings of Zhang et al. (2010) could help explain the ways in which the interviewees' attitudes changed in a societal setting, implicitly and explicitly. Especially since social media serve as a way for individuals to coordinate the real world (Shirky, 2011) and because the ability to consume, participate and produce content through social networking sites allows for "the global network of new media [to be considered] as the decisive network of cultural expression and public opinion in the information society" (Castells, 2000 in Valtysson, 2010, p. 202). Facebook being the most popular social networking site in the Netherlands (Fanrise, 2015), the last section of this theoretical framework will focus on this platform's information abilities and information processing by its users.

2.2.3. Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that was founded by Mark Zuckerberg on February 4th 2004 (Facebook, 2015). While the website was first designed for Harvard university students only, the website quickly expanded to other American and British universities in 2005 (West, Lewis & Currie, 2009). By September 2006 anyone older than thirteen years of age with a valid email address was able to join the social networking site (West et al., 2009). Over the years, Facebook has expanded in size tremendously (West et al., 2009; Statista, 2015). Worldwide the number of monthly active Facebook users expanded from 100 million in 2008 to nearly 1.4 billion in 2014 (Statista, 2015). In the Netherlands alone Facebook saw an increase in number of monthly users from 6.3 million in 2012 to 9.2 million in 2014 (Fanrise, 2015), making Facebook the most popular social networking site in the Netherlands (Fanrise, 2015).

The social networking site's popularity lies in providing its users with possibilities to share their daily experiences, their opinions and their memorable thoughts, feelings and moments with each other (Koroleva, Krasnova & Günther, 2011a). As "the largest database of social information, increasing at a rate of 30 billion pieces of shared content per month" (Koroleva et al., 2011a, p. 171), Facebook users are provided with increasing amounts of shared information. To process and evaluate that information presented by their Facebook friends, users have to apply certain strategies to focus on the information they like and consider relevant (Koroleva et al., 2011a). Considering the role of Facebook in the attitude change toward Black Pete, for this research it is important to discover what strategies individuals applied to make sense out of all the shared information in relation to the topic and what Facebook features possibly helped motivate those individuals to oppose the figure.

As a social networking site, Facebook provides its users with various features to create their social identity online. Such features include the ability to create and maintain individual profiles, to add friends to the own friend list through friend requests, to post visual and written messages on the own profile wall and users' own privacy settings (West et al., 2009). Facebook also provides its users with features to help make sense out of all the shared information on the platform. Those Facebook features include the newsfeed, instant messaging in a private manner and public messaging, the ability to create or join groups and networks, the events calendar and the ability to follow specific pages by 'liking' the page (West et al., 2009; Koroleva et al., 2011a), thereby providing Facebook users with the option of turning posts of certain friends or groups off and on (Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009). Koroleva, Krasnova and Günther, (2011a) researched how information was processed on the Facebook feature 'newsfeed'. Through a real-time survey, wherein the researchers were granted access to six posts on participants' newsfeed after they logged onto their Facebook accounts,

Koroleva and colleagues (2011a) researched implicit and explicit attitudes toward Facebook messages by asking the participating users in a survey following the posts about their attitudes towards the specific Facebook message. Results showed that communication intensity and the post's comprehensibility were the most important factors to impact users' attitudes when going through their newsfeed (Koroleva et al., 2011a). However, due to information overload on the Facebook newsfeed, communication intensity between the Facebook friend who posted the message and the user appeared to be more important for information processing than comprehensibility of the actual message information presented in the post (Koroleva et al., 2011a). In other words, when making sense out of all the information they are provided with on Facebook, the social networking site's users are more likely to process information presented to them on their newsfeed by Facebook friends they communicate a lot with rather than to focus on the cognitive importance of message content. This finding coincides with another study done by Koroleva (Koroleva, Stimac, Krasnova & Kunze, 2011b) wherein the relationship with the 'poster' of the message was found to be most important for users to process information of Facebook messages as well. Following the same research methodology as Koroleva and colleagues (2011a), these researchers added to their conclusion that when the communication intensity with the 'poster' was low, the users would focus on the simple cues of 'likes' and 'comments' before explicitly processing a message whereby the amount of 'likes' equaled positive evaluations of the message and the amount of 'comments' equaled negative evaluations of the message (Koroleva et al., 2011b). What these results mean for actual attitude changes can be further investigated through qualitative analysis by asking Facebook users what messages on, for example, their newsfeed caused them to change their attitudes toward the social topic of Black Pete.

Besides serving as an information platform (Joinson, 2008), Facebook with all its features can also serve as a platform for conversation, as a support system and as a tight-knit network thereby providing social and emotional support (Joinson, 2008). While information provision is one of the most important motivations for new media use (Sleijpen, 2015), the ability to communicate with others is considered to be the most motivational reason for Facebook use (Ross et al., 2008). Sharing thoughts, ideas and opinions in the form of Facebook-posts can spark some profound discussions on the social networking site (Van Dijck, 2011) which can, in their turn, induce attitude change amongst other Facebook users. Facebook's feature of joining groups, for example, makes it easier for people to meet like-minded people, to share information about the common interest and to go into conversation about the issue (Park et al., 2009). The information processed through group formation can then cause attitudes to be formed or changed implicitly or explicitly (Wood, 2000). Group influence online, according to Wood (2000),

... does not operate through a single process. People's motives to align with or differentiate from social groups can yield [...] relatively superficial information processing, or they can yield careful, systematic processing of relevant information. (p. 558)

Reasons why individuals choose to join certain Facebook groups over others can thus give a lot of insights about how those individuals process the information they are provided with. Therefore, qualitatively focusing on specific Facebook groups in the topic of Black Pete such as anti-Black Pete groups like 'Pietmakeover' and 'Zwarte Piet Niet' ['No Black Pete'] and pro-Black Pete groups like 'Pietitie' and 'Zwarte Piet is geen racisme' ['Black Pete is not racist'] can give explanatory insights about opponents' motives to align with certain Facebook groups while differentiating from others in the process of changing their attitudes toward the figure.

As an informative platform for conversation, Facebook can also facilitate attitude change through information processing in a more practical manner. Due to the social networking site's ability to interact with other users online, the digitalized form of communicating provides users with a different set of rules than acquired in the offline world (Ross et al., 2008). That different set of rules online in contrast to offline fosters deeper personal questions amongst users and generates more self-disclosures of individual users (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). In a practical sense, this means that individuals are presented with more direct messages on Facebook conversations than in face-to-face conversations, which can have its implications for the way those individuals process on- and offline information implicitly and explicitly as well.

In the digital revolution of new media, social networking sites as social media have opened up a realm of possibilities for the consumption, participation and production of information, especially through the ability of mobilized interconnectivity and opinion expression. Social networking site Facebook specifically has seized popularity in the Western world with its various user-friendly features through which users are able to make sense out of all the information they are provided with on the digital social platform. To process and evaluate that information presented by their Facebook friends, users have to apply certain strategies of information processing to focus on the information they like and consider relevant. Considering the role of Facebook in the attitude change toward Black Pete, for this research it is important to discover what information processing strategies individuals applied to make sense out of all the shared information in relation to the topic and what Facebook features possibly helped motivate those individuals to oppose the figure.

2.3. Conclusion

With this theoretical chapter I have tried to lay the foundation for this research's aims: To understand what has caused individuals whom were once supportive of Black Pete to oppose the figure now and to understand what role Facebook has played in the attitude change. For this study, cognitive dissonance theory, the ELM and the APE model were reflected upon as theories of reference for attitude change through information processing. Considering these three theories for this research about attitude change toward Black Pete beforehand acknowledges the idea that individuals could have been motivated to change their attitude toward Black Pete for various reasons.

Furthermore, with a specific focus on social networking site Facebook as an informative and interconnected platform on which information can be exchanged and through which messages can be processed, this research also acknowledges the importance of new media as an influential form of information in the era we are currently finding ourselves. While the use of Facebook grew exponentially over recent years (Ross et al., 2008; West et al., 2009; Koroleva et al., 2011a; Fanrise, 2015; Statista, 2015), research investigating information processing through use of the social networking site has not (Ross et al., 2008), highlighting this research's importance even more. The following methodological chapter will give insights on how the theories and concepts discussed in relation to the topic of Black Pete will be researched qualitatively.

Chapter 3. Method

This research is designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do opponents of Black Pete explain their attitude change from supporting the tradition?

RQ2: What role has Facebook played in that attitude change?

By answering these research questions this study aims to understand how individuals explain their attitude change toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the figure and to understand Facebook's role in that attitude change. In order to answer the research questions, the research design entails interviewing as a qualitative research method. With the research design as described in this chapter, a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study, namely Facebook and attitude change, can be acquired.

In this chapter I will first discuss the research method, followed by a description of the units of analysis. Finally, before an extensive elaboration of the data results in the next chapter, I will shortly discuss how those data results were obtained and analyzed.

3.1. Research method

The methodology used will consist out of interviewing as a way of qualitative research. The qualitative research is both explanatory and exploratory, because it serves the purposes of understanding why attitude change in opposing Black Pete occurred and what role Facebook components have played in the process. These purposes can be best served through interviewing, because the topics for the qualitative interviews allow room for interpretation of the interviewees which could give insights I, as a researcher, had not thought of before (Babbie, 2008). In his research about motivations for participation in a crowdsourcing application, for example, Brabham (2012) found that interviewees revealed another recurring motivational theme than previously anticipated on in his motivational categories. Also, because what had triggered the attitude change could be different for every opponent, asking open questions instead of closed questions about the path towards opposing the figure of Black Pete could give differing answers per individual and, thus, more insights about the research aims.

Various research articles about attitude change through Facebook have followed interviewing as a methodology. Merchant et al. (2014), for example, qualitatively examined the engagement of a sample of participants in weight loss programs delivered through Facebook. In doing so, the researchers (Merchant et al., 2014) found that, although the participants had not

shown active engagement in the Facebook posts, the interviewees did report to have changed their attitude toward eating schedules because of the weight loss programs on Facebook. With their research on Facebook's strength of network ties and a change in attitude toward charity, Farrow and Yuan (2011) found that active participation in Facebook groups facilitated attitude change among interviewed alumni. Frequency of communication on Facebook and emotional closeness experienced through Facebook appeared to play a large role in changed attitudes toward charity (Farrow & Yuan, 2011). These examples of previous research show how information processing on Facebook and attitude change toward a topic can be examined through interviewing. Also, the research method of Merchant et al. (2014) and Farrow and Yuan (2011) explained why and how attitude change through Facebook occurred; findings the researchers could not have obtained through a quantitative research method solely. Thus, with this study aiming to understand how individuals explain their attitude change toward Black Pete and to understand Facebook's role in that attitude change, interviewing has proven to be a valuable research method.

Within this research, the interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide (see App. 1 and 2) that consisted out of research specific topics derived from the theoretical framework with most importantly the path towards attitude change, experienced associations with Black Pete, the components of Facebook and the role of Facebook within the attitude change. Each topic contained more general topics, like why the person initially felt supportive of Black Pete, how it was like growing up with the Dutch children's tradition of Sinterklaas and his black painted helpers, the current reason why he/she is opposing Black Pete and which Facebook groups the interviewee is a member of. Using a semi-structured guide presents the interview with a structure while allowing flexibility and leaving room for follow-up questions during the interviews (Babbie, 2008).

Each interview was recorded with permission of the interviewee. Because of the semi-structured format of the interview guide, the interviews proceeded like comfortable conversations wherein, through specific questions, themes emerged. After interviewing each interview was transcribed by listening back to the recordings extensively, so that the obtained content could be qualitatively analyzed. Transcribing the interviews before analyzing the results is very useful, because in writing the coding of content is easier to follow and more comprehensible making it easier to identify patterns and themes (Babbie, 2008). The interviews were recorded with my mobile phone; most recordings were e-mailed to my e-mail address on the same day in order to avoid any risk of, for example, losing it. A transcription of each interview was completed manually within two months after the recording.

