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The Revolutionary Force of Facebook in the United States of America:  
The Social Media Network that is Impacting American Society,  
Politics and Economy.

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## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this dissertation to my Husband Hafid and my children Ilies and Rayane. Without their patience, understanding, and support the completion of this work would not have been possible.*

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## **Abstract**

One of the most important revolutionary results of computational technology is the advent of web 2.0 and social media networking sites in particular. They are new means to interact with one's dear connections. But what is also noticed is that such platforms are starting to affect other domains like politics, economy, education and journalism. Indeed, social media are used during American electoral campaigns to reach potential voters. Businesses, also, are taking advantage of the different services that social networking sites are offering to reach customers and provide them with their latest brand's information. In education, American universities and colleges created their official pages on such platforms to communicate with students, parents and teachers. Journalists are as well utilizing social media pages to defuse real time news and give the opportunity to users to debate a wide range of issues. Furthermore, Facebook started to exercise its influence on other America's vital sectors like local politics, foreign policy and economy.

Facebook is among a long list of social media networking sites that is used worldwide. This revolutionary site has indeed changed the way people interact with one another and socialize. It has succeeded to transform this huge world into a tiny one where geographical frontiers do not exist; a long lasting and continuous communication has thus become possible. On another hand, and according to many statistics, Facebook is Americans' favorite social media networking site. Americans use it to communicate with friends and family members, to follow a celebrity or a political figure, to date online, to build virtual identities and to satisfy many other needs. Facebook is tremendously having a great impact on American society.

Therefore, this dissertation has the purpose of analyzing the effects of Facebook on the American society, politics and economy. Four important themes are tackled in four chapters respectively. The first one deals with the definition of social media in general and Facebook in particular. It as well highlights Americans' different uses of Facebook. The second chapter mainly focuses on Facebook's impact on American society. Other psychological consequences of Facebook's use are also presented. The third chapter's main concern is Facebook intervention in American local politics and foreign policy. Facebook's participation in American surveillance programs is discussed in this chapter. The forth and last chapter examines social media's capitalist nature. Moreover, big data that is derived from networking sites like Facebook as a new business value is going to be examined.

**Key Words:** Social Media, networking, Web.02, Facebook, Facebook's features, Society, identity negotiation, American teenagers, narcissism, cyber bullying, self-esteem, American politics, electoral campaigns, President Barack Obama, American foreign policy, public diplomacy, Surveillance programs, American economy, American socioeconomic values, Americanization, Mark Zuckerberg, capitalism, Facebook's privacy terms and settings, targeted advertising, profit and surplus, dataveillance, economic surveillance, big data.

## م ا خ ص

واحدة من أهم التطورات التي أحدثت ثورة في تكنولوجيا الحاسوب تمثلت في ظهور ويب 2.0 وبشكل خاص مواقع شبكة وسائط التواصل الاجتماعي. هي عبارة عن وسائل جديدة للتفاعل مع روابطنا المفضلة. إلا أننا نلاحظ أيضا أن مثل هذه المنصات بدأت في التأثير على مجالات أخرى مثل السياسة والاقتصاد والتعليم والصحافة. في الواقع يتم استعمال وسائط التواصل الاجتماعي خلال الحملات الانتخابية الأمريكية للوصول إلى الناخبين المحتملين. تستفيد شركات الأعمال هي الأخرى من مزايا مختلف الخدمات التي تقدمها مواقع شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي للوصول إلى الزبائن وتقديم أحدث المعلومات حول علاماتهم التجارية. في مجال التعليم، أنشأت الجامعات والكليات الأمريكية صفحات رسمية خاصة بها على هكذا منصات من أجل التواصل مع الطلاب والأولياء والمعلمين. يستعمل الصحفيون صفحات شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل جيد لنشر أخبار في زمن حقيقي وإعطاء الفرصة للمستعملين لمناقشة مجال واسع من القضايا. فضلا عن ذلك، بدأ فيسبوك في ممارسة تأثيره على القطاعات الحيوية الأخرى لأمريكا مثل السياسات المحلية، السياسة الخارجية والاقتصاد.

يعتبر فيسبوك واحد من قائمة طويلة من مواقع شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي التي تستعمل عبر العالم. هذا الموقع المحدث لثورة في هذا المجال غير فعلا في الطريقة التي يتفاعل بها الناس مع بعضهم البعض ويقومون بروابط اجتماعية فيما بينهم. نجح فيسبوك في تحويل هذا العالم الشاسع إلى عالم بالغ الصغر لا توجد فيه أي حدود جغرافية؛ فلقد أضحت إجراء اتصالات دائمة ومتواصلة. من جهة أخرى، ووفقا للعديد من الإحصائيات، يعتبر فيسبوك موقع شبكة التواصل الاجتماعي المفضل لدى الأمريكيين. يستعمله الأمريكيون للتواصل مع أصدقائهم وأعضاء عائلاتهم، لتتبع شخصية مشهورة أو سياسية، لبناء هويات افتراضية وللوفاء بحاجيات أخرى كثيرة. لفيسبوك تأثير بالغ على المجتمع الأمريكي.

بناء عليه، يتمثل موضوع هذه الأطروحة في تحليل آثار فيسبوك على المجتمع، والسياسة والاقتصاد الأمريكي. سنتطرق إلى أربعة مواضيع هامة في أربعة فصول متتالية. يقدم الفصل الأول تعريفا لوسائط التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل عام ولفيسبوك بشكل خاص. وهو يسلط الضوء بشكل مسهب على مختلف استعمالات الأمريكيين لفيسبوك. يركز الفصل الثاني بشكل أساسي على تأثير فيسبوك على المجتمع الأمريكي. سنتطرق أيضا إلى النتائج النفسية الأخرى لاستعمال فيسبوك. أهم ما يتطرق إليه الفصل الثالث هو تدخل فيسبوك في السياسات المحلية والسياسة الخارجية لأمريكا. يناقش هذا الفصل مشاركة فيسبوك في برنامج المراقبة والتجسس الأمريكي. يدرس الفصل الرابع والأخير الطبيعة الرأسمالية لوسائط

التواصل الاجتماعي. علاوة على ذلك سنقوم بدراسة بيانات ضخمة مشتقة من مواقع الشبكات مثل فيسبوك كقيمة أعمال جديدة.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

وسائط التواصل الاجتماعي، الشبكات، ويب 2.0، فيسبوك، خصائص فيسبوك، المجتمع، تفاوض الهوية، المراهقين الأمريكيين، حب الذات (النرجسية)، المضايقة الإلكترونية، احترام الذات، السياسات الأمريكية، الحملات الانتخابية، الرئيس باراك أوباما، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، الدبلوماسية العامة، برامج المراقبة، الاقتصاد الأمريكي، القيم الاجتماعية الاقتصادية الأمريكية، الأمركة، مارك زوكربيرغ، الرأسمالية، شروط وإعدادات الخصوصية لفيسبوك، الدعاية المستهدفة، الربح والفائض، مراقبة البيانات، المراقبة الاقتصادية، البيانات الضخمة.

### **Résumé**

L'un des résultats les plus révolutionnairement marquants de la technologie informatique est l'avènement du web 2.0 et des médias sociaux, en particulier en ce qui concerne les réseaux sociaux. Ils constituent de nouveaux moyens d'interagir avec nos connexions préférées. Mais ce que l'on remarque également c'est que ces plates-formes commencent à affecter d'autres domaines comme la politique, l'économie, l'éducation et le journalisme. En effet, les médias sociaux sont utilisés pendant les campagnes électorales américaines pour atteindre les électeurs potentiels. Les entreprises, aussi, profitent des différents services que les sites des réseaux sociaux offrent pour atteindre des clients et leur fournir les dernières informations sur leurs marques ou modèles les plus récents. Dans le domaine de l'éducation, les universités et autres établissements d'enseignement supérieurs américains ont créé leurs pages officielles sur ces plates-formes pour communiquer avec les étudiants, les parents et les enseignants. Même les journalistes utilisent les pages des médias sociaux pour diffuser des nouvelles en temps réel et donner la possibilité aux utilisateurs de débattre d'un large éventail de questions. En outre, Facebook a commencé à exercer son influence sur d'autres secteurs vitaux de l'Amérique comme la politique locale, la politique étrangère et l'économie.

Facebook fait partie d'une longue liste de sites de réseaux sociaux qui est utilisée partout dans le monde. Ce site révolutionnaire a en effet changé la façon dont les gens interagissent et échangent les uns avec les autres. Il a réussi à transformer ce vaste univers en un espace limité où les frontières géographiques n'existent pas ; une communication continue sur une longue durée est ainsi devenue possible. D'autre part et selon de nombreuses statistiques, Facebook est le réseau social préféré des Américains. Ceux-ci l'utilisent pour communiquer avec leurs amis et les membres de leur famille, suivre une célébrité ou une personnalité politique, se connecter à des sites de rencontres en ligne, se construire des

identités virtuelles et satisfaire de nombreux autres besoins. Facebook a un impact extrêmement marquant sur la société américaine.

Par conséquent, ce mémoire a pour objectif d'analyser les effets de Facebook sur la société, la politique et l'économie Américaine. Quatre thèmes importants sont abordés dans quatre chapitres respectivement. Le premier porte sur la définition des médias sociaux en général et de Facebook en particulier. Ainsi, il met aussi en évidence les diverses utilisations que font les Américains de Facebook. Le deuxième chapitre se concentre principalement sur l'impact de Facebook sur la société américaine. D'autres conséquences psychologiques liées à l'utilisation de Facebook y sont également présentées. Le troisième chapitre se préoccupe principalement de l'ingérence de Facebook dans la politique américaine locale et la politique étrangère. La participation de Facebook à des programmes de surveillance américains est discutée dans ce chapitre. Le quatrième et dernier chapitre examine la nature capitaliste des médias sociaux. Par ailleurs, le phénomène des grandes masses de données émanant des réseaux sociaux comme Facebook et engendrant une nouvelle valeur commerciale va être examiné.

**Mots clés:** réseaux sociaux, réseautage, Web.02, Facebook, caractéristiques de Facebook, société, négociation de l'identité, adolescents américains, narcissisme, cyberintimidation, estime de soi, politique américaine, campagnes électorales, le président Barack Obama, politique étrangère américaine, diplomatie publique, programmes de surveillance, économie américaine, valeurs socio-économiques de l'Amérique, américanisation, Mark Zuckerberg, capitalisme, paramètres de confidentialité et conditions d'utilisation de Facebook, publicité ciblée, bénéfices et excédents, surveillance des données, surveillance économique, grandes masses de données.

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### General Introduction

Our modern times are characterized by the proliferation of various networks that are utilized to share information and content globally. Making social connections via social media has altered the meaning of socialization as well. Social Media has indeed revolutionized the way we interact and stay connected to the world. However, some scholars argue that social media started to exist as soon as people started to make use of the internet to share information and communicate with each other. The problem with the old platforms is that they were “technology-driven” and their use compelled people to have knowledge in the field. So the number of individuals using these platforms was not important. Later technology progressed and gave birth to a new form of social media that does not require any technological knowledge and people started to use such platforms’ services comfortably.

Facebook is one of these social media networking sites (SNS) but it is proved by many scholars and statistics that it is the most popular site and the most used one on a global scale. This platform was created for globalization purposes and to make people better understand each other, excluding all the distance barriers that impede their long-lasting and instantaneous communication. In fact, the world becomes a global village thanks to social networking sites like Facebook. Furthermore, Facebook is not only a simple site or a wealthy company that is making money, but it is as well a computerized human-based virtual world that is deeply embedded into our lives. For that reason, Facebook is attracting researchers’ attention to introduce new areas of research in social media studies.

What has been noticed recently is that Facebook is impacting The United States of America socially, politically and economically. From a social perspective, Facebook gives the possibility for users to engage in self-presentation identity and interact with their members. What makes online interactions distinct from face-to-face conversations is that people can express themselves and disclose amounts of personal information that were never revealed in offline social interactions. Facebook is indeed a perfect social networking site that provides a virtual sphere in cyberspace in which American youth can build identities.

Politically, Facebook impacts American political landscape and provides American election campaigns with innovative strategies to reach citizens and influence their voting choices. Facebook is playing as well a crucial role in the American Surveillance projects. It

has provided American security agencies with valuable data about potential terrorists and criminals.

Facebook, on another hand, is not only one of U.S Security Agencies's surveillance tools, it is engaged in what is known as Economic surveillance and or else dataveillance. As a matter of fact, Facebook with its imperialist and capitalist traits is generating profit and making American business benefit from the new services that Facebook is offering. It is permanently engaging in the surveillance of users' information and sells it to advertisement companies which create targeted advertising for Facebook users.

While the study of the connection between Facebook and American society, politics and economy is our prime objective, we have realized that in order to achieve our goals we need to shed light on the historical context of Facebook and its most salient features. Therefore, we will endeavor to deal with the different uses of Facebook. As we aim at revealing Americans' use of Facebook, taking into consideration variables like age sex, and income.

The primary question related to the topic is: What role does Facebook play in reshaping the 21<sup>st</sup> American society, politics and economy? So, in order to answer this question, one must break it down into series of secondary questions which will be addressed in detail within this dissertation. The secondary questions that flow from the former research question are as follows: What changes is Facebook bringing to the American society? What American beliefs and values does it carry? How is Facebook used and perceived in the United States? Is Facebook making American citizens more interested in political matters than before? Is Facebook a modern American surveillance instrument? What is the impact of Facebook on American local politics as well as foreign policy? What economic dimension does Facebook have? How does Facebook help American economy prosper?