3.2. Interview process

The whom being studied were individuals that are currently against Black Pete, but who were once supportive toward the figure. Each possible interviewee has a Facebook-profile and is a regular user of Facebook. The individuals do not necessarily have to be activists in such that they are physically striving for the cause of socio-cultural change on a daily basis, but they do have to be a member of minimally one anti-Black Pete Facebook-group which they follow actively by at least reading its posts. This latter criterion was put into practice at the beginning of my search for interviewees, because members of such groups were approached through the Facebook-pages themselves. The page administrators of the Facebook-groups ‘Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary’, ‘Zwarte Piet is racism’ and ‘Pietmakeover’ were asked if they could post a call for participants for me to find potential interviewees for my Master’s thesis research. Not only is it not possible to post a message on most of these Facebook pages directly, but it can also come across as more trustworthy when the page administrators support me finding interviewees in an attempt to scientifically help understanding what brought individuals to oppose the figure of Black Pete; especially since the outcomes of this research could possibly help lead to more attitude changes in Dutch society from pro to anti Black Pete.

Both ‘Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary’ and ‘Pietmakeover’ posted my message immediately after I sent them a reminder on the day we agreed on. Within the first day I received over one hundred reactions of people wanting to participate in the study, either in reaction to the posts or via a private message. The vast majority of these messages were from members of the Facebook-group ‘Pietmakeover’; only one of the reactions came in response to the post on ‘Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary’. This variation in reactions could have been the result of multiple differences between the pages. First, the number of members for each page: ‘Pietmakeover’ currently has 14.270 members⁶ while ‘Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary’ currently counts 1.162 members⁷. A second difference could stem from the fierceness of my message (“... looking for people who are now against Black Pete...”) in relation to the way the pages profile themselves: ‘Pietmakeover’ opts for change of the stereotypical color of Black Pete⁸ while ‘The Documentary’ profiles itself as an informative page about everything that is going on around the figure without taking an outspoken stand in the matter⁹. A third difference could lie in the level of interaction between the groups. ‘Pietmakeover’ calls on its members to participate in the discussion by, for instance, providing room for public messages from users and asking users to send pictures and videos

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pietmakeover/1485255905084399?fref=ts>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/blackpetethedoc/likes>

⁸ https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pietmakeover/1485255905084399?sk=info&tab=page_info

⁹ http://blackpetethedocumentary.com/?page_id=7

of their own differently colored Petes. 'Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary', on the other hand, does not want to seem to stimulate interaction, because users are not able to post public messages and all posts seem to be informative rather than action-based. For the latter group to post my message for a call for participants, thus, does not fit their usual posting structure which could have caused less immediate reactions among its members.

Unfortunately, although I had asked the administrators of 'Zwarte Piet is racism' numerous times to help me out with this research by reposting my message, I received no responses to any of my messages at all. While the messages were delivered and read –a feature Facebook provides after sending a private message– any form of reply from the Facebook-group failed to appear. Due to the numerous positive reactions for participation on the posts on the other two Facebook-pages and because I had high hopes for some response of the administrators of the third Facebook-group, I decided to not contact another Facebook-group in replacement of 'Zwarte Piet is racism'.

The following day the selection of participants out of over a hundred reactions took place on a first come, first serve-basis. However, when I saw that I had only one respondent coming from 'Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary', I decided to go through all private messages first to see if anybody had responded to the message posted on 'Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary'. This resulted in four interviewees who saw the post on 'Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The documentary' first. After this deviation in first come, first base-selection, the first group of fifteen people interested received a reaction from me thanking them for their willingness to participate in my research and asking them if they indeed fit the criteria as mentioned in my call for participants ("once for and now against Black Pete" and "member of at least one anti-Black Pete-Facebook group"). Once they responded that they met the criteria interview appointments were scheduled. Depending on the distance of an interviewee's residence, interviews could either take place face-to-face in Rotterdam or online via Skype. Three people who met the criteria and wanted to participate decided to not go through with the actual interviews, because they wanted me to come meet them in person while living more than 1 hour away since they were no fans of new videophone technology and thus refused to participate in another way than face-to-face in their place of residence. Although unfortunate, I focused on the rest of the respondents and contacted three other people who had responded that they wanted to participate in my study.

Although fifteen people were scheduled for interviewing, one of them unfortunately decided to not make an appearance. The research, thus, ultimately involved interviewing fourteen individuals in total, between the ages of 20 and 53 years (see App. 3). In qualitative interviewing theme saturation typically occurs within the first dozen interviews (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) already within the first six interviews, meta themes become apparent. For me this seemed no different. After the first six interviews I was able to identify

the first big themes and the eleventh interview was the last one wherein I heard something new.

After the day of postings, all fourteen interviews, of which six via Skype, were conducted in a timeframe of ten days with a maximum of three interviews per day. The time of recorded interviewing varied from 42 to 85 minutes.

3.3. Data and data analysis

The interviews were transcribed into written texts. The obtained data, then, was analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Qualitative analysis “is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (Babbie, 2008, p. 415). Using Mayring’s method (2000) of qualitative content analysis, the analysis of the transcripts followed three steps. The first step is summarizing wherein the text through bundling and generalization will be reduced to this study’s important context (Fink, Kölling & Neyer, 2005). The second step, explication, involves the use of additional information to make sense out of those textual parts that cannot be easily understood through this study’s theoretical framework (Fink, Kölling & Neyer, 2005). Structuring is the last step of Mayring’s (2000) qualitative content analysis method and is characterized by categories developed by the researcher after rereading the transcripts (Fink, Kölling & Neyer, 2005). By rereading a body of text I was able to “identify the key concepts contained within it” and attribute them to certain codes (Babbie, 2008, p. 423). After open coding I reanalyzed the obtained results aiming to identify the most important, general concepts –this process is called axial coding (Babbie, 2008). In the next chapter the results as obtained will be presented.

Chapter 4. Results

To provide a better understanding of how Facebook plays a role in attitude change toward Black Pete, fourteen individuals were interviewed. The interviewees' answers to the semi-structured open-ended questions about how the individuals came about their attitude change toward Black Pete and how social networking site Facebook played a role in that attitude change gave interesting insights. After qualitatively analyzing the transcribed interviews according to Mayring's method (2000) of qualitative content analysis, the data results made it apparent that various stages initiated by different altercations explain the interviewees' attitude change toward Black Pete. Based on the data results those stages are described in this chapter as positive attitude toward Black Pete, existing personality, awareness, acknowledgement and attitude change (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 demonstrates how the interviewees' attitudes toward Black Pete changed from positive to negative. The transcribed interviews resulted in various codes through which these different stages became apparent; those general codes are described in the codebook (see App. 4).



Figure 1. Stages of the process of attitude change toward Black Pete, including the role of Facebook

Analysis of the data results made the mental discomfort most of the interviewees experienced apparent, as rooted in cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1956; Perloff, 2010). The mental discomfort they encountered ultimately resulted in the actual attitude change. The data results show that the mental discomfort mainly occurred in the following manner:

1. Previous attitude: Black Pete is a cheerful character that is part of the fun children festivities surrounding Sinterklaas.
2. Existing personality: Empathy for other people's feelings and/or No person should encounter any form of racism.
3. Awareness: There appears to be a negative counter side to Black Pete.
 - Role Facebook: awareness through shared information and supporters' reactions.
4. Acknowledgement: Black people in the Netherlands are bullied and stereotyped every year due to the appearance of Black Pete.
 - Role Facebook: realization through racist reactions, personal stories and positive alternatives on topic-related group pages.
5. Attitude change: I do not like Black Pete anymore, I think the black painted figure should change.
 - Role Facebook: changed associations and strengthened negative attitude through continuous information and interconnected social ties.

These thoughts show that, due to their new acquired information –especially processed through Facebook in stages 3, 4 and 5– (3), the fun ways of celebrating Sinterklaas and his Black Petes (1) did not coincide with their existing personality anymore (2). In an attempt to maintain their character traits of being morally good (Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992), the current opponents acknowledged the problem (4) and decided to change their attitudes about Black Pete (5).

The process of attitude change toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the figure will be elaborately described in this chapter. Based on answers the interviewees have given to the interview questions, each stage as part of the process of attitude change is accompanied by various examples to discuss the main findings. First I will elaborate on stage 1 –positive attitude toward Black Pete– after which explanations of the other stages will follow.

4.1. Stage 1: Positive attitude toward Black Pete

For individuals to participate in this study, one of the main criteria was that they reported to have had a positive view toward Black Pete prior to their current negative view toward Black Pete. With a positive view is meant that the participants supported the festivities, including the black painted

figure, in such that they had joyful thoughts about and experiences with the Sinterklaas festivities and Black Pete (like i.e. Duurvoort, 2014). When interviewing the individuals, the interviewees were asked to share some passed positive experiences about the Sinterklaas festivities and Black Pete. The data results showed that all fourteen interviewees had positive experiences with the Sinterklaas festivities and Black Pete growing up, and that most of them experienced the national festivities positively as adults as well. Always being very passionate about the Sinterklaas festivities, Nicki¹⁰ and Mike, for example, explained the importance of the Sinterklaas celebrations as:

Well to me [Sinterklaas] really is, it sincerely is, the most important celebration of the year. (...) I don't know anybody that has such a strong tradition as we have, in the sense of... of, it's celebrated every year, we could place our shoe [near the fireplace to receive presents] every Saturday so my children can as well. And... we always have a large bag with gifts, for the children and the adults, and those are accompanied with poems. (...) In total I invited Sinterklaas twice at my home, with Black Petes as well for crying out loud. The last time was I believe some seven years ago and the first time was about nine years ago. And... so that also indica-, and you have to pay a lot of money for that, so that also indicates how important I believe [the Sinterklaas celebration] is. I've always had so much with it, I think it's way more fun than Christmas or birthday parties (...). Sinterklaas is really a celebra-, I mean you spend weeks anticipating toward [the celebration]. (Nicki, 45 years, Indonesian-Dutch)¹¹

I grew up with Sinterklaas you know, without a doubt. I mean I can remember different, many times... the evenings, the 5 December evenings, the evening that Sinterklaas arrived at my father's work place... you know... that was such an exciting time you know. Looking back on my childhood I can still remember that so well, how nervous I was and the heart fluttering and stuff. I still remember a 5 December evening that my mom played a particular song, and I still remember that... imagine how much that impressed me. (...) But that December 5th, that really was the most impressive. It's dark right... and as a child it's even more impressive when it's dark... than during the day, you know, because many celebrations happen during the day. So yeah, I really really grew up with [the Sinterklaas festivities]. More so, I even played Black Pete.... (Mike, 35 years, Dutch)

¹⁰ For reasons of anonymity all names of the interviewees have been altered to pseudonyms. In App. 3 additional information about the anonymous interviewees can be found.

¹¹ Because the interviews were conducted in Dutch, all quotes used as an example in this chapter have been translated from Dutch to English.