The first reason that encouraged me to tackle this topic is my overwhelming curiosity to reach answers to many fundamental questions about the role of Facebook in our lives and how the U.S.A uses it to control the world. One has mainly considered the role that Facebook played in some Arab countries' revolutions. Consequently, it is this extraordinary effect of Facebook over Arab countries' political landscape that has led me to search and figure out the social, cultural and political values that the United States is trying to impose on the world via Facebook. The second reason that highly motivated me to deal with this topic is the fact that this research will give me the opportunity to interpret many of the political issues that

dominate American foreign policy as well as society. As a result, as a researcher in American civilization, this study will enable me to broaden my knowledge about American politics and society, in addition to improving my career prospects.

There are several assumptions made while studying this topic. The primary assumption is that the use of Facebook in the United States of America resulted in social, political and economic changes for various categories of Americans. Or expressed differently, the use of social media in general and Facebook in particular is referred as a turning point because it has led to important social, political and economic changes. Additionally, Facebook has a profound impact on American society in the sense that it remarkably altered how Americans communicate with each other.

The second assumption is that Americans' privacy is protected by the American Constitution. However, many Americans contend that their privacy is invaded by Facebook. Therefore, the conviction is unshakable that Facebook is in contrast with the American constitution and is in a way on another threatening Americans' confidentiality. In other words, the advent of Facebook may be in contradiction with the American constitution.

The dissertation will also assume the impact of Facebook on American local politics which can be summed up as follows: First, thanks to Facebook Many American citizens are now more politically engaged and active than they used to be. Second, the adoption of any policy requires public opinion assessment. In fact, American politicians are now using Facebook to gauge American public opinion concerning any issue. The policies that are going to be embraced should respond to Americans' preferences. On another hand, the traditional use of polls to measure public opinion is now replaced by Facebook, among many other social media networks. Obama's use of Facebook in the presidential elections of 2012 as a major campaign strategy is a prominent case in point.

The present dissertation assumes Facebook's impact on American foreign policy that can be summarized in the following points: first, Facebook is a modern American instrument to dominate the world. Second, 9/11 attacks have compelled the U.S to find another way to collect as much information as possible about the world and the Arab world in particular. Facebook is, consequently, a tool par excellence to understand the Arab mindset, especially the new generation. In other words, the U.S aims at avoiding another 9/11 by using Facebook as an information gatherer. Third, Facebook plays an important part in American surveillance

system through which the U.S can be informed in advance about what other countries plan to do.

The last assumption is that economically, Facebook is helping the American economy boom and flourish. Through advertising on Facebook, the U.S is making profit and creating jobs for many Americans. On another hand, it is worth noting that the world's oil is in danger. The shortage in this natural resource will hinder American economic success and prosperity. Therefore, the U.S is looking for other resources to get rid of its dependence on black gold. What we call "Big Data" is the future U.S oil and Facebook is one of the most salient "big data's providers. To draw it clearer, the "big data" collected from Facebook is the most recent avenue for productivity, prosperity and enterprise. Facebook is, indeed, the recent global marketplace.

Our main objective of this area of research is a meaningful interpretation of the impact of Facebook on American society, politics and economy. To achieve our goals, we will essentially use analytical research as an approach to our work. We will analyze Facebook's privacy settings and terms and figure out whether it is designed in accordance with the American constitution. Also, we are going to use data from the Pew research Center<sup>1</sup> as well as many other studies' data and analyze their results. On another hand, we will analyze Facebook's features and tackle the extent to which American traditional and socioeconomic values are revealed through them. Archives like the American constitution and other laws are going to be used. Accordingly, the mode of discussion of this work will be scientifically argumentative, and may on occasion seem political.

The present work will unfold itself into four chapters. The first chapter will deal with the nature of social media and its impact on people and Americans in particular. Different definitions of social media suggested by remarkable scientists are going to be presented. History of social media will be as well a part of this work. The main concern of this part is to expose the different circumstances that surrounded the creation of social media. Additionally, we will show that social media started to be used in different domains. The next point will define Facebook, the story that was behind its launch as well as the different uses of Facebook. The Last point is concerned with Americans' use of social media. Accordingly, we

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research (pew Research Center).



will search the extent to which social media satisfies Americans' social, political as well as economical demands.

The impact of Facebook on American society will be examined in chapter two. We will try to deal with the impact of Facebook on Americans' privacy. We will as well figure out the extent to which American teens unveil their personal information on Facebook. The other point that will be highlighted in this section is American teens' mastery of their profiles' settings, making use of different techniques to protect their privacy online. The last section of this chapter will be devoted to the undeniable role that Facebook is playing in American society. We will show that Facebook is helping many American teens build their identity. The last part of this chapter will be dedicated to enlisting the different psychological consequences of Facebook's use. The analysis will comprise: Facebook and self-esteem, Facebook and cyber bullying, Facebook and narcissism as well as Facebook and racism.

The third chapter will deal with Facebook and American political arena. The first part of this chapter will deal with how Facebook and its different services are enabling American youth to stay politically engaged. The second point will tackle the role of Facebook during American elections campaigns. The campaign of Obama will be used as an illustrating example to make into evidence that Facebook is becoming a new tool for campaign mobilization and fundraising. The second section of this chapter will concern Facebook and American foreign policy. Its main aim is to explain how Facebook is utilized to make American public diplomacy facilitate the conduct of American foreign policy. The last section of this chapter will concentrate on Facebook's involvement in American surveillance programs. Snowden's leaked slides of NSA's surveillance programs are going to be the arguments of this section.

The last chapter will deal with Facebook and American economy. The first part will tackle the impact of American socioeconomic values on the design of Facebook and its functionalities. It will contend that Facebook is a carrier of American values that are spread worldwide. The first point will give an overview of American traditional values. Then we will deal with the role of the internet is having to internationalize these values. The last point is going to examine the American socioeconomic values that are heavily shaping Facebook's features. The second section of this chapter will shed light on capitalism in the age of social media. Additionally a definition of economic surveillance is going to be provided. The second point's concern is Facebook's participation in reinforcing American economic surveillance. It is in this part that Facebook's privacy settings are going to be examined. The

last part will tackle the new business of big data. We will show, through this part, that the data collected from social networking sites like Facebook are the brand new raw materials that many American businesses are benefiting from in order to generate profit.

### Introduction

The major concern of chapter one will be to study the nature of social media and the impact it is exercising on people's lives. The investigation will be achieved by dealing with the definitions of social media that are provided by influential scientists and computer specialists. In fact, the definitions that are going to be presented in this work will give the reader the most important features of social media.

It is reasonable to state that many scholars have recently embarked into social media research. Not only do they provide social media definitions, but they also reveal its history and its different uses. Accordingly, one's main purpose in this chapter is to shed light on the circumstances that surrounded social media creation, and how social media can be beneficial in many domains.

An overview of social media is indeed crucial to one's study. However, it is not possible to deal with every single social media networking sites. One has, therefore, selected Facebook as a case study of this research. A clear definition of this service will be provided in the first point. One may also reveal the story that was behind Facebook's launch. This section will be concluded by a focus on how Facebook is used. The reasons behind users' utilization of Facebook will be unveiled.

In this chapter, statistics about Americans' use of social media and Facebook in particular is going to be essentially enclosed. The aim will, by no means, be to reveal important data concerning Americans' use of social media, and to seek to what extent social media networking sites like Facebook have any impact on Americans' lives. On the other hand, the researcher aims at tackling the extent to which social media sites meet Americans social, political as well as economical demands. This is not going to be easy as it may seem at first glance. One may, however, endeavor to carry out an insightful analysis about motivations for Americans' use of social media.

## 1.1 An Overview of Social Media

Social media in general, and social networking sites in particular, are tremendously attracting the attention of academics and researchers interested in their features and reach. They examined social media networking sites for the sake of understanding the practices, culture ramifications and the sites' meaning, without neglecting the users' engagement with them. In the first point of this chapter, one would try to define social media and deal with its different formats. The history of social media sites from the early beginning day they were launched till today is going to be part of the researcher's investigation. The use of social media, on the other hand, is also going to be tackled. One may mean by the use "who" uses social media and "what fields" are benefiting from the various advantages that social media features are offering.

### 1.1.1 Social Media Definition

The recent years have witnessed an emergence of a great number of networks used to share information to a universal phenomenon providing more information, content and social connections than ever before. The most interesting and outstanding evolution in the history of the internet has been social media, " a web – based made of dialogue that uses a wide array of tools, websites and other applications to encourage communication between individuals, corporations, non – profits and other organizations"(Baswell 01).

Social media has become very closely related to our lives because it allows us to stay connected to the world. Every platform that enables people to share information, photos, and news with other individuals is considered as one of the various social media platforms that exist now. Different definitions of social media have been provided by many scholars and dictionaries. Meriam- Webster dictionary online defines social media as a "*form of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)*" (Taprial and Kanwar 08). Wikinvent, on the other hand, defines social media as

Websites that allow users to share content media, etc. Common examples are the popular social networking sites like Friendster, Facebook, MySpace ,etc. Social media also includes youtube, photoBucket, Flickr, and other sites aimed at photo and video sharing. News aggregation and online reference sources,

examples of which are Digg and Wikipedia, are also counted in the social media bucket. Microblogging sites such as twitter can also be included as social media (Taprial and Kanwar 08).

Boyd and Ellison discuss social media in their article *social media network sites. Definition history and scholarship* and defined social networks as “ *web- based services that allow to (1) construct a public or semi-public profiles within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site*” (213).

All the previous definitions of social media state that any site that enables its users to stay connected to other individuals instantaneously and gives them the possibility to form communities and share photos, videos or any other content is undoubtedly counted among the long list of social media networking sites. Indeed, an online social media networking site is a site that (1)plays the role of a “hub” for people to have relationships with others;(2) provides an important range of tools for individuals for the sake of building a sense of community with each other, share information to the common information sphere, and participate in many other social activities; (3) and possesses components that enable people to design their online profiles, reveal their connections, receive their friends activities’ notifications, be very active members of groups or community activities, and control their profile privacy settings (Pallis, Zeinalipour-YAzti and Dikaiakos 216).

Researchers have also expanded considerable efforts in dealing with the reasons behind social media’s development. One of the most important advances in technology that led to social media improvement is the birth of the web search engine and web2.0 as well. This latter gathers and analyzes information on websites and forms an index of every word existing in reachable computer files. People, therefore, can have access to information using any keyword. The other leading force that led to social media development from a small scale-network to a large- scale network is the emergence of peer-to-peer networking services. This basically means that instead of depending on central computers to save and give out information, people can directly get connected to anybody’s computer on the web and this became possible thanks to the new services of the peer-to-peer networking (Blossom 24).

John blossom defines social media differently because he focuses mainly on users' empowerment. According to him, social media is “*any highly scalable and accessible communications technology that enables any individual to influence groups of other individuals easily*” (Blossom 29). He means by this definition that social media publications can reach large proportions of people all over the world. In addition, the other dimension of social media that is of high importance is its accessibility and free of charge services. On the other hand, Social media enables an individual or a group of people to communicate with other groups of individuals, the fact that results in emphasizing peer-to-peer communication, one-to-many communication and many-to-many communication. Stated differently, any person can share information with one person or a group of people. It is as well possible for groups of people to share content with other groups simultaneously. Since the information published on social media can be accessed by a large number of people without limitation, one may, therefore, assert that social media impact on our lives is beyond recognition. It is also possible to argue that social media plainly enables the influence of any groups of individuals over others (Blossom 31). Blossom names this category of people “content nation”. When we talk about content nation, we refer to those who publish any content on the net that can be videos, messages, and articles. These publications are in various instances very influential and are having a substantial impact on every world's society ( Blossom 06).

As far as social media types are concerned, Kaplan and Haenlein in their article *Business Horizons*, classified social media as follows:

- 1- Collaborative projects (e.g., wiki media).
- 2- Blogs and micro blogs( e.g., Twitter).
- 3- Content communities( e.g., Youtube).
- 4- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook).
- 5- Virtual game world (e.g., World of warcraft).
- 6- Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second life).

And according to Fred Cavazza, an internet specialist, social media has six primary uses that are clearly demonstrated in the following figure.

# Social Media Landscape 2016



Figure 1.1.: Social Media Landscape 2016.<sup>1</sup>

FredCavazza.net

Each social media site focuses on a given social engagement. As a way of example, Facebook users are interested in communications with other connections and sharing content (videos, photos, or simply messages.) LinkedIn users are more professionally oriented, giving importance to business relationships and job-related information. The relationship between the users of this site is less casual and more businesslike. Twitter, on the other hand, focuses on sharing content, conversing with others and building reputation (Baswell). In addition, some social media networking sites are used by diverse audiences; however, other sites attract users based on a common language, or shared racial, sexual, religious nationality-based identities. Moreover, Social media networking sites also vary in their features and tools.

<sup>1</sup> Source: "Social Media Landscape 2016". 2016. Web 24 November 2016. <https://fredcavazza.net/2016/04/23/social-media-landscape-2016/>

Attraction, as a result, depends also on the extent to which these sites are able to offer new information, communication tools and features like mobile connectivity, photo/ video sharing and blogging (Boyd and Ellison 210).

Moreover, when a person joins a social networking site, he/she is asked to answer various questions about their age, location, and interests. The majority of the sites allow their users to upload a profile photo. Some other sites enable their users to make their profiles more appealing by adding multimedia content or altering their profile's look. Other sites, like Facebook, give the possibility for their users to add applications that bolster their profiles. The visibility of the profile varies from one site to another. In some platforms, profiles are visible to anyone by default. LinkedIn allows its users to view other profiles based on whether a given person has a paid account. MySpace gives the choice to its users, whether they want their profiles to be public or viewed by friends only. Facebook's privacy settings are somehow different. Users of the same network can view each other's profile by default unless one of the users decides not to give permission to view his profile by the members of his network. Accessibility and visibility are one of the most crucial elements that make social media networking sites vary from one another (Boyd and Ellison 213).

In addition to accessibility, speed, interactivity and longevity are also substantial properties of social media. One means by accessibility that social media is not difficult to use. Anyone on the net can have a profile and a blog and can use it anywhere and anytime using any gadget. Speed, on the other hand, denotes that the user can communicate with his friends as soon as he finishes writing his publications and his friends' feedback through comments can be made right after. Indeed, *"you can have a dialogue, which is almost in real time."* Additionally, interactivity refers to the fact that the user cannot only interact with his friends, but he can also discuss many issues and ask questions. Another feature of social media is that the user can evaluate products and ask others' opinion about it. Last and not least, longevity signifies that the content published on social media stays for a long time. On another hand, it can be changed and updated anytime. For example, if the user feels that the opinion posted yesterday about a given issue is no longer what he really feels, he can change it or delete anytime and anywhere. (Taprial and Kanwar 29) John Blossom shares the same stand concerning the features of the revolutionary technology advance "social media" by saying *"Technology now allows any person on the planet to publish things to virtually any number of people in any place at any time at little or no personal cost"* (Blossom 01).



What distinguishes social media from any other traditional media is that it is used via the internet. Anyone can communicate with any other person without being obliged to pass through a central point. However, traditional media like newspapers, radios and many other examples of such media do depend on a central checkpoint to allow the publication of its content. Wikis are one example of the developed software that allows anyone to share and publish websites and content, and this is done without any necessary technology mastery. The thing that makes such software so unique is that people can share their knowledge and work collectively on a given website without worrying whether the content added is well presented or not. Weblogs are also another example of the newly launched publishing tool “*that helped to accelerate social media into a global publishing phenomenon*” ( Blossom 23).

Some definitions of social media have been provided throughout this point, and one may assert that a clear image of what is meant by social media has been reached. However, a complete understanding of social media requires tackling the history of social media which is going to be the main concern of the next point of this section.

### **1.1.2 Social Media History**

The term social media is widely used nowadays. 90 % of online users do use the term social media because they are unable to name all the social media platforms that exist now. The reason behind this phenomenon is the rapid evolution and development of social media (Taprial and Kanwar 06). So the term social media comprises all the kinds of sites that enable instantaneous socialization.

Social media emerged as soon as people started to use the internet as a means for sharing information and communicating with each other. However, the first platforms were more “technology” driven and their use required significant knowledge in the field. Therefore, the number of people using such platforms was limited. After a period as technology has developed, social media platforms have witnessed an important progress and users, without any technological knowledge, have had the ability to use the services of any social media site. This view is shared by Taprial and Kanwar in their book *Understanding Social Media* stating “*This was a turning point in the history of internet, making the internet technology all inclusive, where people were no longer silent spectators to the content being dished out to*

*them. Now they could create their own content, share it with others, respond to people, collaborate with them and more”*( Taprial and Kanwar 06).

As it is mentioned earlier, one cannot proceed in this area of research without unveiling the history of social media evolution from its early beginnings to the present. The evolution started from the Phreaking era and continues till the present:

1- Phreaking(1950's –early 90's):

The culture of people who are interested in telecommunication is called phreaking. The spread of this phenomenon started when a 07 years old blind boy Joe Engressia discovered that by whistling at 2600 Hertz he could use phone switches and disable the security of the network and succeeded also to make free phone calls. That was made thanks to whistling into the phone receiver. He was able to use a method or a technique called “blue boxing” that was reinforced by an electronic ability to produce sounds affecting the telephone companies’ switches. Later, two other kids Steve wozniak and Steve Jobs built similar boxes that also produced sounds (tones) helping people make unpaid phone calls. The so-called “codelines” were the first step towards “blogs/podcasts” in which information was left as a voice mail ( Taprial and Kanwar 09).

2- Bulletin Board system (1979-1995):

B.B.S was improved by Ward Christensen and, it became used by the public in 1979. This system was very simple and a three-dimensional one. It was a kind of a server that was attached to personal computers and connected to a modem. If one wanted to use this system, he would have to login in order to download or upload content, receive or send messages, and play online games. Social discussions were also possible. However, the B.B.S was only black and white (Taprial and Kanwar 10).

Usenet, developed by Jim Ellis and Tom Truscott in 1980 was another “internet discussion system”. The user could send messages to one person as he could send them to a group of people called “newsgroup”. According to Taprial and Kanwar, “ *Usenet differed from the B.B.S in that there was no central server or dedicated administrator, but a distributed network of various local servers that communicate with each other*” ( 10).The Bulletin Board system paved the way for what is known now the World Wide Web and social networked services that became widely used by the late 1990's.

3- Commercial online services (1979- 2001):

The term Commercial online services came to existence to refer to the computerized communication services through which its members could download files, use chat rooms, as well as electronic mails. “CompuServe” and “The Source” were the first commercial online services, and the owners were large corporate companies. “Prodigy Communications Corporation” was another example of this kind of online commercial services that was rated the second company after “CompuServe.” Both companies provided the first forms of online social interactions. Later in 1983 “America Online” was founded, and it was very popular because it enabled people to access the internet with all its services and advantages (Taprial and Kanwar 13).

4- The World wide Web – 1991:

It is a fact that the internet as a network existed since the 1960’s; the World Wide Web, however, became accessible to the public only on the 06<sup>th</sup> august 1991. Indeed, in the early years of the 1990’s, the WWW was available only to universities, governments and military institutions. It was only in the mid -1990 that people started to get advantage of unlimited online services from their homes.

5- Instant Messenger (1983-1996):

Instant communication developed from a simple telephone conversation to chatting and discussions by the means of computers. Instant messaging system was developed, and people have been able to send and receive messages wherever they are online. It became part of MSN, Hotmail, Yahoo and Gmail services.

6- Social media sharing- 1999:

Social media sharing started to exist as long as people started to have the ability to share videos, photos and files using email, forums and instant messenger. The sharing concept developed and became known as “file sharing” via Peer-to-peer applications. This Kind of applications gave the opportunity for users to download music and get access to various uploaded files. Napster was one example of file sharing applications thanks to which people started to download an unlimited number of songs and many other files. However, after a short period it was declared illegal to deal with such applications. “BitTorrent” technology replaced Napster’s applications, and it became legal thanks to a peer-to-peer file sharing protocol. Through “BitTorrent”, users could download any type of data from the net. Ultimately “the Pirate Bay” came to existence as a new avenue for any kind of “Social media distribution” (Taprial and Kanwar 15-16).

7- Social media networking (1990-2008):

The conviction is unshakable that people loved the way Internet was designed because it enabled them to network, download and upload any type of files and share them with their friends. Social networking became very popular and various sites were launched to provide advanced networking features. Sites like Classmates.com succeeded to connect people and enable them to have virtual meetings. For this reason, it became very popular in the United States of America. Another Site Called SixDegrees.com, which was launched in 1997, was not as popular as Classmate.com, but was one of the first sites that enabled its users to create profiles and groups, as well as send invitations to other people. The principle of the site was “no person is separated from another by more than six degrees” (Taprial and Kanwar 18).

In 2002, social networking witnessed an important advancement with the launch of the site “Friendster”. The site had the same purpose as that of Sixdegrees.com: making people connected in the form of a circle of friends. Indeed, it succeeded to have more than 90 million active users from Asia. It is still active till today. In 2003, other social networking sites like MySpace, linkedIn and Facebook came to existence. Specific Media LLC and the pop Star Justin Timberlake founded MySpace and became very popular in the U.S.A. MySpace is like any other social networking site. It allows its users to create profiles with original backgrounds, put music players and photos and of course communicate with other users. Evidence suggests that MySpace is a social networking site that is directly serving DJ’s and musicians (Blossom 1,2). According to Taprial and Kanwar, MySpace surpassed 351 million U.S visitors in august 2011. However, Facebook succeeded to take the lights in 2008 and became the most visited social networking site. LinkedIn, which was also launched in 2003, is the first business colleague- based social networking site. It encourages users to have a profile that is in reality an online résumé. Users in such networking sites can communicate with their colleagues, get advantage of recommendations, and can be introduced to new connections expanding their professional network. The site is still working till today, and more than 100 million people use it. With regard to Facebook, it was founded and launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his classmates. In the beginning, the access to the website was restricted only to Harvard University students. The sites’ membership was expanded later to other colleges in the United States of America. In 2006, the site spread worldwide and was open to the general public. Anyone of age 13 and over with an email address could have a Facebook

account. In 2011, it reached 800 million active users. On Facebook, anyone could and can until now create profiles, add friends and organize groups of common interests. Recently, Facebook is adding a great number of applications and games to its platform to customize one's profile even further (Blossom 3). As Taprial and Kanwar put it *"Since its inception in 2004, Facebook has evoked in many ways making it much more user-friendly, accessible and a fun place to connect with long-lasting friend or even strangers with common interests"* (20).

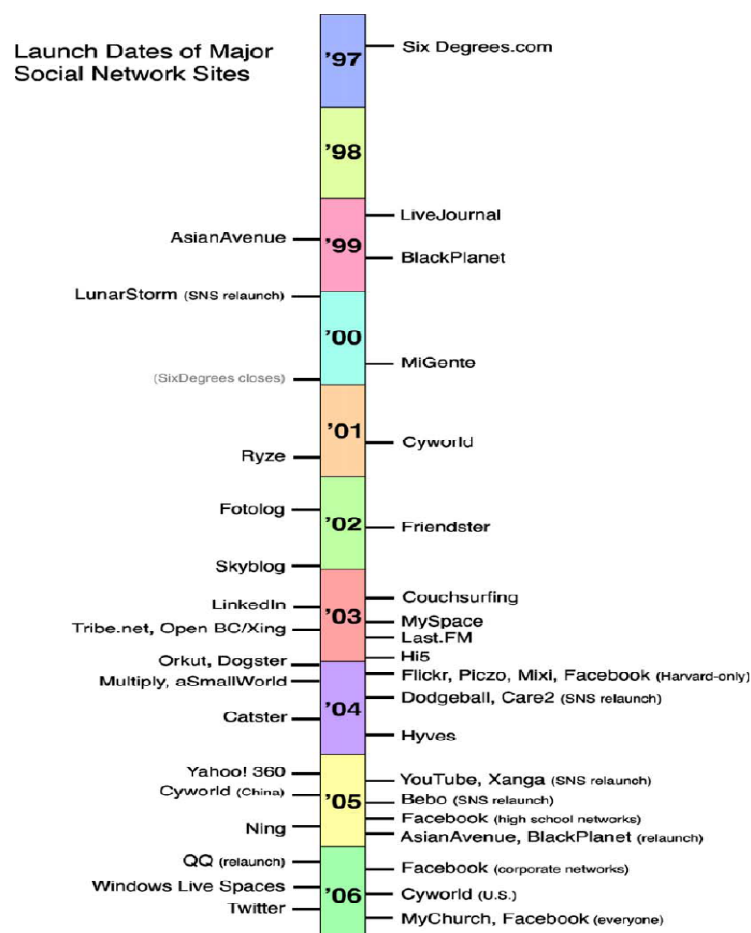
In addition to the formerly mentioned networking sites, various other sites were launched to meet the same purpose of keeping people connected in real-time. In 2004, a site named Digg was launched as an interest-based social media site because it was primarily destined to allow its users to share information and web-based links. The site is still active today. YouTube, launched in 2005, started as the most popular video-based social networking site. People on this site can create profiles and upload videos of their own creation. YouTube, on the other hand, actively participated in the success of a great number of musicians in the music industry. The site, of course, is still operational till to date. In 2006, another revolutionary site was launched: Twitter and it is still working till now. It started as a micro blogging social media site. Twitter has become a web phenomenon where *"celebrities are followed by fans on the site and even followed in real life based on their tweets"* (Hershey 5). Twitter is also used by news agencies for breaking news because users utilize the site to update the world on all the events that happen in their lives. Users, therefore, are considered journalists rather than ordinary users. In 2011, Google succeeded to create a similar network to Facebook called G+. People on this network can add and invite friends. On the other hand, users with similar hobbies and interests can form groups. G+ witnessed a great success from the very first day of its launch. Nowadays, it is trying to attract business people by creating business pages. It succeeded to have 25 million users in August 2011. Now there is a clear competition between G+ and Facebook, and both of them are trying to be a top used networking site ( Taprial and Kanwar 21).

#### 8- Blogs (1994-1999):

One cannot leave this discussion of social media history without a mention of the emergence of blogs in the social media realm. The word weblog was first used by Jorn Barger in 1997. In the early days of Blog's existence, blogs were not easy to use and required technology knowledge. However, it developed in later times and anyone

on the net could have a blog that was used and updated easily. However, blogs in the beginning were just a kind of personal journals that were used and updated by their users whenever they log in. After a given period, internet developed and so did the blogs. Their power became noticeable because the users relied heavily on them to express their viewpoints. More than that, the user “ *could interact directly with its readers in a form of comments that could be posted below the posts*” (Taprial and Kanwar 23). Additionally, blogs “*have evolved into a powerful social media tool that just cannot be ignored today*” (Taprial and Kanwar 23).

It is worth noting that many other social networking sites were launched simultaneously with the previously mentioned sites in this dissertation. The following two figures provide insightful timelines of online networking sites.



**Figure 1.2.: Timeline of the Launch Dates of Many SNSs and Dates when Community Sites Re-Launched with SNS Features<sup>2</sup>.**

<sup>2</sup> Source:Ellison and Boyd. *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship*; onlinelibrary.Wiley.com, 2008; Web; November 2013, p 212.