Like Mike many other interviewees reported to have played Black Pete prior to their attitude change toward the figure. Eleven out of fourteen interviewees played Black Pete at least once for the entertainment of children as part of the Sinterklaas festivities. Fleur and Maria shared their own Black Pete experiences as follows:

That was... at home, and at school, and as I recall also at the gymnastic club or something. And in Schoonhoven, where I lived as a child, there we had a special tradition as well, something like 'Sint Maarten' but then it was called Sinterklaas- or Black... Black Pete-walk. That children walked door to door with painted faces... to collect sweets. And I went door to door painted like Black Pete as well... and that was just one big celebration for me, back then. (Fleur, 42 years, Dutch)

I used to volunteer in church... (...) and on Saturdays we had to entertain the children. (...) And yeah, at some point my cousin and I had to play Black Pete because we obviously celebrated Sinterklaas there as well, more with surprise gifts. I believe the children there were aged 8 to 13 years. So we had surprise gifts, and I was Black Pete as well, I just painted my face black and I wore a Pete-outfit and we, I even really put on that funny voice as well. (Maria, 33 years, Cape Verdean)

Two of the interviewees reported that they, besides playing Black Pete in former years, had used Facebook as a platform to show support of the celebrations. Richard, who played Black Pete as Radio-Pete while documenting the arrival of Sinterklaas and his Black Petes, said:

I've really changed a lot, because because you know what's funny, (...) it's funny that the year prior [to my attitude change] I posted a clip of the arrival of Sinterklaas in Surinam with Black Petes, so back then I actually told my Surinamese [Facebook friends] something like 'well, you better take it easy, because this is the way you Surinamese people celebrate it like this as well [in Surinam]'. (Richard, 45 years, Surinamese)

Prior to her attitude change, Julia also supported Black Pete on Facebook. She said:

Well, in the beginning I posted pictures, but that was really in the beginning [of the national discussion], I shared pictures on my Facebook profile saying things like 'Our Black Pete should stay!', you know. And, that's just stuff that I posted back then. (Julia, 20 years, Gambian-Dutch)

When both interviewees entered the second stage, however, they stopped showing support online for Black Pete as part of the Sinterklaas festivities. This second stage, existing personality, is interrelated to stage three, awareness.

4.2. Stage 2: Existing personality

The circular relationship between stages two and three within the process of attitude change toward Black Pete is characterized by existing personality and awareness. While this section will focus on existing personality specifically, the next section will discuss awareness more deeply. In both sections, however, the circular relationship between existing personality and awareness will be elaborated on.

With existing personality is meant character traits the individuals possessed as part of their beings or developed from a younger age on. The data results showed that all fourteen interviewees reported that their existing personality possess specific personal character traits from an early age on that made them more susceptible for information processing about Black Pete. That existing personality which made the interviewees more susceptible for information processing about Black Pete ultimately resulted in a change of attitude toward the figure. Respondent Koen, for example, explained the underlying reason of his attitude change as follows:

I've always had a thing with injustice and discrimination, which I really find hard to deal with and which I totally hate as well. I've always did my best to, also growing up actually, I was somebody that didn't find it cool when it was two against one or something like that, and I always thought discrimination was horrible. So that certainly, when I heard that people were also hurt [by Black Pete], that feeling arose inside of me again... like okay, that feeling of injustice and anti-racism feeling. (Koen, 31 years, Dutch)

All interviewees reported to be very self-conscious about their morally good and competent character traits, having a clear vision of the person they were or are and the person they want to be. Leila, for example, explained her early position in the national discussion about Black Pete as:

The discussion made me realize that no, I don't want to be that somebody who holds on to a tradition just for the sake of it being a tradition. I want to be someone who really thinks things through, who thinks about changing or not changing [the tradition] in an

argumentative manner. But not like, 'it's a tradition, and that's it'..., because that's not a fair discussion. (Leila, 30 years, Moroccan)

Apart from resenting injustice and a clear vision about the person the interviewed individuals want to be, the ability to be empathic toward other people's feelings was explained by the interviewees as an integral part of their existing personality as well. According to many interviewees, empathy caused them to listen to others and to open up their old attitude toward Black Pete. Emma, for example, said

I often had Turkish girls in my classroom, you know, and [my mom] told me to, instead of being funny about that, it is better to be amazed by that, that's a much more pleasant way. Yes... and then I thought, she's right about it and... she always raised me, and also my dad, with... imagine what it is like for someone else. I was raised a Christian, and my whole life I've heard, imagine what's it like for the Other. I also think for the Other, think about... what is has to be like for the Other. Try to put yourself in the place of the Other. Just because of that, just because of my upbringing... I'm always open to and... wanting to approach it from every perspective, that's what I want. And if somebody, and I find it very simple then, if somebody lets you know to be hurt by you, then you look for a solution and that's how simple it is. (Emma, 29 years, Dutch)

Fleur explained her existing personality as the start of her attitude change as:

I am such an... yeah, such a moral frump... that then indeed only buys biological meat, and righteous is and stuff... And, so yeah, I think that that yeah just is really rooted deep inside of me.... (Fleur, 42 years, Dutch)

When talking about his existing personality, Mike described himself in relation to his passion and his posts on Facebook. He said:

I'm a thinker. Just to think things through, and to live consciously... and among each other with nutrition and and, for example with upbringing, that all gets to me a lot you know... I write a lot about that on my Facebook wall too you know, I share a lot of things on there, and I also have my own blog. Writing is really a passion of mine, I really love love to write... You know, I also see myself as someone who builds bridges, who builds bridges between white

and black [people]... As a blogger I have to do something with that, it's my passion... I have a lot of followers on Facebook you know. (Mike, 35 years, Dutch)

This example shows the role that Facebook plays for an individual like Mike who wants to express his thoughts about several issues to others. As a social medium, Facebook provides Mike, like many other bloggers (Cheung & Thadani, 2012), with a platform to express those thoughts in an easy manner.

Theorized in cognitive dissonance theory, according to Thibodeau and Aronson (1992), existing character traits as morally good and competent can initiate mental discomfort to occur physically in a later stage. As data results show, such mental discomfort concerning Black Pete indeed occurred in the following stages.

4.3. Stage 3: Awareness

Supplementary to existing personality as the second stage of the process of attitude change toward Black Pete is awareness as the third stage. While the interviewees' existing personality made them susceptible to worldly problems, in order for their attitude change concerning Black Pete to occur the current opponents had to be made aware of the problems surrounding the figure. The interviewees reported that awareness was a big part of their attitude change, because without them being made aware of the issues surrounding Black Pete they would not even have thought about changing their attitudes. Thus, without their gut feeling or own negative experiences, without somebody else in their environment telling them about the severity of the issue or without reading or hearing about the issue on television or Facebook, their attitude about Black Pete most likely would not have changed yet. Although all interviewees described their attitude change as a process wherein multiple moments added up resulted from supporting to opposing the tradition, various interviewees remembered one specific moment in their past that was the start of their transition. In the process of attitude change (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Perloff, 2010) such a moment was described by Allport (1935) as the 'power of the situation'.

Two of the interviewees talked about how they were made aware of the negative portrayal by Black Pete through their gut feeling. Their situation of power was described as moments in time whereby listening to the Sinterklaas songs or dressing up as Black Pete made them both realize that the yearly celebrated tradition did not feel completely right anymore. Although for her attitude toward Black Pete to change completely took a while, Roos remembers the first time she questioned the black painted figure as part of the celebrations clearly, saying:

The entire process [of attitude change] took a long time, because at some point what caught my attention were, what I found strange were weird phrases in songs. Those those songs, those caused me to think ‘hey, that’s kind of strange...’ like the phrase [sings in Dutch] ‘hear who knocks on the door there children, it’s surely a stranger, who is lost’, I found that weird, I found that weird back then already. And I think I was a teenager back then, when I first began to think how strange all those songs actually were. And also the phrase ‘Black Pete, as black as soot’, those associations began to bother me at some point, I can remember that really well still, that I thought ‘yeah, you shouldn’t be singing that’. But that was in the seventies.... (Roos, 45 years, Dutch)

Roos’s last sentence ‘but that was in the seventies...’ explains the reason for her process of attitude change to have taken so long. While this was her first moment of awareness, Roos mentioned following moments at her work as a mediation coach and on television when she heard more complaints about Black Pete as part of her awareness stage as well. Also through his gut feeling, not through the Sinterklaas songs but by playing Black Pete as a child yearly, Mike explains why he at the age of fifteen decided not to partake in such a way in the festivities anymore:

I quit playing Black Pete at 15 with that... you know, for me it just didn’t feel right anymore, but at that time I can’t remember if, you know I didn’t have the historical realization at all actually... It was... an instinctive feeling like hey, hey wait a minute, this doesn’t feel right anymore for me and that’s when I quit. (Mike, 35 years, Dutch).

Most of the interviewees, namely eight out of fourteen, were made aware of the issues surrounding Black Pete through direct contact with family, friends or colleagues. Being empathic toward other people’s feelings having a direct contact telling them that he or she was, for example, offended by the figure made the interviewees aware of the negative sides of the celebrated figure. Not realizing that there was a negative side to the Dutch celebrations beforehand, direct contacts telling them about that side made the interviewees aware of other experiences. A major influence in these direct contacts appeared to be globalization: international contacts, contacts with Dutch people with various cultural backgrounds or even moving from a village to a larger city in the Netherlands brought other experiences to the attention of the interviewees.

Nicki (45 years, Dutch-Indonesian), an enormous advocate of the Sinterklaas festivities, reported to be dismayed a couple of years ago when her brother came back from a business trip to the U.S.A. and told her how his American colleagues reacted to a brochure he as a marketer produced for a Dutch store chain. Her brother’s American colleagues –“whom as I believe were even

white people, they weren't black people or something" (Nicki, 45 years)– were appalled by the black-painted figures in the brochure which her brother, without further thoughts, had brought with him to the U.S.A. as part of his company's portfolio. According to Nicki her brother felt so awkward because of his inability to explain the figure to his foreign colleagues that he changed his attitude about the figure immediately. Nicki, however, reported that her actual change toward Black Pete took a couple of years, but she acknowledged this story as her first powerful moment of awareness that made her think further about the issue and eventually resulted in a change of her attitude as well. Maria experienced something similar concerning the moment she started thinking about her attitude toward Black Pete, describing her 'power of the situation' as:

I remember exactly when, it was in 2010. I was, it was like a Christmas dinner... at school... and then there was a just a white American bartender... a young guy, I believe about 28 years or something. And he... he worked... he studied here in the Netherlands. (...) And it was just a white male, and he was constantly telling me, he was convincing me that Black Pete was racist. He said 'strange, don't you think, that it's a guy with afro hair and... that people paint their face black, don't you think that's strange?' I thought it was really interesting, so I was in conversation with him the whole time. And that's when I thought 'okayyy, yeah I don't know', and I told him 'no, we we just celebrate it like that...' (...) So he was talking about, I never had, I thought it was really weird that somebody said that like that it was racist, that is what he told me. 'Dutch people, they are racist', that's what he said... He said in America it really is not tolerated you know. I thought o okay, that's new to me. (Maria, 33 years, Cape Verdean)

Interesting in Nicki's and Maria's experiences of awareness about other perspectives toward Black Pete is that they both emphasize that the negative perspective came from a white individual. Although both women were born and raised in the Netherlands, yet with different cultural backgrounds, the fact that a white person made them aware of the racist features of Black Pete could have played a strengthening role in their level of awareness. However, because the interviewees had to talk about passed experiences and not hypotheses this specific part of their anecdotes was not researched further.