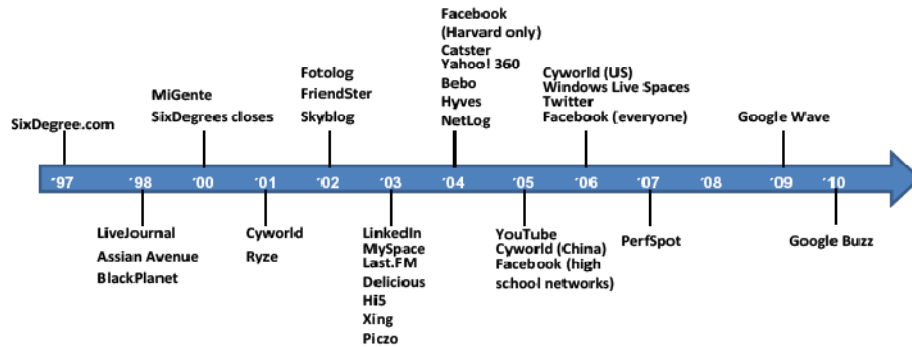


Figure 1.3.: Timeline of Online Social Network Sites<sup>3</sup>.

What is noticed in the previous figures is that each year witnessed the launch of a new social networking site. This confirms the rapid proliferation of this kind of sites. The more people use such sites, the more other social networking sites emerge. What is noticed as well is that a sort of competition have arisen between such platforms.

It is no surprise that advances in software allowed any person to publish and get access to any content without being an expert in computing and technology. The other secret behind the success of the various social networking sites is that such sites promote the vision of a “human-centric web”, making people and their interests the most important source of information (Pallis ,Zeinalipour-Yazti and Dikaiakos 214). How people use such sites and for what purposes are the topics of the next point.

### 1.1.3 Social Media Usage

When social media appeared, their users were classified under six Cs: Crowd, connectors, customizers, collectors, commentators and creators. First, the individual starts to get used to the social media sites. He starts observing and understanding how the site functions. Later, when he gets used to it, he starts using it by having his own profile and interacting with other members. After a given period, he becomes a customizer. He begins using other platforms as well as getting advantage of the advanced features of social media sites. He becomes a collector because he starts collecting and classifying all the things he prefers on social media. Then he becomes a commentator. He is ,then, an active member, commenting all what he notices and reads all what is published on social media sites. The

<sup>3</sup> Source: Pallis ,Zeinalipour-Yazti and Dikaiakos, Online Social Networks: Status and Trends; Springerlink.com; 2011, web, 23 January 2014.p214.

highest stage of the social media Cs is that of the creators. The user effectively contributes to the social media world. He unveils his opinion through blogging and creates content that benefits the online space. Through time, he becomes an expert in his chosen domain (Shah Sananda 9).

John Blossom in his Book *Content Nation* Classifies social media publishers into three main categories: Personal publishers who use social media for social or professional reasons, media publishers who get advantage of social media to create and provide online services, and enterprise publishers referring mainly to organizations that use social media sites to boost their internal as well as external communications and accomplish their important missions (Blossom 60).

It appears worthwhile to examine Blossom's types of social media publishing. He mainly classifies publishing into six main kinds. The first type is Personal publishing that refers to weblogs in the first place. It enables one user or a group of users to publish his/or their point of view to many other people. This kind of publishing helps individuals share opinions with others; those points of view are often based on the users' personalities and knowledge. The second publishing type is called collaborative publishing. Wikis are the best example of such a kind of publishing. It allows a group of people to work in a collaborative way in order to publish documents and articles on well-designed websites. The site Wikipedia is one example of the already mentioned type of sites. In addition, such publishing gives the possibility to many people to work on a common document which is going to be used by a great number of other people or the publishers themselves. This kind of publishing, on the other hand, results in creating a sort of debates over a common document, building "collaborative skills". The next type is known as social-network publishing. It enables people to have profiles with personalized features and information; it allows them also to create their own network of friends. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter..., etc. are examples of this kind of publishing. Additionally, the publishing goal of these platforms is to enable people to find other people of the same interests, to allow users to create profiles, to give them the possibility to share content like photos and videos with other users within the same network, and finally to boost the users' ability to acquire knowledge based on members' discussions (Blossom 34).



The author of *Content Nation* tackles other aspects of publishing that are feedback and discussions. This kind of services enables people to have valuable information about a given topic or a product through discussions and online published feedback. One example of this kind of websites is Amazon.com. It allows its members to publish reviews of books and reviews of many other products sold on this website. The main goal of this kind of publishing is to share information, as well as points of view about a given a product with many other users (Blossom 35). The fifth type of publishing is Aggregation and filtering which refers to the collection of people's shared information and content from different sources. This kind of publishing on one hand makes it easier for people to create an aggregated set of content which is communicated to others either privately or publicly, “[builds] an appreciation of a person's ability to provide valuable insights through choosing other people's content” on the other hand (Blossom 35). The last type of publishing is called personal markets and marketing. In Sites providing such services, individuals have the possibility to promote their markets and services to others. As a way of example of such sites is Ebay<sup>4</sup>. The publishing goal of such services is to give the opportunity to anybody to notice people who are interested in a particular product or topic; hence, the creation of markets for such products is possible (Blossom 36).

It is possible, therefore, to argue that social media's features may act as a powerful bridge between organizations and people. Similarly, companies and businesses are benefiting from social media in the sense that they are getting advantage of the great deal of value to be found in the “commons”, the sphere of publishing that gives the possibility for people with different occupations and from various types of enterprises to work together and share ideas and solutions. These cross-role and cross-organization meeting places created thanks to social media allow collaboration, problem-solving, and meetings providing a new sense of common purpose (Blossom 148).Brunsell, Eric and Horeji do take the same stand in their article *Science 2.0* and say

Social networking in the digital age has evolved far beyond its moon-landing era roots of simple computer communication. It now encompasses wireless up-to- the second reports, an exponentially expanding supply of resources and information, and limitless ways to collaborate and share. By networking

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<sup>4</sup> Ebay is an online market place where trade on local, national and international basis is enabled.

socially, we can move beyond the simple consumption of information and become contributors to the online body of knowledge. (Brunsell, Eric, and Hereji 01).

Accordingly, social media has become essential for business. Indeed, business people can interact directly with customers and answer their questions and educate them about the brand. Through social media, companies can get marketing and advertising campaigns for any kind of their products. Baswell confirms one's line of reasoning and claims

Savvy organizations recognize that social media gives them a uniquely personal way to connect to their consumers. A one-way, professionally managed public relations monologue is no longer the only choice that businesses, organizations and non-profit have. Nowadays, smart business create online communities where customers and clients can exchange innovation

Shah and Sadananda referred to businesses' use of social media and asserted "*business can use the social media to build long lasting relationships with customers by engaging them at a level comfortable to them, answering queries, understanding their problems and helping them out. They can use the social media as an effective communication tool to provide support, care and service to customers directly at their fingertips*" (Taprial and Kanwar 43). However, if any business wants to make its campaign successful on social media, it will have to follow "VULP" model of engagement:

- 1- Building value for the community.
- 2- Allowing users to general content.
- 3- Listening to people's point of view.
- 4- Seeking user participation (Shah and Sadananda 02).

It is true that the VULP model establishes businesses' engagement with social media. However, the question that comes to one's mind is: what advantages does any business get from social media? The advantages are numerous, and one can unveil some of them. The first advantage is online branding which denotes that any brand can have a page with its logo, colors and name on social media. The following figure exposes clearly online branding.



**Figure 1.4.: Online Branding<sup>5</sup>.**

The other advantage is marketing. Through social media, many products can be promoted. Businessmen or companies in general use Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and blogs for marketing and advertising purposes. Building relationships is another advantage companies can benefit from. Customers need to feel they are crucial for the prosperity of the business. This can be accomplished only if the firm or the company listens to their customers' complaints by either entering directly through a page on a social media site or by leaving messages on the companies' site through forums, surveys and polls (Taprial and Kanwar 43). This view is shared by Hershey because, in her paper "Social Media Revolution", she says "By participating in two-way communication outlets with consumers and stakeholders, companies show they care, giving rise to a strong sense of corporate social responsibility. Instead of seeing business as soulless, revenue-searching entities, they are being looked at as 'friends' or reachable organisms that care about their constituents" (Hershey 07).

An extensive body of evidence indicates that social media is the "new word of mouth". Through social media, customers can spread news and information about a given brand or business. Simple people, on social media, can easily and automatically become "marketing agents" (Taprial and Kanwar 43). What we call Online reputation management is what social media can also offer to businesses. Social media can affect any business reputation either positively or negatively. On the other hand, business "can use online promotions through new content creation, get involved in the social networking, promote existing positive content

<sup>5</sup> Source: Taprial, Varinder, Priya Kanwar. Understanding Social media. Varinder Taprial and Priya Kanwar and Bookboon 2012. Bookboon. Print 23 december 2013.

*and build social profiles in order to manage their online reputation and keep it positive”* (Taprial and Kanwar 44). Continuing in that vein, Community building benefits businesses in the sense that it is possible on social media to create communities focusing on a particular brand. Those communities discuss, promote and market any product using social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn Google+....., etc. As a matter of fact, *“building communities help the business by providing them with a highly targeted group of customers to whom they can market markets or services”* (Taprial and Kanwar 45). Last and not least, lending a human face to the business is a top advantage social media can ever offer. People are more likely to be interested in a product that is well known on networking sites than the ones that do not even exist on any of the social media sites (Taprial and Kanwar 45).

One can conclude from the aforementioned ideas that businesses and companies are taking advantage of social media features. Indeed, social media

- 1- Promotes open communication between employees and management.
- 2- Enables employees to share project ideas and work in teams effectively, which helps in sharing knowledge and experiences.
- 3- Promotes better content such as webcast and videos than just simple text.
- 4- Helps to communicate collaboratively between current and potential customers in receiving feedback, product definition, product development, or any form of customer service and support.
- 5- Encourages members or part of the company’s employees to become members of a well- recognized community.
- 6- Becomes a good venue for discussions and becomes a classic goal of marketing and communication, but companies must ensure that their employees are adhering to the rules and etiquettes of social media (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouane, Watson and Seymour 08).

Social media does not only impact businesses, but it also affects people’s carriers and professional lives. This can be vividly noticed from a comparison of social media sites to traditional job-seeking sites. In fact, websites like Monster and CareerBuilder .com are not receiving as much attention from the job seekers as Facebook, and LinkedIn are. Social media allows people to have trusted relationships within networks instead of simply inserting information into a database. Stated differently, social media is not a commodity, it also enables people to gain more value in the context of relationships. Companies and business

organizations, on the other hand, are starting to comprehend the power of social media and use it as a tool for recruiting workers (Blossom 154).

Social media can be also used for educational purposes. As a way of example, a school in Los Angeles created a page on Facebook called “Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD) that aims at enabling the school’s principal and other school leaders to send updates to the teachers, the students and the students’ parents. It is also used as a tool for fundraising the school when enough people are engaged with the page and start to like it (“Social Media’s New Direction”).

It is no surprise that social media is used for intelligence collection ends. Indeed, the government in the United States of America is using social media to capture terrorists. In April 2006, a classified “Intellipedia” wiki site was created by the office of the director of the National Intelligence (ODNI) to enable 16 intelligence agencies to work in collaboration and to effectively share classified information. The powerful collaborative tool “Intellipedia” succeeded after more than 80 updates to confirm that the 2006 plane crash into New York city was not a terrorist act (Digiammarino, Frank, Trudeau and Lena 02). There would appear to be food for thought in the words of Blossom because he plainly states that “*Intellipedia is still growing after two years of deployment, helping the CIA and other U.S intelligence agencies to combine their knowledge on key topics rapidly and to eliminate barriers to the flow of information*” (Blossom 140).

Paradoxically, other scholars explore the negative impact of social networking sites. They claim that people are more and more becoming dependent on the net and social media networking sites in particular. In fact, social media sites affect people at work, at school and influence society as a whole. Continuing in that vein, the widespread use of technology and social media sites leads to “antisocial and house dwelling” citizens whose social skills are lacking. Scholars argue that social media causes distractions in the workplace and employers, therefore, lose a lot of money. As far as schools are concerned, students are exposing themselves too much to social media networking sites than it should be, and scholars noticed that students are discussing mundane topics like politics on social media networking sites rather than interacting in real human discussions. People are, therefore, misled by the term social networking, and they think that they are socially interacting when they are, in fact, not. Chatting on the computer for hours with a friend or a group of friends is not necessarily called

socialization. The more people get dependent on the net, the more they forget how to interact with the real world they belong to. And the ones who are unable to express themselves in real human interactions find the digital world the most suitable space for self-outspokenness. Evidence suggests

someone's online personality may be completely different from their offline persona, causing chaos when their two 'lives' intersect. The negative impact of social networking sites is evident in online dating when the couple meets face-to-face for the first time. Commonly their personalities do not match their self-written descriptions. It is easier to type what someone wants to hear rather than telling the truth.(Ybarra and Mitchell )

It is neither possible nor logical to tackle every single social networking site into detail. The researcher's main interest is in Facebook that is the most popular SNS worldwide. Therefore, the next section of this work will be dedicated to defining Facebook, revealing the history of its launch and shedding light on its use.