Moving within the Netherlands from a village to a big city appeared to play a large role in awareness about the different sides surrounding Black Pete as well. One of the interviewees, Koen, explained his first experience with another perspective toward Black Pete as follows:

I really think that when I came to Amsterdam and started getting some more friends from the Surinamese culture and stuff with a Surinamese background whom were not always, whom at once said like 'I'm not going to celebrate that, I don't celebrate that' or something. Why don't you celebrate that? You've got children... 'Yeah, that Black Pete', what do you mean Black Pete, 'yeah it's just a caricature'. Hey, wait a second..., I think that that was the first time that I heard that and that I realized something like, hey wait a second, that indeed isn't right no. (...) From that moment on I started becoming more and more aware. (Koen, 31 years, Dutch)

Besides direct contact with others, traditional and new media facilitated awareness as well. The most influential media platforms among the interviewees that provided information for awareness appeared to be televised debates and Facebook. The debate on the Dutch public broadcasting channel 'Nederland 1' [the current 'NPO 1'] wherein Dutch artist Henk Westbroek verbally attacked activist Quinsy Gario after the latter claimed that Black Pete is racist was described by interviewees who claimed television made them aware of the issue as their 'power of the situation'. Leila, for instance, described that moment of awareness as:

When the discussion heated up, and for me that was about 2 or 3 years ago... that I first was confronted with it... was when I first started thinking about it. Well actually, more because I was confronted with it on television. (...) I don't remember his name, but there was a very... dark... man that was very passionately against Black Pete in that discussion, and it was mainly his passion that appealed to me. He was, he really was just offended and hurt... and... yeah, I was touched by that... I, I don't feel it like that, I'm not offended if the Sinterklaas celebrations remain the way they are, but it does touch me deeply that somebody else... sees it as a painful issue. And yes... that really touched me. (Leila, 30 years, Moroccan)

Interestingly, one interviewee –Fleur– was made aware of this seemingly powerful televised debate through direct contact with a friend after which she watched the episode by clicking on a shared link on Facebook. Fleur recalled that she saw the link being shared on her Facebook newsfeed a few times, but it was not until her friend told her in disbelief about the heated up debate that she actually decided to view the content of the link. While she, thus, according to the ELM, implicitly processed the information as shared on her newsfeed earlier by focusing on simple cues (Perloff, 2010), it was not until Fleur was motivated by a reliable source that she decided to process the information explicitly through considerable cognitive deliberation (Perloff, 2010). After seeing the

debate, not realizing that Black Pete had a negative side to it before, Fleur had similar thoughts as Leila after watching the episode.

Besides the sharing of informational links, Facebook has proven itself to the interviewees also as a direct platform of information by making other users' thoughts and ideas public (Van Dijck, 2011). Julia, who called Facebook "her life", described her first moment of awareness about the Black Pete issue as:

Yeah it wasn't that long ago, 2 years or something, because of Facebook. Because I really didn't realize that... I really didn't think about [the Black Pete issue] before... On Facebook I saw a lot of weird reactions of people and dead threats..., that kind of things. Like come on, what is this all about...? (Julia, 20 years, Gambian-Dutch)

While Julia was a firm supporter of Black Pete at first, also on Facebook, the above mentioned reactions made her aware of the severity of the issue. Julia continued how reactions to her personally on Facebook were reason for her to start the process of attitude change:

Later a page appeared, a Facebook page, and on that page a lot of those things were written like 'yeah, go back to your own country'. And then I reacted on it with 'yes, but I love Black Pete too, and I'm also black'. Looking back at it it really was a dumb reaction of mine. But everybody responded to it with 'yeah but if you write this and this'... Everybody always suddenly writes about 'freedom of speech' and 'then you just have to go back to Morocco'. And all that I was able to think was 'huh... I reacted that I like [Black Pete], didn't I?'. (Julia, 20 years, Gambian-Dutch)

Like many other interviewees, Julia furthermore explained that she decided to focus on various posts about Black Pete to understand the problem. Rooted in the ELM (Perloff, 2010), that focus on messages about Black Pete can be considered as careful cognitive deliberation ultimately resulting in explicit attitude change. Rita explained the big role that Facebook played in her awareness stage toward attitude change as follows:

To me Facebook played a pretty big role, because it was on Facebook that I discovered that there seriously was a group that is against Black Pete and that there are children books with colored Petes that you can read to your kids, the clips of the past that show that Black Pete was originally white, you know those kind of things I was all made aware of through Facebook. (Rita, 28 years, Antillean)

Beatrice shared the same thoughts as Rita, because before the Black Pete issue was discussed on Facebook and other mediums she was not aware of the problem surrounding the black painted figure:

Yeah it was only two years ago that my daughter and I stood in front [of the arrival of Sinterklaas], and... around that time I did have a conversation with my neighbor, because at some point it was more and more on the news and on Facebook and stuff, and my neighbor who is half Dutch and half Surinamese stood beside me at the arrival you know. So that made me wonder, yeah why do you see that many black people that just go to those festivities, so I had a conversation about that and she said like 'yes we black people, we don't find [Black Pete] very pleasant, but...' She told me she was raised with Sinterklaas as well and while Black Pete wasn't welcome in their home, but to really tell a school 'yes, I don't like [Black Pete]' was a step too far, that was not done in the generation of her parents, because you're torn between some kind of two evils, as I find myself in now as well with my young daughter. (...) It can be best described as looking away. (Beatrice, 39 years, Dutch)

The above examples show that, as a new medium, Facebook thus definitely opened up conversations between people online as well as offline. Since web 2.0 on which content can be created via various public postings (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012) and Facebook are both only eleven years young (Facebook, 2015; Fuchs, 2008), former generations were dependent on traditional media like the television and the radio (Fuchs, 2008). Social networking sites like Facebook, however, have broadened the realm of news in such that individuals are not only able to create their own news through their own posts (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Cheung & Thadani, 2012), but by doing so social networking sites can also enforce news time on traditional media for issues internet users deemed newsworthy through likes, reactions and shares online. So, while Beatrice mentioned news programs in the same sentence as Facebook as reason for her to go into conversation with her neighbor about Black Pete, the question arises whether Black Pete would have become a news item in traditional media in recent years if the discussion was not made public first on the social networking site. The capability of internet users nowadays to make thoughts and opinions public and the capability of older people to discuss their thoughts and opinions publicly decades ago –let alone the amount of courage needed to discuss the negative sides surrounding the national tradition back then– can thus be reason for the difference in approach between the older and newer generations.

The various ways in which awareness about the negative sides of Black Pete were raised were among the interviewees reason to consider the next stage in the process of attitude change: acknowledgement.

4.4. Stage 4: Acknowledgement

The fairly popular saying ‘you cannot change what you do not acknowledge’ appeared no different when it comes to the issue of Black Pete. After the circular stages of existing personality and awareness, the data results show that the fourth stage in the process of attitude change toward Black Pete was indeed acknowledgement or, in other words, recognition of the problem. After in any way being made aware of the problems surrounding the figure, the interviewees admitted that they first had to really acknowledge what they were made aware off before they were able to change their attitudes about the matter. The data results show that being able to feel empathy for other people’s emotions, the realization of racism existing in the Netherlands and pro- and anti-Black Pete Facebook groups characterized the acknowledgement stage.

The ability of being empathic toward other people’s feelings as part of one’s existing personality appeared to play a large role in the acknowledgement stage. Beatrice, for example, explained the way in which she acknowledged the counter side of Black Pete as:

I did search for the feeling myself as well, that I thought by myself how do I feel about that and what what a lot of people say is ‘I don’t experience [Black Pete] as racism”, well when I look at myself I don’t experience it as racism either, but that’s not what matters to me... It’s not about me, and that’s what I told the teacher [with whom I had a discussion about the issue earlier] as well when she was like ‘yes I think, I think, I think’, ‘but it’s not about yóu, it’s not about yóu’ (laughs). The moment it is brought to your attention that well, this is how it is experienced by another person than you just have to quit. When you continuously tell somebody ‘hey fatty, hey fatty’ and that person tells you he doesn’t like it, than you stop saying it don’t you? (Beatrice, 39 years, Dutch)

Roos, a mediation coach, shared similar thoughts as Beatrice, saying:

My thoughts are nooo, not the people that experience the hurt, or we, we that’s how I really feel as autochthonous [Dutch inhabitant], like ‘nooo that Sinterklaas is a part of our culture’, that’s the same as when you say ‘that’s a part of us, it doesn’t matter if you feel offended’, that’s when I think nooo that’s not possible, when you feel offended then we have to fix that,

you have to take that so seriously you can't let that [hurt] continue to drag on. (Roos, 43 years, Dutch)

Besides empathy for other people's feelings, the acknowledgement that racism in the Netherlands exists appeared to be a part of this fourth stage within the attitude change process as well. Through direct contact with family and friends or through Facebook some interviewees came to the realization that Black Pete and racism are not that far apart as they previously thought. Steffi, who was aware that her Surinamese husband of seventeen years had racist experiences, really acknowledged the severity of racism in the Netherlands and the relationship between institutional racism and Black Pete through an altercation of one of her young kids with other children. Filled with emotions she tells about her process from awareness to acknowledgement:

My children, those are really specific events, so... my eldest was I believe about three years, no he was older,... five, he already played soccer. We then had a Sinterklaas celebration [at the soccer club] and my eldest wanted to dress up as Sinterklaas and my thoughts really were 'o that's fun, why not'. So he went dressed up like Sinterklaas, he was wearing his little miter, and... and... most of the other children were dressed up like Black Pete. And I think we were about ten minutes inside [of the event] and then he came back and said 'I want to go home, because I have to change clothes'. And I said 'why? You look so pretty' and then he said 'no, that's impossible, because I actually can't be Sinterklaas' and I was like 'why not?' Other kids had told him that [being Sinterklaas] wasn't a possibility, because he was black and therefore couldn't be Sinterklaas but was Black Pete. (...) To me this was... because it were children who had said it. (...) My husband already thought differently about [Black Pete], but I always had something like 'whatever, let it go, what does it matter'. But then they... against my, no, my children, that's crossing the line. (Steffi, 34 years, Dutch)

The event of becoming a parent, appeared to be a determinant in the acknowledgement stage for a few interviewees. Not only through experiences of their children, but also thinking about what those interviewees wanted their children to learn and how they wanted their children to grow up, helped them acknowledge the counter side of Black Pete. After being made aware of the Black Pete issue through Facebook, Rita really acknowledged racism as a problem in Western society after child birth:

After all, yes, he is really my baby, and it is what I pass onto him that counts. You know, I myself am of course not a man, but I think that for dark skinned men living in this society life can be really tough at times. And all I really want to pass on to my little son is to just give him

the tools for a strong foundation and a good pair of brains with which he is able to resist people verbally, and just so that he knows where he comes from, what his roots are and yeah, just the motivation behind Black Pete as well as the dark skinned man's history. That's what I deem really important... And that's more like, yes it all started with Black Pete because that's what caused me to dive into history and there's ssoooo little available, just in school books or even just in books from the library, you really have to dive very deep into the material to learn more about black history. And I just feel [my son] has the right to know, and yeah, that's how I realized the problem existed. (Rita, 28 years, Antillean)

While Julia was made aware of problems surrounding Black Pete through reactions of other people on Facebook, the acknowledgement that racism in the Netherlands exist also became evident through other users' reactions on Facebook. Richard who as a black man living in the Netherlands said he never experienced racism before explained he was appalled by all the racist reactions he encountered on the social networking site just because of the issue concerning an alteration of the color of Black Pete:

At some point, on Facebook, it was really just like 'yeah shut up, otherwise you can just go back to your own country', tha- that was the terror, and I thought that was just really crude. And really fast as well, and also remorseless, because that's when I think if it's if it's, and I, and I previously never experienced that life like that before, perhaps for the better as well, but a lot of other black people had told me that... that under that other, that that [racism] under the chrome layer of those people lies, but I had never experienced it like that myself, but at once you do see that arise to the surface yes. And what Facebook did show, on several fronts, is how racist Holland really is. (Richard, 45 years, Surinamese)

What Richard describes here with the expression of the 'chrome layer' is the feeling of anonymity Facebook users can experience when communicating on the online platform (Ross et al., 2008). Since digital communication provides people with a different set of rules than communication in the offline world (Ross et al., 2008), users can be more freely to say what they want and/or feel while those sayings might have not been communicated face-to-face (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). Richard's experience in different set of rules online versus offline shows that individuals like Richard who never had to process such racist comments in the real world are suddenly presented with very direct messages on Facebook. Although Richard was already made aware of the problem of racism by other people, he had to acknowledge racism in the Netherlands exists when he saw the information presented to him in writing on the social networking site.

Facebook appeared to play a large role in the acknowledgement stage of the interviewees in another way as well, namely through its group feature. Facebook's ability to form or join certain groups helped most interviewees acknowledge the problems surrounding the figure in two ways. Firstly, based on the posts and reactions of a lot of Dutch Facebook users, pro-Black Pete Facebook groups helped the interviewees acknowledge that Black Pete is indeed associated with racism and that there appears to be at least some association between Black Pete and a black person. Thelma, who had liked a pro-Black Pete Facebook group at first, said:

At the beginning [of the discussion], I joined Facebook group 'Black Pete has to stay'. But when it became really exaggerated I disliked the page immediately. All that expulsion of critics... I thought it was pretty excessive. Those were my thoughts in the beginning... It was all so extreme. (Thelma, 35 years, Dutch)

In his process of attitude change toward Black Pete Richard decided to follow different groups. He explained:

I also join [Facebook] groups to follow things, to see what's going on. And I must say that I have liked [pro-Black Pete Facebook group] 'Pietitie' as well, also to see what's going on there. And it scared me... Last year I was really startled on Facebook because of the fervor (...), especially on the Dutch side I must say. Really holding onto their thoughts firmly. And what terribly startled me as well was the arrival of Sinterklaas in Gouda last year and before that [arrival], a few weeks prior the discussion became really violent, and really calling on people from Meppel and other villages like that, 'we're coming to Gouda and we're going to beat them [demonstrators] all up' and yeah, that really frightened me because, not so much for me, but that people are really capable of doing that. (Richard, 45 years, Surinamese)

So, through Facebook, Richard did not only come to acknowledge that racism in the Netherlands exists, he also acknowledged the problems surrounding Black Pete through the social networking site. Koen also discussed how Facebook groups played a role in his process of attitude change toward Black Pete:

All those enormously hateful reactions and racist reactions [on Facebook] you know. Yeah really terrible, yeah there are 2 opposing parties that are becoming more and more extreme. Well not entirely actually, because I really think the pro-Black Pete groups are crossing the line in a lot of ways, the anti-Black Pete groups aren't that bad. But it's really just horrible

what you read now. I should just stop reading every now and then, because I'm going crazy because of it and it's something I can do nothing about. I can react really angrily, but there's no sense in it. They are just a group of morons sitting behind their keyboards who write that kind of shit. Just pathetic people, but yeah it really upsets me and I can get really frustrated about it. (Koen, 31 years, Dutch)

Acknowledging all the written hatred from especially the pro-Black Pete groups on Facebook ultimately resulted in Richard and Koen's, together with existing personality and direct contact with friends, attitude change from supporting to opposing Black Pete.

Secondly, anti-Black Pete Facebook groups helped interviewees acknowledge that celebrating Sinterklaas differently without the black painted figure did not have to affect the fun of the festivities. To the question why she decided to like the anti-Black Pete-Facebook group 'Pietmakeover', Rita answered:

Information. Information about how [Sinterklaas] can be celebrated differently, information about the role of Black Pete. Yeah I'm a real information monster before I want to really make my opinion about [Black Pete] clear, so I really mainly read first and especially the reactions of people, yes that made me..., yeah that just hurts. (Rita, 28 years, Antillean)

This example not only shows how Facebook group 'Pietmakeover' helps acknowledge that Sinterklaas can be celebrated differently, but it also shows how Rita acknowledged the negative side of Black Pete because of the reactions from people pro-Black Pete on the group's posts. Steffi added to that the following:

I think that [Pietmakeover] seeks a rapprochement in the right way. They're not filled with hatred, they're not... Of course they have an opinion that Pete has to change. Of course they have an opinion, they make that very clear. I find that really good, so it's not an attack on the Sinterklaas celebrations, it's about the way Pete currently looks, that's just not okay. From what angle you look at it. (Steffi, 34 years, Dutch)

Opting for change of Black Pete through direct contact with family and friends, 'Pietmakeover' was the only Facebook group approved by Emma. She explained:

What I did like, at some point with the 'Pietmakeover'-page, I thought that was much more personal than [anti-Black Pete Facebook group] 'Black Pete is Racism'. On [Pietmakeover] you

were able to upload video clips with your own experiences. I think that has the same function like a face-to-face conversation. (Emma, 28 years, Dutch)

The examples above about the opposing Black Pete Facebook groups show support for the findings of Slagter (2014) whom researched how the Black Pete discussion on Facebook and televised debates was framed. Slagter (2014) concluded in her study that the Facebook posts of pro-groups is characterized by the Silent!-frame in which opponents of Black Pete are verbally attacked, because they, according to the supporters, should just adjust to the Dutch tradition or leave. The Facebook posts of anti-groups, on the other hand, is characterized by the Listen!-frame in which supporters are called upon through arguments to acknowledge the racist associations Black Pete brings along and that it is not right to diminish the feelings of others for the sake of a tradition (Slagter, 2014). In line of Slagter's research (2014) my data results show that that Silent!-frame including its negative and racist reactions of Black Pete supporters have not only raised awareness about the issue of Black Pete but also helped acknowledge the problems surrounding the black painted figure among Facebook users susceptible for worldly problems with empathy for other people's feelings. The explaining and problem solving reactions on Facebook of Black Pete opponents through the Listen!-frame (Slagter, 2014), in addition, helped those susceptible Facebook users to empathize with people on the opposing side of Black Pete. These findings demonstrate that the role of Facebook for Black Pete activists lies in making the negative reactions of supporters of Black Pete visible meanwhile creating more groups opting for change in a respectful manner like 'Pietmakeover'.

After this fourth stage wherein the interviewees acknowledged there indeed was a problem concerning Black Pete, they entered the last stage of the process of attitude change. That last stage of the process of attitude change is the actual attitude change itself.

4.5. Stage 5: Attitude change

The last stage within the process of attitude change toward Black Pete is the actual attitude change from supporting to opposing the black painted figure. The data results of the transcribed interviews show that the final stage of attitude change is mainly characterized by a changed negative association with the figure and is heavily determined by Facebook. Among all interviewees, Facebook as a social networking site appeared to play a large role in the transition from mere acknowledgement to attitude change as well as in strengthening already changed negative attitudes toward Black Pete. In this final section of the data results I will first discuss the role of Facebook and specific Facebook features that caused interviewees to shift from the acknowledgement to the attitude change stage. Then I will discuss how interviewees who felt that Facebook strengthened

their changed negative attitude toward Black Pete explained the role of the social networking site and its features. Finally, I will elaborate on the interviewees' explained changed negative associations with Black Pete.

From the fourteen individuals interviewed nine admitted that they just recently –within 3 years ago– changed their attitude toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the figure. Once these nine interviewees were made aware of the Black Pete discussion and acknowledged that the black painted figure indeed had a negative counter side to it, all of them reported that Facebook played a very large role in actually changing their attitude from supporting to opposing Black Pete. How the social networking site played that large role, however, varied among the interviewees. Fleur and Beatrice, for example, talked about all the information they received via, respectively, Facebook groups and the site's newsfeed:

A big role. Yes yes, a very big role. I've learned so much, especially the [Facebook] groups taught me a lot. I really didn't know anything. Through a Facebook group-invitation a friend and I also went to 'the big racism debate' in Rotterdam. That was actually the first meeting, you know, where I met people I suddenly had as a Facebook friend, what I found really strange at the time, people whom I really didn't know suddenly invited me to be their Facebook friend [because of my reactions on hateful posts of supporters]. I met those people there and that... that meeting taught me a lot as well. (...) Without [Facebook] I wouldn't have known as much as I do now. And I'm sure I wouldn't have felt so passionately about [the issue of Black Pete] as I do now... Because then I would have had to gather all the links and books and articles and stuff myself and yeah, if I really would have done that myself I don't know. (Fleur, 42 years, Dutch)

Yes Facebook definitely played a large role, because I obviously received a lot of news through Facebook... Because I think that if you watch the 8 o'clock news nowadays then you know nothing. And... also the, [on Facebook] I liked a lot of newspaper pages as well, so sure you can subscribe to one newspaper so that you receive yesterday's news today, but especially the background of 'De Volkskrant', 'Het Parool', sometimes 'De Telegraaf' as well but then with another approach, 'De Metro', 'De Spits' you know..., especially when you put all of those together, sometimes with the same pictures but with a different heading, makes you think they're talking about a whole different story while accompanied by the same picture. Well that really made me aware [of traditional news nowadays]. (Beatrice, 39 years, Dutch)

In these examples Fleur and Beatrice mention the informative side of Facebook through which information is made easily and readily available. While Fleur is provided with new information about Black Pete through anti-Black Pete Facebook groups, Beatrice uses Facebook as an informative collecting bin of all the news available. Not only Facebook as an information platform (Joinson, 2008), but also Facebook as a social hub wherein like-minded people are connected (Brooks, 2004) helped Fleur receive the information she needed to shift from the acknowledgement stage to an actual change in attitude.

Through informative posts on their newsfeed, Facebook played a large role in the final stage of attitude change toward Black Pete for Rita and Nicki as well:

That video clip of the arrival of Sinterklaas, I believe it was the 1930's or something, that there were only white Petes [without painted faces] during the arrival of Sinterklaas in Amsterdam... That's when I thought 'seriously people, what is all the fuss about, if in the past Black Petes were non-existent. Why really, what's the problem! (Rita, 28 years, Antillean)

There was an article shared on Facebook, from [newspaper] 'De Volkskrant' written by an art historian... I believe an art historian who works at the national museum..., with as I recall a Surinamese background and... that was about, in that article was explained how the appearance of Black Pete descends from child slaves. And... the article was accompanied by illustrations of... well you're probably familiar with them, of healthy elite white people with on the background their lovely little child slave or something. And... well, there's no denying of [the background of Black Pete] after seeing that article. (Nicki, 45 years, Indonesian-Dutch)

While both women were not sure through what Facebook friend they saw the, for them, most impressive post on their newsfeed, they mentioned that it probably was posted by an anti-Black Pete Facebook group they joined during their acknowledgement stage. So, just like Fleur, Rita and Nicki acknowledged the informative features Facebook provides its users with through the ability of joining certain groups by liking their pages.

After the stages of awareness and acknowledgement, other interviewees entered the last stage of the process of attitude change after seeing very negative reactions of Black Pete supporters on Facebook. Some examples of how interviewees described the role of Facebook then:

Facebook was for sure a decisive factor yes. Yeah, a few times I really spend a couple of hours intensively reading the reactions on the 'PowNed'-page... especially because I, if one

reacted, pictures that were then placed underneath [those posts] with 'miserable baboon' and things alike... That's what I found quite shocking actually. (Richard, 45 years, Surinamese)

[On Facebook] there were more and more negative posts about how... people who were against Black Pete, how they were treated. That's when I really thought like no this is not right... that's when I decided to really join that [opposing] group. (Leila, 30 years, Moroccan)

Well a very, very big role. Because without Facebook I really wouldn't have realized that people say such weird things. Really, I don't know what reaction it was... but a lot of reactions have led me to think 'now it really has to stop'. (...) Like those posts of [Dutch singer] Anouk, that she shared. With all those reactions to her Facebook page [about her opting for change of Black Pete] like 'yeah rather a traitor to one's country than a nigger lover'. You know, that kind of stuff. (Julia, 20 years, Gambian-Dutch)

These examples show the role Facebook has played in the various stages within the process of attitude change toward Black Pete. While Richard and Julia were at first both made aware of the Black Pete discussion through Facebook, they later also had to actually acknowledge that racism in the Netherlands exists due to the racist comments they read on the social networking site. That acknowledgement sparked their curiosity to not only follow certain anti-Black Pete Facebook groups but also to read more reactions of other Facebook users to posts about Black Pete. These very negative and hateful comments piled up leading both Richard and Julia to change their attitude toward Black Pete completely, causing them to find themselves on the opposing instead of the supporting side of the black painted figure now.