### **1.2 An Overview of Facebook**

As it has been mentioned in the previous point of this chapter, a great variety of social media networking sites emerged in the last 12 years. Facebook belongs to the long list of these sites, but it has remained up-to-date the most popular website and platform worldwide. Without any doubt, the revolutionary networking site Facebook is inspiring researchers to introduce new avenues in social media studies. Facebook is not only a simple site or a wealthy company that is making money, but it is also a computerized human-based virtual universe that is deeply anchored into our lives. In this second point of this chapter, the researcher tries to define briefly Facebook. Then the history of its creation is provided for the sake of revealing under which circumstances Facebook came to existence. The third part, which is the concluding one, sheds light on the different uses of Facebook and criticism it faced because of young people's addiction to it, including various other reasons.

### 1.2.1 Defining Facebook

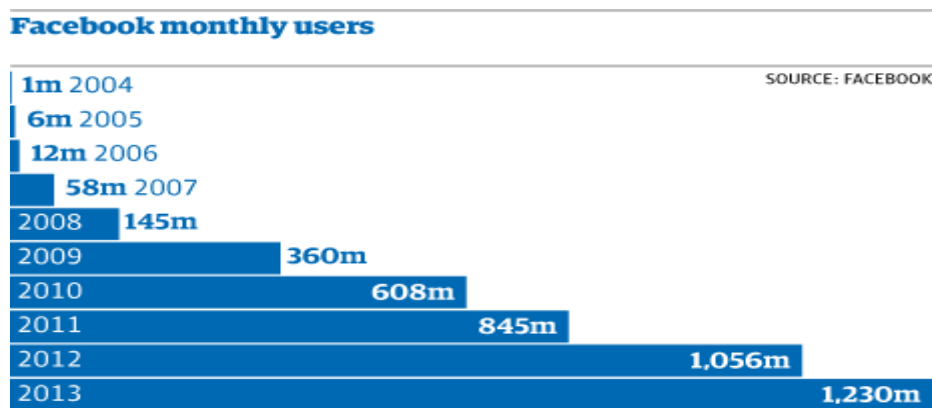
Facebook is a free social networking service and website that was created in 2004 By Mark Zuckerberg, a sophomore at Harvard University and his three classmates Eduardo Severin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. Facebook was named after the publications that some Harvard students handed out to other students in the beginning of the year for the sake of knowing each other better, known as Facebook (“Beginning of Facebook”). These paper student directories contained information about each student such as hometown, high school, major, interests, a photo and a snapshot of the student’s summer hobby. Zuckerberg did not understand why such a facebook was not put online and added “*During sophomore year, I decided that Harvard needed a facebook. It didn’t have one, so I made it.*”(“Facebook” 01) In the beginning, Facebook was opened only to Harvard students. Mark Zuckerberg and three other Harvard students launched Facebook in order to keep students connected via the net and to have the opportunity to know each other better. In just a few months, Facebook became very popular and was accessible to other U.S colleges. One may, therefore, state that Facebook was mainly designed for college students. And Facebook’s core values are “openness” and “connectedness”(Fattal 01).

The main reason behind the creation of such a networking site was the quest for globalization, making people better understand each other, and eliminating any distance barriers that hinder any continuous, long-lasting, and instantaneous communication. Facebook is indeed a “distance killer”. The whole world is transformed into a global village thanks to Facebook and many other social media networking sites. This view was confirmed by Horváth when she stated that Facebook “*Strengthened the world’s global village character. Geographical distances play none ever-increasing role in our lives given the possibility of being in the same cyberspace, whatever our geographical location might be. Maintaining contact does not depend on geographical proximity anymore, what does count, though, is internet availability*” (Horváth 86).However, one may argue that Facebook is taking the lead on social networking worldwide. Gajewski confirms one line of reasoning by stating that Facebook is a new layer of the internet. He manifestly asserts that

instead of perceiving Facebook as a huge social network, one should rather recognize it as a new layer of the internet, providing completely new approach to internet communication. The layered structure of the internet allows creating new layers, and now Facebook seems to become the top one, determining to a

great extent the way we use computer mediated communication today (Gajewski 49).

In fact, in January 2009, Compete.com announced, after a study, that Facebook was the most popular and used social networking website worldwide. (Nagar, Contractor, Das, Arora) And According to Krivak based on comScore statistics, Facebook has more than 64 million users, 250000 new users everyday, 55000 high school college and work related- networks, more than 65 billion page views per month, more than half of the users are outside college and the quickest demographic of 25 and older. (Krivak 03)The following table illustrates clearly Facebook monthly active users from 2008 to 2013.



**Figure 1.5.: Facebook Monthly Users<sup>6</sup>.**

Additionally, Facebook's popularity is high in English-speaking countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Facebook's penetration in North America is ranked the most important one (69%), later come the Middle East (67%), Latin America (58%), Europe (57%), and Asia-Pacific (17%). (Nagar Et.al)

Moreover, Facebook is a convenient tool to keep in touch with friends and to remain up-to-date about their actions like a trip to another country. Whenever a user adds friends to his contact list on Facebook, he will be all the time notified that they are adding new things to their pages or updating their profiles. Also on Facebook one can join groups that share the same interests as his. Any Facebook profile is composed of various sections such as

<sup>6</sup> Source: Sedghi Ami. "Facebook: Ten years of social networking, in numbers". February 2014. Web 11 October 2014. [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)



information, friends, status, photos, notes, friends in other networks, notes, groups and the wall (yadav) On Facebook the user can:

- 1- Have a profile page that has numerous features. These features help them to keep in touch with their friends or simply get to know new friends. To keep up on what other users do, the user has to add information about himself or tag his friends.
- 2- Add photos and photo albums. The user can make the site personal by adding photos and photo albums to his profile page. Indeed, Facebook “*is a very personal piece of technology*” (Snead and Parish). Facebook is one of the few networking sites that gives the possibility for its users to upload an unlimited number of photos, with only one restriction which is 60-photos per album. Indeed, it is stated in the article *Facebook 101* that “*Facebook is the No.1 photo sharing application on the web, with more than 14 million photos uploaded daily. In comparison, Flickr, the No.2 photo sharing application, averages 3 million to 5 million uploads a day.*”(Kridav 02). However, in May 2009 the photo album limit has been increased to 200 photos per Album. (Nagar, Contractor, Das, and Arora) Users assign limitation to their created albums and other users with right credentials are allowed to view them and post comments on them. (Yadav)
- 3- Have a blog thanks to Facebook blog feature.
- 4- get advantage of the many advanced design feature of the site itself.
- 5- Find friends, old and new ones. Finding new friends can be done by browsing profiles. The Facebook browse feature enables its users to find friends and sort them by age, gender, interests and many other things.
- 6- Can find old friends. This can be done by inserting the user’s email address and email password into this tool. It will attempt to find email addresses in the user’s email address book to inform him if any of his friends has already a Facebook profile.
- 7- Be a member of common interest groups. Joining such groups enables the user to meet new friends who share the same interests as his. Whenever he signs up, he can participate in the discussion board of the group. The user, on another hand, can be kept up to date on every single thing happens in the group thanks to the user’s editing page. And there are two types of groups: a normal group and a secret group. These groups can be used for educational purposes and can also be a space for “closed discussions”.(yadav)
- 8- Chat using Facebook Instant messaging.

9- Comment on blogs and profiles. (“the beginning of Facebook”)

10- Get advantage of the Facebook’s ‘events’ feature which enables its users to organize and plan different kinds of events. Such a feature is used a lot by colleges and universities to plan events before hand and find out those who are over. It stays one of the most popular Facebook feature. (Yadav)

If we refer to Facebook as a company, its headquarters is in Manlo Park, California (Facebook Site). As far as a ownership is concerned, Prior reports claim that Marck Zuckerberg owns 24%, Accel partners owns 10%, Digital Sky Technologies owns 10%, Dustin Moskovitz 4%, Eduardo Severin owns 5% , Sean Parker owns 04%, Peter Thiel owns 3%, Greylock Partners and Maritech own between 1 to 2% % each, Microsoft owns 1.5%, Li Kashing owns 0.75%, the Interpublic group owns less than 0.5%, former as well as current Facebook’s employees own less that 1%, a tiny group of celebrities including Matt Cohler, Jeff Rothschild, Adam D’Angelo, Chris Hughes and Owen Van Natta own also less than 1% of the company. The remaining 30% belong to employees and an unknown group of celebrities and investors. Adam D’angelo, however, quit the company in May 2008 because he was no longer interested “in partial ownership of the company”.(Nagar Contractor, Das, and Arora).

Facebook won many awards such as its placement into the “Top 100 Classic Websites” granted by PC Magazine in 2007 and a “People’s Voice Award” from Webby awards that took place in 2008. Moreover, in 2010 Facebook was the winner of the Crunchie “Best overall Startup or product”. Lead411, on another hand, recognized it as one of the “Hottest Silicon Valley companies”. (Nagar, Et.al)

If we are to talk about financing, Facebook Primarily makes money from advertising. That is why users see banner ads on their Facebook profile pages. This plainly explains why Facebook offers services to its users for free. As a matter of fact, in august 2006 “*Facebook signed a three-year deal with Microsoft to provide and sell ads on their site in return for a revenue split*”(Yadav). Later the direct competitor of Facebook MySpace signed an identical deal with Google.The other deal that was of high import was the one with Apple, which was

intended to provide Facebook users with 10 million free iTunes samplers. The second aim of the deal was to give birth to Facebook credit cards.<sup>7</sup>

Year	Revenue	Growth
2006	\$52	—
2007	\$150	188%
2008	\$280	87%
2009	\$775	177%
2010	\$2,000	158%

**Table 1.1.:Facebook Revenues<sup>8</sup>.**

Facebook financing went through different stages, starting from the dorms of Harvard and the minor means Zuckerberg owned to prestigious companies' sponsorship. In the Summer of 2004, Zuckerberg and his friends lived in a rented house in Plato Alto, CA. The team worked day and night to redesign and relaunch Facebook, and started to utilize other servers to meet the demands of the rapidly growing website. Simultaneously, Zuckerberg met the co-founder of Napster and Plaxo, Sean Parker, and became friends. Parker informally provided the Facebook Company with valuable pieces of advice, and by the end of that summer he agreed to become the president of Facebook. Parker's addition was very beneficial for the company because this fact resulted in helping Zuckerberg hold meetings with important potential investors and entrepreneurs who were simultaneously involved with similar social networking companies ("Facebook" 06). Indeed, Facebook's investors were PayPal co-founder Peter Theil, Accel Partners, and Greylock partners. It received \$500,000 from Peter Theil, \$13 million from Accel Partners and \$25 million from Greylock partners. (Yadav ) In 2007, Microsoft succeeded to invest 246 million dollars for a 1.6% share in Facebook. Later Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-Shing invested in Facebook too.

Facebook was a success in American universities and colleges; however, it had to look for other markets in order to maintain its growth. As a matter of fact, in September 2005 Facebook decided to invade the U.S school market. College students were requested to send invitations to high school students to join the new networking site; those students, therefore, were able to send invitations to other high school students. However, Facebook faced two important obstacles: first, getting involved in the high school market increased the stakes concerning the security and privacy issues that handicapped social networking sites for years.

<sup>7</sup> When we talk about Facebook credit cards we talk about virtual currency in Facebook that is bought with real money to get virtual goods and services such as Facebook apps and games.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Nagar, Chandra, Rushin Contractor, Debasmitt, Das, and Arora Deeksha. "A report on Facebook". 24 April 2011. Web. 26 December 2013. www.Scribd.com.

Second MySpace was a real competitor of Facebook in the high school market and was successfully gaining ground in schools around the country. (Facebook 07)

In 2006, Facebook attempted to find other avenues for success. In April 2006, Facebook gave the permission to users from corporate networks to join the service. Corporations like Accenture, Amazon, Apple, EA, Gap, Intel, Intuit, Microsoft Pepsi, PWC and Teach for America were supported. Additionally, the company began to grow internationally by attracting colleges outside the United States of America. It succeeded to expand to India and at the Indian Institutes of technology and the Indian Institute of Management in particular. Later that time, the expansion reached German Universities and high schools in Israel. (“Facebook” 08)

By the end of September 2006, rumors spread that Yahoo! Was trying to buy the company. It was claimed that Yahoo! offered to buy the company at a price of around \$2 billion. This offer was based on estimation that Facebook’s revenues would grow to \$608 million in 2009 and would reach \$969 million by 2010. Yahoo’s attempt to acquire Facebook failed and *“in December 2006, CEO Mark Zuckerberg and board member Peter Thiel announced that the company was not for sale and that their focus was to continue to grow the company.”* (“Facebook” 10).

The previous point tried to give a brief overview of Facebook. In the next point the researcher attempts to shed light on the circumstances that surrounded Facebook’ creation, and the different factors that boosted its furtherance.

### **1.2.2 History of Facebook**

During the early days of 2000, Adam D’Angelo and Caltech, Zuckerberg’s friends, worked together to develop a social networking site called BuddyZoo. It was a popular website because it was used by a great number of people. However, D’Angelo after a given period of time decided to shut it down. Later, Marck Zuckerberg and his computer science friends worked hard on coding and studied the different factors that led to the failure of D’angelo’s website in order to develop a better future social networking platform. After that, Zuckerberg gave birth to CourseMatch that was a popular site. It enabled Harvard students to

have an idea about the courses that their friends were taking. On October 28, 2003, Zuckerberg wrote another site called Facemash the one that preceded Facebook. The site was a Harvard version of Hot or not and *“used photo compiled from the online facebook on nine houses, placing two next to each other at a time and asking users to choose the hotter person”*. (“History of Facebook”)

As it has been mentioned earlier, Mark Zuckerberg co-created Facebook and all happened in his Harvard dorm room. To reach his aims, Zuckerberg succeeded to hack into the computers of Harvard and to copy the houses’ private dormitory ID images and wrote Facemash. Interestingly, Facemash had 450 visitors and 22.000 photo-views only during the first moments online. However, after a few days the site was shut down by the Harvard university administration. Zuckerberg was accused of violating copyrights and invading privacy and thus he faced expulsion. Fortunately, the allegations against him were dropped. In January 2004, he started working on a new code for another website using the Facebooks that already existed in different residential houses. The concern with the old Facebooks was that students could use only the ones they belong to. For this reason, Zuckerberg wanted to found college-wide Facebook online, enabling students to communicate with others regardless of where they dwelled (“Facebook” 02). Zuckerberg was aware of the shortcomings of the traditional facebook and on February 2004, he launched thefacebook. Com. Its members were able to create a personal profile that contained personal information like phone number, address, instant messenger ID and email address. The profile contained also information about the users’ interests and current course schedule.