Five out of fourteen interviewees were already made aware of the negative counter side to Black Pete through mainly direct contact with family, friends or colleagues, and had acknowledged the problem before it being a recurring item on Facebook. To the question 'What role do you feel social networking site Facebook played in your attitude change about Black Pete?' these five interviewees answered that, while Facebook did not play a role in their attitude change from positive to negative thoughts about Black Pete per se, the social networking site did really help strengthening their current negative attitude towards Black Pete. Mike, for example, answered:

My negative attitude toward Black Pete has strengthened because of [Facebook}, without a doubt. Because Facebook is part of the whole funnel... Everything [about Black Pete] is being shared, the lawsuits, the the suspicions, the arrests, ... you know all that kind of stuff... arrests of people, so that really has... affected [my attitude change] in that sense. (...) I think that I

have expressed myself even stronger and more firmly because of Facebook. Because I simply am able to see what's happening everywhere. (Mike, 35 years, Dutch)

Like Fleur and Beatrice whom both had entered the last stage of the process of attitude change because of Facebook, Mike regarded Facebook as an information platform as a valuable contribution to his changed attitude as well. However, there is a difference noticeable between the answers of the women and Mike in relation to the information they were provided with on Facebook: while Fleur and Beatrice talked more generally about the Black Pete discussion as part of the news, Mike really focused on particular news events within the Black Pete discussion. This difference could lie in the fact that Mike opposed Black Pete before Facebook even existed, that he is a blogger interested in societal issues and thus already joined particular groups and connected with like-minded people on the social networking site from the moment he created his own Facebook profile. Since Fleur and Beatrice are rather new in the subject of Black Pete –both started their process of attitude change two to three years ago– their answers made it appear that they are still focused on their changing networks and modernized sources of information.

Roos, who also changed her attitude toward Black Pete prior to the discussion had intensified on Facebook, talked about how the ability of being interconnected through the social networking site played a strengthening role:

Especially the direct contact you can search for [on Facebook] with people who think alike. (...) People are of course now easier to find than in the past, and that has strengthened my attitude [toward Black Pete] without a doubt. So the search function [of Facebook] played a large role, yeah yeah. That's how I eventually started getting the contacts in the first place, through the search function on Facebook, yeah that's how I found like-minded people....
(Roos, 43 years, Dutch)

Roos's answer shows how like-minded people, or individuals who oppose Black Pete as well, helped her maintain a negative attitude toward Black Pete. While she seemed quite alone in the second stage in the seventies when her gut feeling made her aware of strange phrases in songs, Facebook as a new medium helped her years later to surround herself with other Facebook users who shared the same thoughts about Black Pete. Or, as Brooks (2004) rightfully remarked in his study: "Once you have joined a side, the information age makes it easier for you to surround yourself with people like yourself" (p. 5).

Like in many phases of the various stages within the process of attitude change toward Black Pete, the negative reactions on Facebook of Black Pete supporters appeared to have strengthened the existing opposing attitude of some interviewees as well. Koen and Steffi, for example, answered:

I really became more passionate [about the issue of Black Pete]. I already changed my attitude, in which I realized that [Black Pete] was a caricature and that he had to change. But I also became more passionate and that was because I read all those reactions. So surely I am... and what I also said that people nowadays aren't able to get away with it [that Sinterklaas is a harmless tradition for children] now that all that information is freely available and that [supporters] keep on insisting that they're right. I became much more passionate in my negative attitude toward Black Pete. (Koen, 31 years, Dutch)

Facebook really strengthened my negative thoughts, because of all the reactions you are able to see... (...) Especially the updates of friends and that you see what the opinion is from people you normally talk to. The ones who laugh with you, who laugh with your kids, and if you then hear or see what they are saying [online]... that's what I found terrifying. Yes yes, that really disappointed me. (Steffi, 34 years, Dutch)

While both examples show how negative reactions of Black Pete supporters strengthened the interviewees' attitudes, Koen and Steffi each experienced that strengthening role of Facebook differently. Koen's answer shows his frustration about not only the negative reaction of Black Pete supporters on Facebook, but also about their choice to not acknowledge the, for him, obvious problem. Koen mentions information being freely available on Facebook, so Koen considers the social networking site as an information platform and as an interconnected web through which all users are made aware of the negative side of Black Pete. Steffi talked about the negative reactions she saw on Facebook in relation to those reactions of online Facebook friends to her social life offline. While a social networking site as a new medium can give the feeling of anonymity thereby generating more self-disclosures of individual users (Tidwell & Walther, 2002) and while users are provided with different conversation rules online than offline (Ross et al., 2008), Steffi does not make those distinctions between her friends on Facebook and in her real non-digital life. So, through Facebook Steffi is informed about the opinions of her friends and acquaintances she otherwise would not have heard face-to-face; this new acquired knowledge has not only strengthened her negative attitude toward Black Pete, but can also change the dynamic within her offline network.

The enormous role of Facebook in the process of attitude change toward Black Pete caused the interviewees to change or strengthen their associations with the black painted figure. Since

attitude change can occur implicitly –spontaneously– and explicitly –through careful deliberation–, the complete attitude change toward Black Pete in this last stage of the process is the degree in which the interviewees’ own associations with the figure changed. The degree to which the interviewees have changed their attitude toward Black Pete is further examined through the data results.

All interviewees but one decided to not engage in the Sinterklaas festivities as they had done before the attitude change. Although interviewee Richard reported to have changed his attitude after careful deliberation –his explicit attitude (Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011)– through Facebook, he reported he could not help but react positively when suddenly being confronted with the figure –his implicit attitude characterized by “mental associations in memory” (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011, p. 61)–. While attitude change can be defined as the “modification of an individual’s general evaluative perception of a stimulus or set of stimuli” (Cacioppo et al., 1994, p. 261), Richard’s explanation of his attitude change toward Black Pete shows support of the APE. The APE, in contrary to cognitive dissonance theory and the ELM, holds that a change in attitude consists out of two distinct mental processes instead of one (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011). Thus, while Cacioppo et al. (1994) define the interviewees’ modified perception toward Black Pete as attitude change, for Richard complete attitude change did not occur according to the APE whereby both distinct mental processes have to be coherent. Since Richard reported to have changed his attitude very recently –only less than a year ago– those incoherent implicit and explicit mental processes could be caused by Richard not having completed the final stage within the process of attitude change yet. Since Facebook played a role in his entire process of attitude change, seeing even more hateful reactions of Black Pete supporters is possibly needed for Richard to change his attitude completely according to the APE. With the Sinterklaas festivities coming up in a few months, Black Pete is already being heavily discussed on Facebook; based on the answers of the other interviewees who have all changed their attitude toward Black Pete longer than a year and a half ago and the ELM’s notion of more careful deliberation to induce long-term change (Alvarez & Brehm, 1995), this year’s Sinterklaas celebrations could finalize the last stage of Richard’s complete attitude change.

All the other interviewees –thirteen out of fourteen to be exact– did change their attitudes according to both the principles of one mental process (Perloff, 2010; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011) and two mental processes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011). All thirteen interviewees namely reported that they tried to avoid Black Pete as much as they could and that they were not able to look at the black painted figure without negative thoughts anymore. The interviewees’ implicit attitude changed the way they reacted to Black Pete spontaneously in such that associations of Black

Pete changed from positive and cheerful to negative and stereotypical, both offline and online on Facebook. Leila and Koen, for example, explained their changed view as follows:

I can't see it apart from the... discussion, or from th... history. That [Black Pete] is an element that stems from slavery, or that it was an element that stemmed from slavery... No, I can't see it apart from that anymore. (...) Of course it's the history, that's being told, and then now when you look at it, the image is obviously black helpers of a white man... Yeah, I can't see that differently anymore. (Leila, 30 years, Moroccan)

Yeah I think that's just strange that you can really... you can obviously see that, yeah I'm not able to not see it anymore, but you see it is a caricature don't you? When somebody... when you climb through a chimney you don't end up with red lips and big gold earrings with an afro wig. So that, I don't understand how you're not able to see that. I really think it's strange when I think about it like that. Why don't you see that? (Koen, 31 years, Dutch)

Once the associations are changed it appeared difficult for the interviewees to explain their former positive views about Black Pete. Although her process toward complete attitude change took a while, Nicki now finds the black painted figure repulsive while still being very passionate about the Sinterklaas festivities. Nicki's positive associations with the black painted figure as described at the beginning of this chapter have completely changed for the negative:

No, I can't see [Black Pete] anymo-, I find it réally repulsive now, when I see [the figure] now I think by myself 'úgh!' How how ... how could it be tha-, so once you know it... then you can't look at it any other way anymore. But you have to take various steps before you come to that. (Nicki, 45 years, Indonesian-Dutch)

This last example of Nicki shows how the interviewee changed her associations with Black Pete completely because of changed perceptions and associations through information processing about the figure. While one interviewee changed his attitude only explicitly, the other thirteen out of fourteen interviewees changed their attitudes toward Black Pete explicitly and implicitly, or in other words after careful deliberation and spontaneously.

4.6. Conclusion

The data results of the fourteen analyzed interviews show that the process of attitude change toward Black Pete consists out of five stages. Those stages comprise positive attitude toward Black Pete as the initial stage, existing personality as stage two supplemented by awareness as stage three, acknowledgement as the fourth stage and finally the stage of actual attitude change. The data results show that Facebook played a large role in the process of attitude change, especially in the stages of awareness, acknowledgement and actual attitude change. While all interviewees described their change in attitude toward Black Pete as a process, most of the interviewees were able to appoint a specific moment in the real world or on Facebook as the 'power of the situation' as an integral part of the process of attitude change toward Black Pete.

In the first stage of a positive attitude toward Black Pete, all fourteen interviewees reported to have had positive experiences with the Sinterklaas festivities and Black Pete growing up, and that most of them experienced the national festivities positively as adults as well. From the fourteen interviewees, eleven mentioned playing Black Pete at least once as part of their former positive experiences. The second and third stage, respectively characterized by existing personality and awareness, show the circular relationship between the two. While the interviewees' existing personality made them susceptible to worldly problems, in order for their attitude change concerning Black Pete to occur the current opponents were made aware of the problems surrounding the figure through direct contact with family, friends or colleagues mostly. Other sources of awareness were Facebook, televised debates, interviewees' gut feeling and interviewees' own negative experiences. Besides being able to feel empathy for other people's emotions, the acknowledgement stage is largely initiated by Facebook groups in two ways. Firstly, pro-Black Pete Facebook groups show that Black Pete is indeed associated with racism and that there appears to be at least some association between Black Pete and a black person. Secondly, anti-Black Pete Facebook groups, and 'Pietmakeover' especially, show that celebrating Sinterklaas differently without the black painted figure did not have to affect the fun of the festivities. The fifth and final stage of attitude change is mainly characterized by a changed negative association with the figure and is heavily determined by Facebook. The features of Facebook that were deemed most valuable in the process were the ability to join groups, the users' newsfeed, the ability to send and receive friend requests and the platform's accessibility to other opinions. Through those features, Facebook played an enormous role as an information platform and as an interconnected social hub and was reason for all interviewees to either shift from the acknowledgement stage to the stage of attitude change or to strengthen the existing negative attitude toward Black Pete.