Nevertheless, Three Harvard Students Cameron Winklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss and Divya Narendra charged Zuckerberg of betraying them and making them believe he would give them a hand to give birth to a social network known as HarvardConnection.com while he was taking advantage of their ideas to create his own competing product. The three deceived students complained to the Harvard University Newspaper Crimson, and an investigation started subsequently. The Conflict, however, was settled afterwards. Facebook started to witness a great success. The site was used by 30 colleges and 150000 registered users. Zuckerberg was so busy to maintain the site that he neglected his studies. For that reason he called his roommates Chris and Dustin for help, and they worked together during the rest of the year 2004 *“to respond to the flood of demand for the service from students on college campuses nationwide”*(“Facebook” 03). In September 2005, Facebook’s membership included not only colleges but also high schools. Moreover, In September 2006 everyone

from the general online public with an email address and an age superior to 13 could join Facebook and a new era of networking began. (“History of Facebook”) However, what is noticeable is that “hacking” became part of Facebook’s own culture (Fattal 03).

In October 2006, Facebook introduced “Social Bookmarking”. Whenever a user came across an interesting content on Facebook or any other site, he could share it by either sending it to a friend or putting it on their profile. Although it was a very simple feature, it was a very popular one. (“Facebook” 10)

In January 2007, Facebook gave birth to the mobile page “m.Facebook.com” that enabled its users to upload photos and notes to Facebook using SMS and MMS and receive Facebook messages via SMS. (“Facebook” 10) Later in February 2007 launched “Virtual Gifts” which were tiny icons sent by one user to another as a gift. Every user had the right to send a gift for free. However, if the user wanted to send more, he would pay then \$1 each. In May 2007, Facebook gave a start to a platform called “F8” which is a system that gives the chance for outside programmers to develop photo sharing tools, as well as quizzes and games tools. In addition to Facebook’s six main application (events, groups, birthdays, marketplace, photos and gifts), users could also download or delete the applications that independent developers were constantly creating. As a way of example of the aforementioned applications, Microsoft launched “Facebook friendly development tools” and Amazon made into effect a “book review” application that enabled users to share their viewpoints within their networks. (Facebook 11) According to the article “Facebook” Published by Stanford Graduate School of Business, “*One week after the Platform’s launch there were 300 applications circulating.*” In another passage, the same article declared that “*The following month, Facebook’s platform attracted more than 40000 developers who created around 1500 applications. Within two months of the platform launch, Facebook hit 30 million active users.*” (“Facebook” 12) Facebook entered then the world of economy and game companies like Zynga Inc prospered and marketplaces like eBay could release an application that enabled users to connect their Facebook account with the eBay one; sharing was then possible within their networks (“Facebook” 12) .

In April 2008, Facebook launched “Chat” that enabled users to communicate with anyone of their friends’ list who was online during that time. Indeed, Facebook “*allowed users to chat real time with their friends.*” (“Facebook” 17). During the same year, Facebook

was translated into many other languages thanks to its internationalization team, and this was intended mainly to support all the users' native languages. In fact in response to the great request for Facebook's translation, the previously mentioned team started translating the site into 55 new languages. On the other hand, users are provided with a new feature called Translation application to translate Facebook into other languages like Asian languages, African dialects, and regional varieties of English as well as rarely spoken languages. (site of Facebook 2015)

In February 2009, Facebook introduced the like feature to enable people opine on each other's posts. In June 2009, Facebook became the leading social networking site in the U.S. In August 2010, Facebook created another feature which is location feature that enables people to know where their friends are. And in November 2010, Facebook introduced a new service called "Facebook Messages". Some people criticized it and called it a "Gmail Killer". The new service provides instant messaging, text messaging, regular messages and emails with much more consolidated privacy settings. (Nagar et.al.)

In April 2011, Facebook enabled its users to make life voice calls, within Facebook chat, with their contact list friends. This feature indeed *"lets the user add voice to the current Facebook chat as well as leave messages on Facebook."* (Nagar Et.al) In September 2011 Timeline, an updated version of profiles, was introduced by Facebook which highlights the entire life of every Facebook user. In November 2011, Facebook was accused of violating users' privacy. However Facebook settled the federal allegations by enabling independent auditors to watch and review the privacy practices of Facebook, which lasted for two years, as well as by getting the consent of the users concerning the policy that the company was going to adopt for data handling. ("Timeline: Key dates in Facebook's 10-year history")

In February 2012 Facebook agreed to file for an initial public offering of stock. By doing so, the company opened new horizons for brands' advertising. The ads became mixed with Facebook status updates and photos. In October 2012 Facebook reached 1 billion active users worldwide. In December 2012 Facebook introduced a messaging application known as poke. ("Timeline: Key dates in Facebook's 10-year history")This is going to be tackled in details in chapter four.

In January 2013, Facebook introduced a search feature that allows users within their connections to look for information places, photos and people. In April 2013, Facebook went through a new experience that is dedicated for Android phone. The purpose was to bring the content of Facebook to the home screen of phones. (“Timeline: Key dates in Facebook’s 10-year history”)

In January 2014 Facebook began to classify topics into “trending topics”, attracting attention of users to the most popular topics at a given moment. In February 2014, Facebook introduced a new application known as Paper that contains plans for future applications. Zuckerberg celebrates the 10- year anniversary stating that *“he is more excited about the next ten years than the last. The first ten years were about bootstrapping this network. Now we have the resources to help people across the world solve even bigger and important problems.”* (“Timeline: Key date in Facebook’s 10-year history”) The conviction is unshakable that Facebook is a successful networking site that reached the highest levels of prominence in a very short period of time. Its features and tools are very useful and appealing, and its users are absolutely well networked. Facebook continues its success and plans to improve the site to become one of the world’s significant social networks.

Facebook is indeed a success that started from the days of Harvard and continues till today. You ask: what is the secret behind Facebook’s success? Many factors contributed in the popularity of this networking site. The first factor that leads to Facebook’s enormous success is that the site is very easy to use. To unveil this easiness, a comparison between Facebook and its rival Twitter can be insightful to our research. As a way of example, in order to use Twitter the user has to master @symbols, hashtags and many other “code-like intricacies”. As a result, People find Twitter confusing because its use requires programming background, internet as well as computer mastery. Unlike Twitter, Facebook is much easier to use, and this is thanks to its simplified features. An extensive body of evidence indicates that not only young people use Facebook, people of all age categories worldwide prefer using it and the reason behind this of course is its simplicity (Better). Additionally, another comparison was advanced by Tagtmeier because he said in his article

Facebook as a social network is much more flexible and versatile. You can upload pictures, videos, games, and apps to your profile; embed videos from YouTube; and post calendar events. Twitter, at first glance, only allows for



text, more text, and even more text with links. Also Twitter is a microblogging service while Facebook has many facets including a microblogging component (Tagtmeier 10)

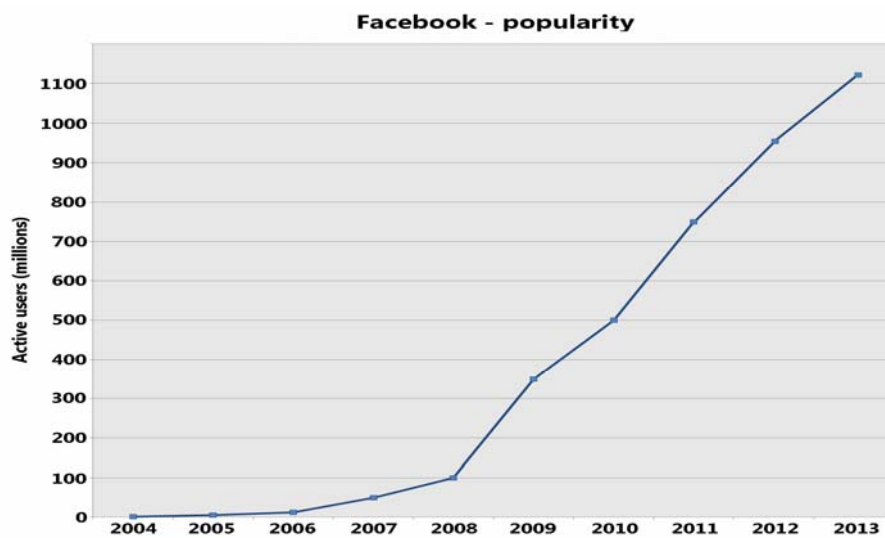
Facebook, on the other hand, is constantly upgrading its products. Indeed, this can be noticed when Facebook changed its interface several times during the years of its existence. It succeeded to add many features, as mentioned earlier, like news feed, timeline, cover photo, messaging platform, and voice calls, The repeated upgrading of Facebook's Platform and products has attracted billions of users worldwide.(Betters) As a matter of fact, Facebook developed what we call mobile features. In December 2013 Facebook succeeded to reach one billion monthly mobile active users who consider Facebook's mobile apps "*both feature-rich and compelling*". (Betters)

Dealing with Facebook's success compels one to deal with the growth of its users numbers worldwide. According to Bullas, Jeff in his article *12 awesome social media facts statistics for 2013* 50% of the world's internet users are Facebook users. According to the Guardian Magazine, by the end of 2013 Facebook reached 1.23 billion monthly active users worldwide ("Facebook: 10 years of social networking, in numbers"). Based on Pew Research Center's statistics, Facebook is used by 57% of American adults(Smith) And according to Josh Constine, Facebook reached 179 million monthly American active users, 128 million daily American users, 142 million monthly American mobile active users, and 101 million daily American mobile active users.(Coustine). The following two figures confirm one's reasoning. Table 1.2 unveils the number of users in the mentioned regions, focusing on the most popular ten social networking sites. And Figure 1.6 tackles the growth of Facebook's popularity from 2004 to 2013.

**Key Social Platforms - millions of Internet Users Active on world's 10 largest social platforms by region, Q2 2013**

	Twitter	Facebook	Badoo	YouTube	Google+	Pinterest	LinkedIn	Tumblr	Myspace	Instagram
Asia Pacific	165.19	269.97	26.54	155.03	204.11	31.71	67.71	36.40	37.83	40.03
Europe	49.09	137.10	8.03	57.47	48.39	8.13	15.88	6.58	7.39	12.64
Latin America	27.06	64.00	7.89	29.81	29.24	5.22	13.74	4.82	6.10	11.12
Middle East and Africa	7.84	13.57	1.30	7.49	7.60	1.90	4.36	1.32	1.30	2.27
North America	47.75	113.15	1.75	50.97	29.05	31.75	18.36	10.40	7.54	18.06

**Table 1.2.: Key Social Platforms<sup>9</sup>.**



**Figure 1.6.: Facebook Popularity<sup>10</sup>.**

Both table 1.2 and 1.6 reveal the extent to which Facebook is a strong networking site. It is the most used site compared to the other platforms and this is noticed in the five regions mentioned in the figure: Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle east, Africa, and North America. It is the evidence that it is present everywhere, and its impact on its users is increasing beyond recognition. Facebook’s popularity, on the other hand, never stops to grow. As it is clearly illustrated in Figure 1.6, Facebook’s popularity started to become higher in 2006, and it peaked in 2013. The reasons behind Facebook’s success during the last ten years are known; however, the questions that come to one’s mind are: how is Facebook used? For

<sup>9</sup> Source: Bullas Jeff. “12 awesome social Media facts and Statistics for 2013”.20 September 2013.web 15 October 2014. <<http://www.jeffbullas.com>.

<sup>10</sup> Source : Taken from Wikipedia uploaded photos about Facebook. Web 15 October 2014.[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

what purposes do users utilize Facebook? and is Facebook used for social networking only? These questions are going to be answered in the next part.

### 1.2.3 Usage of Facebook

Facebook's popularity is above criticism. All the previously mentioned statistics confirm that Facebook is the top used social networking site almost all over the globe. On the other hand, it is not only a means of socializing, but it becomes an instrument to reach journalistic, economic, and artistic aims. In fact, the influence of Facebook "*is pervasive, entering homes, businesses and organizations worldwide, and reaching widespread demographic groups*" (Raymond, Lu 03).

The majority of the articles published concerning Facebook indicate that this networking site is mainly used by college and university students. Many studies also have been conducted to figure out the reasons behind the use of Facebook and they found that information, friendship and communication are the most important ends that users seek while signing up. Evidence also suggests that people use Facebook to maintain first their offline relationships, second to create new connections. Facebook is then efficient in helping people manage their weak connections and further the preexisting strong relationships (Anderson Woodnutt, Pagan, and Chmorro- Premuzic 30).

Moreover, a different article suggests that Facebook is the new media frontier because it creates new applications that foster young people's civic engagement. Indeed, Young people are "facebooking" not only to do informal activities such as uploading photos or simply communicating with other friends, but they are rather "Faceworking" which implies that the young generation is using the social networking platform to generate content, and remedy problems. For a better civic engagement among young people, news formats and experiences shared on social media should fit their lives. As a way of example, Facebook news sharing applications that meet the young people expectations do enable them to do the following:

- 1- Write stories and share them within their network on Facebook.
- 2- Participate in evaluating other stories written by others.
- 3- Create blogs and invite other friends to comment them.
- 4- Communicate with other users concerning common interest issues.
- 5- Gain points thanks to this engagement in all the previously mentioned actions(Greenhow, Reifman 01).

As a matter of fact, Facebook applications can reward its young users whenever they prove their civic engagement through activities on Facebook. Indeed, two interesting community-related Facebook applications Hot Dish and MN daily were created to mobilize an engaged young citizenry. Hot Dish was launched on February, 2007. Its main purpose is to encourage young people read, write and share information and experiences. The participants who get involved in Hot Dig's challenges will gain points rewarding them for civic engagement and activism like *"writing a letter to an editor, writing lawmakers, starting a recycling program, or recycling old electronics"* (Greenhow, Reifman 02). The most effective user who succeeds to get the greatest number of points wins a trip to the Arctic. ( Greenhow, Reifman 02) MN Daily, on the other hand, was launched on March 29, 2009. It is a page on Facebook where users are informed about stories that are related to their campuses from The Minnesota Daily. Users, who become members of the Daily team, write and share important content and show interest in their community gain points. The most active user wins a prize. Both Facebook applications *"are doing a better job than other forms on online community in catalyzing youth-initiated conversation"* (Greenhow, Reifman 02) and boosting young people's civic engagement and local activism

By the same token, it is noticed in many studies that professional journalists and Facebook users are working collaboratively to create multimedia stories on the sites of news as well as impact the news ecology on Facebook (Drula 113). The aforementioned stories are often in the form of videos that can be shared in Facebook posts. Facebook is then useful cyberspace for journalism, promoting Facebook users' collaboration and participation with professional journalists. Facebook on one hand enables users to comment on news and events, promoting users' freedom of speech. Professional journalists, on the other hand, can be informed what their readers' wishes and preferences really are via Facebook. (Drula 114). According to the same source, the way users consume and share news has absolutely altered the flow of information and news (Drula 114), and since users collaborate with journalists to create news stories, their role changed from news consumers to news creator and distributors. A separate piece of research entitled *"do Social Media cause the Birth or Death of Traditional Media News Consumption"* firmly asserts that users consider social media networking sites as Facebook substantial providers of news. It is true that traditional media can never be replaced by new media due to accuracy and trustworthiness issues. However, Social media can provide its users with additional news sources but can never replace the traditional sources of news (Teng and Joo 148)

Concerning Facebook and economy, it was possible for companies to join Facebook after three years of its creation (Anderson, 26) Simultaneously, Facebook users were able to interact with their favored brands and express their brand loyalty. ( Anderson.et.al 26).Indeed, there exist over three million brands and 20 million fans supporting them on Facebook (Anderson et.al 26). Companies now acknowledge the importance of social media networking sites and their continuous marketing procedures now experience important advancements. As a way of example, Facebook *“is recognized as an important customer relationship management tool for corporations and marketers. Its online platform allows brands to develop more open and two-way relationships with their customers by facilitating participation, dialogue, and opt-in brand experience”* (Anderson et.al 27). If the companies work hard on providing users with entertaining games; content of high import; and the opportunity for regular conversations, they will undoubtedly be able to have strong customer relationships (Anderson et.al 27). Consequently, the new engagement with customers via social networking sites like Facebook gives birth to a new advertising model, replacing the traditional one(Anderson et.al 27). Facebook proved its effectiveness when organizations were at stake to lose customers. An extensive body of evidence indicated that Facebook played a major role in public relations crises for companies Such as Toyota’s Yaris recall of the Yaris in 2009. In that car recall, Toyota used its Facebook page to send users to a dedicated microsite with reassuring information” (Anderson et.al 27). Gajewski continues in the same line of thought and takes the same stand concerning Facebook’s imposed presence in the realm of business as well as its effectiveness in maintaining unceasing conversation between companies and their customers because he clearly asserts that

Facebook is now a corporate necessity and this thesis does not seem too extravagant, when we realize that roughly all the companies, very often even these smallest ones, like shops and bars, have their own Facebook website, which are open to every Facebook user who feels free to write anything on it. Before Facebook, the websites of companies rarely provided a functionality of public, open discussion (Gajewski 47).

In the same vein, Facebook can be used by consumers to enhance the brand’s reputation. Indeed, the experience of any customer with any given brand can reach millions of

people only in a period of minutes if not seconds. Users can also form what we call consumer communities that highly empower brands' popularity. As a way of example, in the United Kingdom in 2007 a company called Cadbury succeeded to support its brand Wispa and that was thanks to a campaign on Facebook. It is then possible to state that "*an online 'mob' culture can be created quickly and easily to challenge a particular identity, service or practices*" (Anderson et.al 27). One can conclude then that Facebook has been continuously showing commitments to enable various brands engage with their customers ( Anderson et.al 27).

Many businesses like The American Cancer Society, General Motors, Public Broadcasting System (PBS), The New York Times, and the Washington Post are present on Facebook. Some use the site for advertising purposes, and others use it to create branded pages for their fans. The company's fans on Facebook are allowed to access exclusive pages like blogs, games, photos, and many other items. On the other hand, the majority of such companies take part in the project "Facebook Connect" that makes users transfer their social networking sites' data into forums they take part in, and then these data are transformed into materials that are going to move from the networking sites to the users' Facebook personal pages (Raymond, Lu 07). The same application allows users to login to other sites using their Facebook account. Facebook accounts then can be utilized as a "universal identity online (Gajewski 33). Who knows? The day may come when "*we will need to login to our FB account and only then we will be able to access all the other online contents*" (Gajewski 33)

There are, however, concerns with regard to companies' employees' use of social media. Generally, Employers worry about their company's productivity. Stated differently, if their workers are frequently online, this may cause important losses to the company. Other concerns are related to leaking the Company's confidential information. That is why many companies prevent their workers from using Facebook at work. For example, The U.S department of Homeland Security prohibited its employees from consulting any Facebook pages during working hours (Raymon, Lu 07).

Socially speaking, people always worry about their privacy when they interact in the offline world; however, once they are online these worries disappear and every detail about their life already published on Facebook is rather called "sharing" and not at all "privacy invasion". What is impossible in the real world is far more acceptable in the online one.

Content sharing is behind the success of many social networking sites like Facebook. People; on another hand, do not consider the reduction of privacy in such sites an issue. This leads one to argue that people's lives excessive exposure on social media networking is leading to a "shift in social norms" (Anderson et.al 28). Despite the fact that people are aware of the risk they are taking while sharing too much about their lives, they still continue doing it because the new social phenomenon "sharing" became an essential element to reach self-satisfaction. Additionally, people's disclosure of their personal information on such a site proves their search for popularity. It has also been proved that "*people with low self-esteem may see information-sharing as a lever for gaining acceptance and are less choosy about those from whom they seek this affirmation, whereas those with higher self-esteem are only about popularity within their chosen circle*" (Anderson et.al 28-29). Some Facebook users prefer losing privacy but gaining celebrity online.

According to a study conducted by Ujhelvi and SzabÓ entitled "Sharing on Facebook from Loners to Popularity Seekers", there are four main motivating forces that encourage people to use Facebook. First, Facebook can play the role of information generator about people and society as a whole effectively. This information can be filtered by users online to avoid an overwhelming number of unreal news and information. Second, Facebook enables its users to share their positive experiences. Third, Many users find Facebook an excellent refuge, reducing their loneliness and boredom. Last and not least, Facebook can be potentially useful in self-presentation, identity construction and the creation of popularity (Ujhelvi and SzabÓ 29).

Meanwhile, according to the article "Facebook Psychology: Popular Questions Answered by Research" people utilize Facebook to get rid of their feelings of disconnection and of course "gain feelings of connections" (Anderson et.al 29). On the other hand, the researcher of this paper adds that people engage on Facebook to forget their real- world problems; however, the fact of using the site does not necessarily solve those problems. And people who suffer from "social anxiety" in the real world are more likely to spend time on Facebook, looking for either distraction from the real world or connection. As a way of example, people who fail in real-world dating are more likely to use online dating.( Anderson et.al 29).

One has noticed throughout the discussion about Facebook's different uses that Facebook can be also used by artists who want to present their works to the widest general

public. Facebook can serve then as a “global museum”, enabling those who are geographically away from real museums become much closer to art. It is no longer necessary to travel for miles to appreciate art in very expensive luxurious museums. The reality is that museums or rather “virtual museums” are the ones that move to our homes via our computers. Artworks “*are hanging on our walls. On our Facebook walls*” (Horváth 87).

Part of criticism against Facebook, it has been argued that the site promotes “an artificial kind of friendship”. Some brands started to experience that. For example, a burger marketing campaign launched an application on Facebook called “Whopper Sacrifice”. A free burger is offered if the users delete 10 of their friends. During only 10-day time, a quarter of a million of people had been de-friended. Consequently; Facebook decided to make an end to the application because it violated its privacy regulations. Accordingly, the conclusion that must be stressed here is that social networking not only “*transformed the nature of friendship, but also arguably devalued it*” (Anderson et.al 31).

It is plainly declared in the same article that Facebook may create problems that did not exist before, especially as far as dating and romantic relationships are concerned. In fact, using the site may result in jealousy and “obsessive behavior”. This is due mainly to the fact that users may access their partner’s online information, leading to “surveillance behavior” (Anderson et.al 31). The same view was shared by Joo and Teng when they stated in their article “Facebook and Identity” that “*Social networking sites like FB increase the amount of information that individuals receive about their partners. If the user is an active user, the wall postings on the partner’s profile and the postings left by the partner at friends’ profiles reveal a lot of information about the partner’ daily activities*” (Joo and Teng 346).

The site that has been intended to facilitate people’s communication in real time also has drawbacks that are heavily and negatively affecting the lives of its users. Facebook may lead to what is called narcissism which means people’s endorsement of the belief that many other users are fans of their profiles and comments as well as follow every single detail of their activities on Facebook. They consider themselves as celebrities, whose fans are looking for their news impatiently, experiencing an online illusion of popularity (Caine). Facebook can deprive its user from his privacy, giving the user’s friends access to his personal information like his job, marital status and interest when the user has never thought that one day such details of his life will be disclosed so openly to his counterparts. Facebook can be



addictive because people spend very long hours using the site. The reason behind that is that Facebook's aim shifted from connecting people to entertaining people, providing them with an unlimited number of applications and games that force them to spend an unimaginable number of hours in front of their computers. It becomes a time-consuming habit (Vilie). Many mental health specialists contend that the virtual conversations that take place on Facebook may negatively impact people's innate ability to interact socially in the real world. What worsens our digital times is that Smartphones are as well equipped with the Facebook application. Consequently, people's dependence on Facebook for communication purposes is unsurprisingly increasing.

If we are to deal with Americans' use of Facebook, we can say that an important majority of Americans are using Facebook. Accordingly, the researcher looks forward through the next point to revealing how Americans use this popular networking site and the extent to which their lives are impacted by that site. This is going to be closely discussed in the next point.

### **1.3 Americans' Use of Social Media**

The internet revolutionized the way Americans interact with each other. More precisely, Social networking sites as another means of online communication have emphatically changed the lives of a great majority of Americans. As it is mentioned earlier, Social networking sites enable their users to keep in touch with their dear ones, and Americans being part of the large population of SNS active users manage to utilize such sites not only to stay close to their friends and family members but also to connect to the rest of the world. For example, Americans get news about world events from social platforms like Facebook, reducing their dependence on traditional news sources. Civic Engagement among American youngsters is fostered thanks to such social platforms. Some Americans, on another hand, use social media to receive information about brands' reputation and their products' efficiency from social networking sites' users. Thus the economic dimension of SNS is undoubtedly giving birth to a new era of digital marketing, making Americans more informed about the companies' newly launched products either from other users or from the brand's official pages on SNS. However, connectedness remains the driving force behind Americans' use of social media.

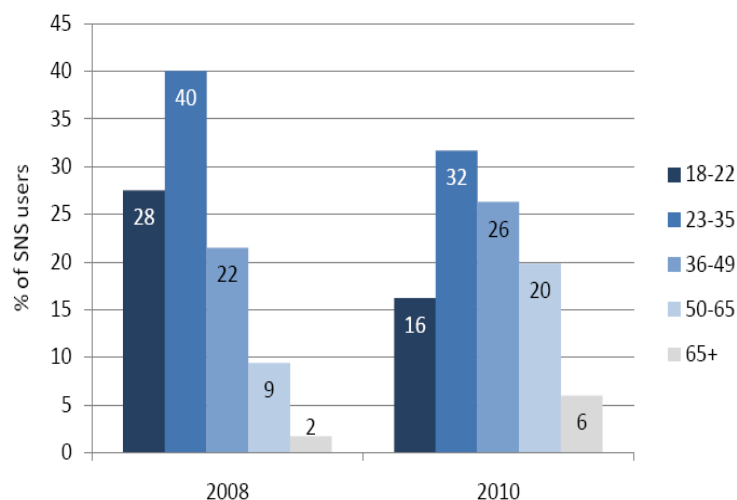
Americans are very active online especially regarding social media use. They use various sites like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter which have a common purpose:

allowing users to “friend” others or sharing content with other users. It is stated clearly in a Pew research center study<sup>11</sup> that Americans spend more time on Social media platforms more than any other activity online (Hambton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 08). Indeed, 79% of American adults use the internet and 59% of these internet users utilize at least one social media platform. (Hambton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 08)

The other element that should be mentioned is that Americans of all ages use SNS. As a matter of fact, in 2008 only 18% of 36 years old users as well as older users used SNS. However, this fact changed in 2010 because 48% of internet users who were 35 and older were utilizing Social media sites. The conclusion that one has reached is that social media use among older users is increasing, and youngsters are not the only active users of such sites. (Hambton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 08)

#### Age distribution of social networking site users in 2008 and 2010

*% of social networking site users in each age group. For instance, in 2008, 28% of social networking sites users were 18-22, but in 2010 that age group made up 16% of social networking site users.*



**Figure 1.7.: Age Distribution of Social Networking Site Users in 2008 and 2010<sup>12</sup>.**

While all categories of American society use social media, the Pew Research center conducted another survey<sup>13</sup> in 2010 in which it unveiled the most important reasons behind

<sup>11</sup> The Pew research center survey was conducted between October 20 –November 2010. It recruited 2,255 American adults.