While all interviewees reported to have changed their attitude toward Black Pete because of mainly Facebook and direct contact with others in their personal environment, a complete attitude change of the implicit and explicit mental processes was shown among thirteen out of fourteen interviewees. In the following chapter I will conclude this study and I will discuss limitations of this research as well as possibilities for future research.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and Discussion

Results demonstrate that attitude change toward Black Pete from supporting to opposing the tradition is explained by the interviewees as a process they went through. That process of attitude change toward Black Pete consisted out of multiple stages, namely initial positive attitude as stage one, existing personality and awareness as supplementary stages two and three respectively, acknowledgement as stage four and finally actual attitude change wherein the interviewees came to oppose the black painted figure as stage five. In the process of attitude change interviewees explained direct national and international contact with friends, family and colleagues, the own ability of showing empathy toward other people's feelings, televised debates and Facebook as the most important features for their attitude change to occur. Among the interviewees, Facebook played an enormous role in the process of attitude change toward Black Pete, especially in the stages of awareness, acknowledgement and actual attitude change. Facebook's role as an information platform and as an interconnected social hub was reason for all interviewees to either shift from the acknowledgement stage to the stage of attitude change or to strengthen the existing negative attitude toward Black Pete. The features of Facebook that were deemed most valuable in the process were the ability to join groups, the users' newsfeed, the ability to find like-minded people and the platform's accessibility to other opinions.

The research findings show support and reinforce existing theories about attitude change and Facebook. While all interviewees described their change in attitude toward Black Pete as a process and thus reinforce existing theories about attitude change (i.e. Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Perloff, 2010), most of the interviewees were able to appoint a specific moment in the real world or on Facebook as Allport's (1935) 'power of the situation' as an integral part of the process of attitude change toward Black Pete as well. As reasons for their attitude change to occur, most interviewees described experiencing mental discomfort as rooted in cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1956) in which their positive thoughts about Black Pete did not comply with the newly obtained information they were made aware off about the figure. While a few interviewees experienced mental discomfort initiated by implicit attitude change, the majority of the interviewees experienced mental discomfort through new outside information. The large role Facebook played in changing the interviewees' attitude toward Black Pete demonstrates the influence of information on individuals in the process of attitude change. This finding shows support for the development of newer models of attitude change like the ELM wherein the power of the information that has to be mentally processed is acknowledged (Perloff, 2010). In the final stage of actual attitude change all interviewees but one experienced a change in explicit and implicit attitude toward Black Pete; this

finding reinforces the findings of Gawronski & Bodenhausen (2011) in which the researchers remodeled attitude change in the APE as a change in attitude consisting out of two distinct mental processes instead of one. While one of the fourteen interviewees claimed to have changed his attitude toward Black Pete completely, his reported implicit spontaneous attitude toward the figure demonstrated otherwise since for complete attitude change to occur both implicit and explicit mental processes have to be coherent (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2011).

This research has contributed to science in various ways. First, since most literature about attitude change are based upon experiments in simulated environments (Petty & Wegener, 1999; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006), the chosen qualitative research method of interviewing expanded existing literature about attitude change. The data results demonstrate that all interviewees were indeed aware of and capable in explaining their attitude change toward Black Pete (Aronson, 1969; Mahaffy, 1996) as well as in explaining their attitude change in relation to Facebook (Merchant et al., 2014; Farrow & Yuan, 2011). Furthermore, the interview questions allowed room for interpretation of the interviewees with insights I, as a researcher, had not thought of before (Babbie, 2008), like direct contact with family and friends and the strengthening role of Facebook as important determinants in the process of attitude change. Secondly, because most of the existing research about the Black Pete discussion has focused on discourse (i.e. Slagter, 2014; Van Es et al., 2014; Wouters, 2014) while none of the existing research about Black Pete has focused on attitude change, this study contributed to existing literature by adding new insights on the topic of Black Pete in the Netherlands. Thirdly, relating the attitude change toward Black Pete to social networking site Facebook demonstrated the role that Facebook can play in attitude change. The various ways in which Facebook and its features played a role in the attitude change toward Black Pete contributed scientifically to existing literature by adding knowledge on attitude change in a digital arena as well as socially by providing a better understanding the role the social networking site can play in attitude change. With help of this research, Facebook's role and its features can be better utilized in future public discussions in which attitude change concerning a specific topic is desired, especially since the use of Facebook continues to grow exponentially (Statista, 2015) while research investigating information processing through use of the social networking site has not (Ross et al., 2008).

Besides the social impact of this research of providing a better understanding of how Facebook plays a role in attitude change toward Black Pete, this research contributed to society in other ways as well. While many articles (i.e. Helsloot, 2008; Van Es et al., 2014) have focused on positive sides of Black Pete as part of the Sinterklaas festivities and on the figure's supporters, this study gave insights into the opposing side of the Black Pete discussion, thereby making a small effort in bringing contemporary polarized Dutch society closer together through understanding. Also, the interviewees under study that have changed their attitudes from supporting to opposing Black Pete

helped better understand how the minds of the large majority that is still feeling supportive towards the black painted figure can be changed and how Facebook can be used best in the process. So, by apprehending current opponents' process of attitude change toward Black Pete, by understanding Facebook's role in the attitude change process and by exerting the findings into practice, this study could eventually also contribute to Dutch society in an actual change of the tradition's feature of Black Pete and in a change of the normality of black facing overall in the Netherlands.

Apart from the scientific and social implications, this research also has its limitations. Firstly, the data results are based on attitude change from supporting to opposing the tradition solely, thereby showing one side of attitude change toward Black Pete. While before or during the study no individuals were found who have changed their attitudes from opposing to supporting the tradition, this does not necessarily mean that those people do not exist. Also, the findings concerning attitude change, Facebook and Black Pete can be extended by interviewing current supporters on Facebook whom have always celebrated Sinterklaas including Black Pete to research what has caused those people to not change their attitude change toward Black Pete in recent years while others have. Future research can thus expand this research's focus with a broader spectrum of people under study. Secondly, the findings of this study are based on the interviewees' self-reports. While I do not have any reason to assume that the interviewees did not speak the truth about the ways that they explained their attitude change, the validity of the research findings cannot be checked (Aronson, 1999). Despite this limitation, the interviewees' answers are, however, compliant to the research findings of, amongst others, Petty and Wegener (1999) that attitude change is indeed a process consisting out of multiple steps and of Merchant and colleagues (2014) whom showed that Facebook as a social networking site has proven its role in attitude change before. Lastly, because of this study's broader theory surrounding attitude change, the role of Facebook was researched in a more general manner, leaving the role of the social networking site's features open for the interviewees' interpretations and explanations. Since this study has proven Facebook's worth in attitude change toward Black Pete mainly through its interactive groups and newsfeed features, future research about attitude change concerning Black Pete or other societal topics can focus on those features' more specifically. Also, following this research's findings it is then advised to follow a quantitative research method, like surveys, for generalizability purposes in which the findings of the sample can be generalized to the society under study.

Researching how individuals explain their attitude change from supporting to opposing the figure of Black Pete and the role of Facebook therein was very insightful. While direct contact with family, friends and colleagues stimulated attitude change by appealing to the individual's empathic feelings as well, the facilitating and strengthening role of Facebook in the process of attitude change may not be undermined. In changing the attitude of current Black Pete supporters, direct contact

and the social networking site's features can best be combined. Facebook group 'Pietmakeover' has proven itself to be a frontrunner with its direct approach of video messaging and showing alternatives of Pete, thereby starting to change the attitudes of individuals initially belonging to the Dutch majority of Black Pete supporters. In the process of writing this research project, the Dutch Sinterklaas festivities were reasons for debates within the European Union again, because of the festivities' dehumanizing features (Blokker, 2015). While change of the black painted figure as part of the Sinterklaas festivities seems inevitable in the long run due to, amongst other reasons, globalization, more opponents have to make an effort for that change to actually occur in a faster pace. With this research I made an effort to give those individuals opting for change of Black Pete the non-digital and digital tools to help make a difference from within contemporary Dutch society.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide (English)

Before we begin I would like to thank you for your time and cooperation. Also I would like to introduce myself and my study first shortly. My name is Renata Rocha and I am a Master-student 'Media, Culture and Society'. As a final project for this study I have to write a thesis.

My research project is about Black Pete and the role Facebook played in the attitude change:

- With attitude change is meant the change in opinion from supporting Black Pete to being against the figure as we currently are familiar with him in Dutch society.
- You changed your attitude in such that you even became a member of a Facebook group that is rooting for change of the Sinterklaas festivities by altering at least the appearance of Black Pete.

During the interview I would like to experience your attitude change concerning Black Pete, so please take me on your journey.

- In the first part of the interview I would like to know how you experienced the Sinterklaas festivities in the past and how you shifted your attitude from there on.
- Because I am interested in the role of Facebook specifically for my research, the second part of the interview contains questions about Facebook and what role this medium has contributed to your attitude change about Black Pete.

The interview is totally anonymous, so no names will be mentioned. There are no right and wrong answers; just tell me what you feel and think. Everything you say will be handled delicately and respectfully. This interview will approximately take an hour.

If you do not mind I will record this interview so that I can listen back to the answers on my questions later. Before I turn it on, may I ask you your age? Okay, let's begin with the first part of the interview about your attitude change from supporting to opposing Black Pete.

Introduction: Before the attitude change

1. Where were you born? And where were you raised?
2. How would you describe the Dutch Sinterklaas festivities?
3. Have you celebrated Sinterklaas as a child? If so, when and how? Also, with whom did you celebrate Sinterklaas?
4. Growing up, when did you first become familiar with Sinterklaas's helpers –his Black Petes? What were your thoughts about those helpers?

The moment of attitude change

5. Have you, back then, ever questioned Black Pete's appearance? Why (not)?

6. Can you tell me the story of why, when and how you started changing your mind about Black Pete?
7. Probe question of previous question: How does the change in attitude about Black Pete coincide with your norms and values as a person?
8. Could you describe the exact moment you changed your mind about Black Pete? What happened in that moment? If not, how would you describe the process of changing your mind about Black Pete?
9. How would you describe that moment or process of attitude change? For example, were you immediately aware of your attitude change or do you feel, looking back at it, the attitude change quietly snuck in?

Now we will talk specifically about Facebook. I would like to know if and, if so, how Facebook played a role in your attitude change about Black Pete.

Components of Facebook and attitude change

10. What do you use Facebook for in general? What do you use Facebook for particularly in relation to Black Pete?
11. What role do you feel the social networking site Facebook played in your attitude change about Black Pete?
12. How would you say the following elements of Facebook helped you think about Black Pete differently:
 - a. Newsfeed
 - What type of Facebook-messages have caught your eye? Could you give any examples?
 - b. Status updates (text and photos) from your friends
 - What kind of arguments on Facebook have lead you to oppose the figure of Black Pete?
 - Have you ever engaged in conversations on Facebook about Black Pete? If so, could you give an example?
 - (News) articles and other links, shared or liked by your friends
 - c. Inbox
 - d. Own wall on your Facebook-profile
 - e. Facebook groups
 - I see that you are a member of Facebook group PMO/BPD, how did this group help you to think differently about Black Pete? And what about other anti-Black Pete

Facebook groups, like 'Zwarte Piet is Racisme' and 'Zwarte Piet Niet'? What motivated you to become a member of that (/those) group(s)?

- Have you ever been a member of pro-Black Pete Facebook groups, like 'Pietitie' and 'Zwarte Piet is geen Racisme'? Could you define how these pro-Black Pete Facebook-group(s) have helped you change your attitude about Black Pete?

f. Invitations to events

g. Advertisements

13. Are there other Facebook elements that I did not mention but that have influenced your attitude change about Black Pete?
14. Do you think you would have changed your mind about Black Pete when Facebook as a new medium would not have existed? Why (not)?
15. What elements other than Facebook do you feel also played a role in your attitude change about Black Pete?

Sources for attitude change

16. How do you follow the discussion about Black Pete? What are your sources?
17. Where do you receive most of your information about Black Pete from: offline, on Facebook or elsewhere online? Why?
18. Was there a passive and an active phase in your information search about Black Pete? On Facebook?
19. How active on Facebook are you in promoting your change in attitude about Black Pete?

Reflection

20. How do you currently perceive Black Pete? How come?
21. To what extent have your attitude change and your membership of an anti-Black Pete Facebook page changed the way you currently celebrate Sinterklaas?
22. Do you have an idea how we could solve the Black Pete-issue in the Netherlands? If so, what role could Facebook play therein?

Closing question

23. Is there anything else you would like to say about these subjects? If so, please do so.

This was the interview.

Again, thank you very much for your cooperation and for your useful answers!

Appendix 2. Interview guide (Dutch)

Allereerst wil ik je hartelijk danken voor je tijd en medewerking, en zal ik me meteen even voorstellen. Ik ben Master-studente Media, Culture and Society en daarvoor moet ik als eindopdracht een scriptie schrijven. Mijn onderzoeksproject gaat over gedragsverandering omtrent Zwarte Piet en welke rol Facebook heeft gespeeld om tot die verandering te komen:

- Voor mijn onderzoek wordt met gedragsverandering een verandering in mening bedoeld van eerst geen kwaad in Zwarte Piet zien naar tegen de figuur zijn zoals die nu is.
- Daarbij ben je zelfs zo tegen Zwarte Piet gekeerd dat je lid bent geworden van een anti-Zwarte Piet Facebook-groep dat oproept de Sinterklaasvieringen op z'n minst te veranderen qua uiterlijk van Zwarte Piet.

Tijdens het interview wil ik je reis omtrent Zwarte Piet leren kennen, dus neem me vooral mee op die reis.

- Tijdens het eerste gedeelte beginnen we met hoe je de Sinterklaasvieringen hebt ervaren in het verleden om het vervolgens te hebben over hoe je van mening bent veranderd.
- Omdat ik voor mijn onderzoek specifiek geïnteresseerd ben in Facebook, hebben we het in het tweede gedeelte over Facebook en hoe dit medium al dan niet bijgedragen heeft aan je gedragsverandering met betrekking tot Zwarte Piet.

Het interview is geheel anoniem, dus er zullen geen namen genoemd worden. Er zijn geen goede of slechte antwoorden; vertel me gewoon wat je denkt en voelt. Met alles wat je zegt zal op een gevoelige, respectvolle manier worden omgegaan. Dit interview duurt ongeveer een uurtje.

Dit interview wordt opgenomen zodat ik de antwoorden op mijn vragen later nog eens kan naluisteren. Mag ik voor ik 'm aanzet even je leeftijd? Okay, dan starten we nu het interview met het eerste gedeelte over je gedragsverandering van voor naar tegen Zwarte Piet.

Introductie: voor de gedragsverandering

1. Waar ben je geboren? En waar ben je opgegroeid?
2. Hoe zou je de Nederlandse Sinterklaasvieringen omschrijven?
3. Heb je Sinterklaas gevierd als kind? Zo ja, wanneer en hoe? En met wie heb je Sinterklaas gevierd?
4. Wanneer heb je als kind als eerste kennis gemaakt met de hulpjes van Sinterklaas –z'n Zwarte Pieten? Wat waren je gedachten als kind over deze Zwarte Pieten?

Het moment van gedragsverandering

5. Heb je destijds ooit getwijfeld aan Zwarte Piet's uiterlijk? Waarom (niet)?

6. Kun je me het verhaal vertellen over waarom, wanneer en hoe je je gedachten omtrent Zwarte Piet begon te veranderen?
7. Na vorige vraag wanneer niet beantwoord: Hoe kan je gedragsverandering over Zwarte Piet verklaard worden door je eigen normen en waarden?
8. Kun je het exacte moment beschrijven over hoe je van mening bent veranderd over Zwarte Piet? Wat gebeurde er op dat moment? Zo niet, hoe zou je het proces omschrijven waarin je je gedachten veranderde over Zwarte Piet?
9. Terugkijkend, hoe zou je het moment/proces van gedragsverandering omtrent Zwarte Piet omschrijven? Was je je bijvoorbeeld meteen bewust van je gedragsverandering of overkwam het gevoel je opeens, achteraf gezien?

Nu gaan we het specifiek over Facebook hebben. Ik wil graag weten in hoeverre Facebook een rol heeft gespeeld bij de verandering van voor/neutral naar tegen Zwarte Piet.

Componenten van Facebook en gedragsverandering

10. Waar gebruik je Facebook over het algemeen voor? Waar gebruik je Facebook vooral voor met betrekking tot Zwarte Piet?
11. Welke rol vind jij dat sociale netwerksite Facebook heeft gespeeld in jouw gedragsverandering omtrent Zwarte Piet?
12. Hoe vind jij dat de volgende elementen jou hebben geholpen anders te denken over Zwarte Piet:
 - a. Newsfeed/nieuwsoverzicht
 - Welk type Facebook-berichten zijn jou vooral opgevallen? Kun je enkele voorbeelden geven?
 - b. Statusupdates (teksten en foto's) van je Facebook-vrienden
 - Wat voor argumenten op Facebook hebben er zoal toe geleid je tegen Zwarte Piet te keren?
 - Ben je ooit conversaties op Facebook aangegaan over Zwarte Piet? Zo ja, kun je een voorbeeld geven?
 - (Nieuws)artikelen en andere links, gedeeld of geliked door je vrienden
 - c. Inbox
 - d. Je eigen wall op je profielpagina
 - e. Facebook-groepen
 - Ik zie dat je lid bent van de Facebook-groep PMO/BPD, hoe heeft deze groep je geholpen anders te denken over Zwarte Piet? En hoe zit het met andere anti-Zwarte

Piet Facebook-groepen, zoals 'Zwarte Piet is racisme' en 'Zwarte Piet niet'? Wat motiveerde je om lid te worden van deze groep(en)?

- Ben je weleens lid geweest van pro-Zwarte Piet Facebook-groepen, zoals 'Pietitie' en 'Zwarte Piet is geen racisme'? Zou je kunnen aangeven hoe deze pro-Zwarte Piet Facebook-groepen je hebben geholpen je gedrag omtrent Zwarte Piet te veranderen?
 - f. Uitnodigingen voor evenementen
 - g. Advertenties
13. Zijn er nog andere Facebook-elementen die ik niet heb genoemd die wel invloed hebben gehad op je gedragsverandering?
 14. Denk je dat je van mening was veranderd over Zwarte Piet als een nieuw medium als Facebook niet had bestaan? Waarom (niet)?
 15. Welke elementen hebben voor jouw gevoel naast Facebook ook een rol gespeeld in je gedragsverandering omtrent Zwarte Piet?

Bronnen voor gedragsverandering

16. Hoe volg je de discussie omtrent Zwarte Piet? Wat zijn je bronnen?
17. Waar haal je je meeste informatie vandaan over Zwarte Piet: offline, op Facebook of elders online? Waarom?
18. Was er een passieve en een actieve fase in je zoektocht naar informatie over Zwarte Piet? Op Facebook?
19. Hoe actief op Facebook ben jij in het promoten van je gedragsverandering over Zwarte Piet?

Reflectie en toekomst

20. Hoe zie je Zwarte Piet op dit moment? Waarom?
21. In hoeverre hebben je gedragsverandering en je deelname aan een anti-Zwarte Piet Facebook-groep de manier waarop jij Sinterklaas tegenwoordig viert veranderd?
22. Heb je een idee hoe we het Zwarte Pieten-probleem in Nederland zouden kunnen oplossen? Zo ja, welke rol zou Facebook daarin kunnen spelen?

Slotvraag

23. Is er nog iets wat je zou willen zeggen over deze onderwerpen? Zo ja, hoor ik het graag.

Dit was het interview.

Nogmaals ontzettend bedankt voor je medewerking en voor je waardevolle antwoorden!

Appendix 3. Overview of anonymous respondents

<u>Interview</u>	<u>Via</u>	<u>Alias</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Descent</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1	BPD ¹²	Leila	Female	30	Moroccan	Family doctor
2	BPD	Fleur	Female	42	Dutch	Lecturer
3	PMO ¹³	Mike	Male	35	Dutch	Blogger
4	PMO	Richard	Male	45	Surinamese	Film producer
5	PMO	Thelma	Female	35	Dutch	Housemother
6	PMO	Nicki	Female	45	Indonesian-Dutch	Lecturer
7	BPD	Beatrice	Female	39	Dutch	Unemployed
8	PMO	Emma	Female	29	Dutch	School teacher in Ghana
9	PMO	Julia	Female	20	Gambian-Dutch	Student in England
10	PMO	Roos	Female	43	Dutch	Mediation, coach
11	PMO	Maria	Female	33	Cape Verdean	School teacher
12	BPD	Koen	Male	31	Dutch	Security personnel
13	PMO	Steffi	Female	34	Dutch	High school teacher
14	PMO	Rita	Female	28	Antillean	Administrative personnel

¹² BPD = 'Black Pete, Zwarte Piet: The Documentary': <https://www.facebook.com/blackpetethedoc?fref=ts>

¹³ PMO = 'Pietmakeover': <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pietmakeover/1485255905084399?fref=ts>

Appendix 4. Codebook

Results	Codes	Examples
Positive attitude toward BP ¹⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often celebrated Sinterklaas including BP - Played BP - Positive depiction of BP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “[Sinterklaas] was one big party for me” (R2) - “I really really grew up with it. More than that, I even played BP...” (R3) - “I thought of BP as the joker, like a clown I would say” (R11)
Existing personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norms and values - Self-conscious: morally good - Empathic toward other people’s feelings - Understanding and open - Social offline and on Fb¹⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “It’s actually a very small thing that is being asked [to change the color of BP]..., and why do you treat fellow human beings like this, that’s what bothers me most” (R7) - “I think I was more open to other perspectives. (...) That has to do with my personality, but perhaps also with my educational background and profession” (R6) - “I think I’ve been having that from an early age on, that in any case I’m standing neutral against other people and that I’m interested [in them]. Rightly so I always chose social professions” (R7) - “I’ve been active on Fb for years already” (R1)
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Own negative experiences - Gut feeling - Family and friends - Specific moments vs. process - Profession - International perspectives - Fb - Television 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “In Surinam I really experienced that I wasn’t served, because I was white and that to me, it happened only once, but that was one time too many!” (R8) - “It also was very instinctive, I just felt that [BP] was wrong” (R11) - “At some point [the discussion about BP] was shown more on the news [on television] and on Facebook” (R7)
Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other people are really hurt by BP - Racism exists, also in the Netherlands: white privilege - Parenthood - On Fb people show their true inner feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Hooo wait... this is really hurting my friends. I thought ho, I... quit [playing BP]” (R8) - “There’s just this whole thing concerning white privilege, that’s... that’s present everywhere” (R8) - “Because of my friend’s reaction I changed my mind [about BP] and because of all the excesses [on Fb] I was pushed toward the negative side more and more” (R5)

¹⁴ BP = Black Pete

¹⁵ Fb = Facebook

		- "Later a Fb page popped up filled with comments about things like 'go back to your own country'. On Fb everybody always writes about the right of freedom of speech..." (R9)
Attitude change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental discomfort - Changed negative association about BP - Opting for change of BP, offline and on Fb - Joining anti-BP groups on FB - Strengthened by Fb: information, groups, newsfeed, online discussion possibilities, ability to share own opinion and to read other opinions, more diverse voices than in traditional media, examples of Sinterklaas celebrations with alternative BP's, interconnectivity, racism online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I received a lot of news via Fb..., because I think that if you watch the news nowadays you know nothing" (R7) - "Because of my friend's reaction I changed my mind [about BP] and because of all the excesses [on Fb] I was pushed toward the negative side more and more" (R5) - "The good thing about Fb is that it's not a face-to-face confrontation, because if somebody would have said what was said in a discussion on Fb to my face... then, out of emotion, I would shout a lot of bad things or I would cry" (R6) - "On Fb all that aggression, all those people showing pictures of children next to BP like 'Look, my child is happy' and that's when I think this is just sickening" (R4)