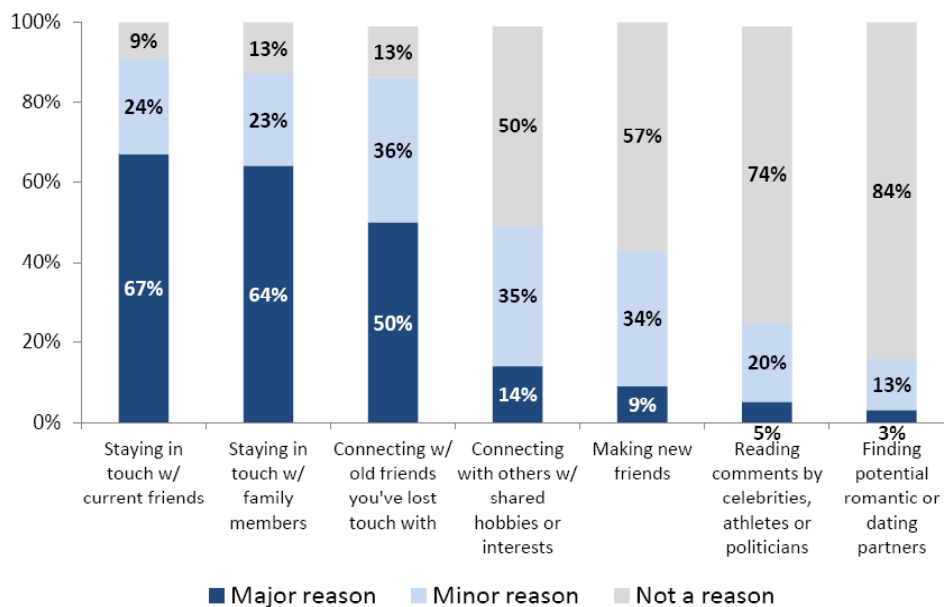
<sup>12</sup> Source: Hampton, Keith. Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives”. 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014. <www.pewinternet.org

<sup>13</sup> The survey was conducted between April 26-May 22, 2011. 2,777 American adults were recruited.

Americans' use of social networking sites. Such a research suggests that 66% of American adults use social media networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn. The users primarily utilize this recent form of online communication to stay connected to family members and friends. Two-thirds of American social media users say so. However, 14% of American users state that connecting with others who share the same hobbies and interests is the most salient reason behind their use of social media platforms. Additionally, 9% of American users of SNS regard making new friends is as well of high importance, and 5% say that reading comments by celebrities and public figures is their main purpose of using social media and 03% assert that they use SNS for dating ends ( Smith 01)

### Motivations for using social networking sites

*Based on adults who use social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and/or Twitter*



**Figure 1.8.: Motivations for Using Social Networking Sites<sup>14</sup>.**

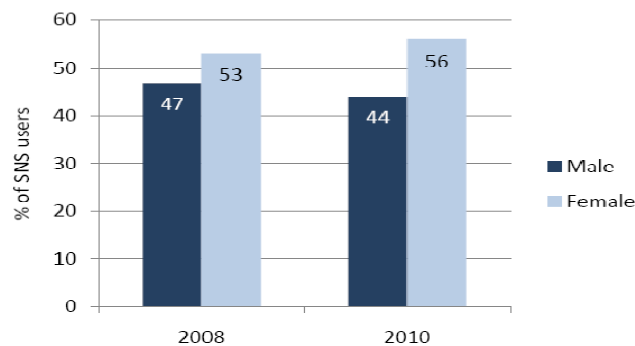
The study's participants who state that keeping in touch with their family members come from diverse demographic groups. Age, income, education, race/ ethnicity, parental status and place of residence did not affect the participants' responses. However, gender made a difference on this question because female users are more likely to use SNS to stay connected to their family than male users (72% vs. 55%) (Smith 03).

<sup>14</sup> Source: Aeron, Smith. "Why Americans use Social media". 14 November 2011 web 23 october 2014.< [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

Another survey entitled “MySpace and Facebook: Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Exploring Friend-Networking Sites”<sup>15</sup> which recruited 116 American university students reveals that students use social networking sites like Facebook to “*keep in touch with old friends, to keep in touch with current friends and to make new friends*” (Raacke and Bond-Raacke 174). The study also unveils that such sites are used to “*learn about events, to post social functions and to feel connected*” (Raacke and Bond-Raacke 174). One may, therefore, state that Facebook, as an example of social media platforms, serves as a recent source of information.

#### Sex distribution of social networking site users in 2008 and 2010

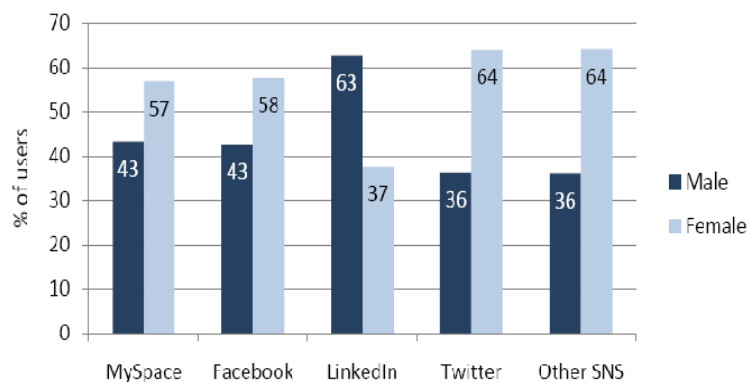
*% of social networking site users of each sex. For instance, in 2008, 47% of social networking sites users were men, but in 2010 men made up 44% of social networking site users.*



**Figure 1.9.: Sex Distribution of Social Networking Site Users 2008 and 2010<sup>16</sup>.**

#### Sex distribution by social networking site platform

*% of users on the following social networking sites who are male or female. For instance, 43% of MySpace users are male.*



**Figure 1.10.: Sex Distribution of Social Networking Site Platform<sup>17</sup>.**

<sup>15</sup> The survey was conducted in 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Hampton, Keith. Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives”. 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014. <[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)>

<sup>17</sup> Source: Hampton, Keith. Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives”. 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014. <[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)>

As the above figure shows that females are more likely to use social media sites like MySpace, Facebook Twitter. As a matter of fact 57 % of females use MySpace, 58% use Facebook and 64% use Twitter. However, Males are more interested in LinkedIn than in any other SNS. On the other hand, Males are moderately using SNS. As it is noticed in this figure, male users of LinkedIn are higher compared to the other SNS. This indicates that while males are interested in SNS for professional purposes, females are rather mainly interested in SNS for socializing.

Americans use different social media sites. However, the 2011 Pew research center study reported that Facebook is the most popular social networking site, and Americans use it for various reasons more than any other SNS. In fact, of the overall social networking users, nearly 92% are Facebook users. Later comes MySpace (29%), LinkedIn (18%), Twitter (13%). The other SNS comprise only 10% of American active users (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 14).

#### Frequency of use for users of different social networking site platforms

*% of users on the following social networking sites who use that site with the following frequency. For instance, 3% of MySpace users use the site several times a day.*

	MySpace	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter	Other SNS
Several times a day	3%	31%	3%	20%	15%
About once a day	5%	21%	3%	13%	17%
3-5 days a week	2%	15%	4%	6%	14%
1-2 days a week	17%	17%	18%	9%	16%
Every few weeks	12%	11%	28%	12%	19%
Less often	33%	5%	35%	23%	14%
Never	29%	1%	9%	18%	5%

**Table 1.3.: Frequency of Use for Users of Different Social Networking Site Platforms<sup>18</sup>.**

When the same study was conducted to ask why Americans use Facebook, they found that the majority of Americans use this platform to have a list of friends, to post comments on other users' content, to update their status, and to write private messages to other users. As a matter of fact, 15% of Facebook American users do update their status; 22% are interested in other users' publications and thus post comments on them; 20% comment other users' photos,

<sup>18</sup> Source: Hampton ,Keith . Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. "social Media Sites and our Lives" . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014.<www.pewinternet.org

and 10% use the site to send private messages to other users. American young users tend to post comments at least once a day. Similarly, 23% of older users of age 36 also comment other users' published content daily. The more the user is older, the more the frequency of commenting on Facebook declines. Indeed, 18% of Facebook users aged less than 50 years old post a comment at least once a day (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 16)

#### Frequency of commenting on Facebook posts by age

*% of users on the following social networking sites who comment with the following frequency. For instance, 21% of Facebook users ages 18-22 comment on Facebook posts several times a day.*

	All SNS Users	Age 18-22	Age 23-35	Age 36-49	Age 50-65	Age 65+
Several times a day	13%	21%	15%	13%	5%	1%
About once per day	9%	16%	8%	8%	6%	10%
3-5 days per week	13%	16%	16%	13%	6%	7%
1-2 Days per week	18%	21%	25%	12%	18%	7%
Every few weeks	15%	10%	13%	17%	20%	15%
Less often	18%	12%	16%	20%	19%	26%
Never	15%	4%	8%	17%	26%	34%
N (weighted)	941	156	309	237	182	57

**Table 1.4.: Frequency of Commenting on Facebook Posts by Age<sup>19</sup>.**

Americans' use of Facebook is not only dedicated to status updating, or commenting other users' content. As it has been mentioned earlier, Facebook is also used to send private messages to other users. A percentage of 82% of Americans use Facebook to send private messages. The younger generation is moderately using the social networking site to send private messages; 45% of 18-22 use the site to send a private message once a week. Additionally, 32% of users whose age is between 36 and 49 send one private message per week and 27% of users aged more than 50 use the site with the same frequency. However, there is nearly no difference between males and females concerning their use of Facebook for the sake of sending private messages (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 20).

<sup>19</sup> Source: Hampton ,Keith . Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. "social Media Sites and our Lives" . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014.<[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

**Frequency of sending private messages on Facebook by age**

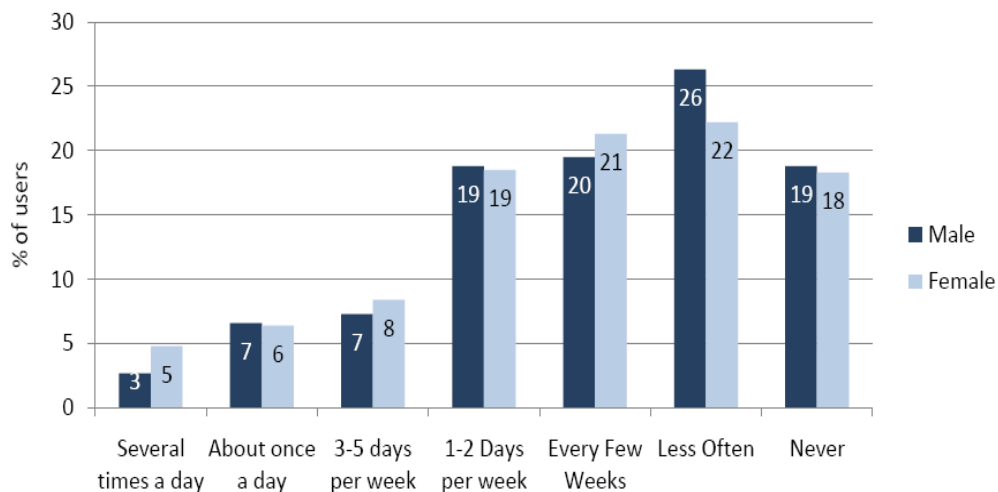
% of Facebook users in each age group who send private messages on Facebook with the following frequency. For instance, 2% of Facebook users ages 18-22 send private messages on Facebook several times a day.

	All SNS Users	Age 18-22	Age 23-35	Age 36-49	Age 50-65	Age 65+
Several times a day	4%	2%	5%	4%	4%	0%
About once per day	7%	11%	7%	5%	5%	2%
3-5 days per week	8%	7%	10%	10%	6%	2%
1-2 Days per week	19%	24%	23%	13%	16%	14%
Every few weeks	21%	16%	25%	21%	20%	15%
Less often	24%	21%	22%	22%	30%	30%
Never	19%	18%	9%	25%	20%	38%
N (weighted)	940	154	309	236	184	57

**Table 1.5.: Frequency of Sending Private Messages on Facebook By Age<sup>20</sup>.**

**Frequency of sending private messages on Facebook by sex**

% of Facebook users of each sex who send private messages on Facebook with the following frequency. For instance, 3% of male Facebook users send private messages on Facebook several times a day.



**Figure 1.11.: Frequency of Sending Private Messages on Facebook by Sex<sup>21</sup>.**

In another part of the same study, Americans were asked to categorize their friends into: “immediate family, extended family, coworkers, neighbors, high school friends, college classmates, members of voluntary/associations, people they had never in person, and people they had only met in person only once” (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 26). The main findings were that 22% of the users’ Facebook friends were the people they went to high

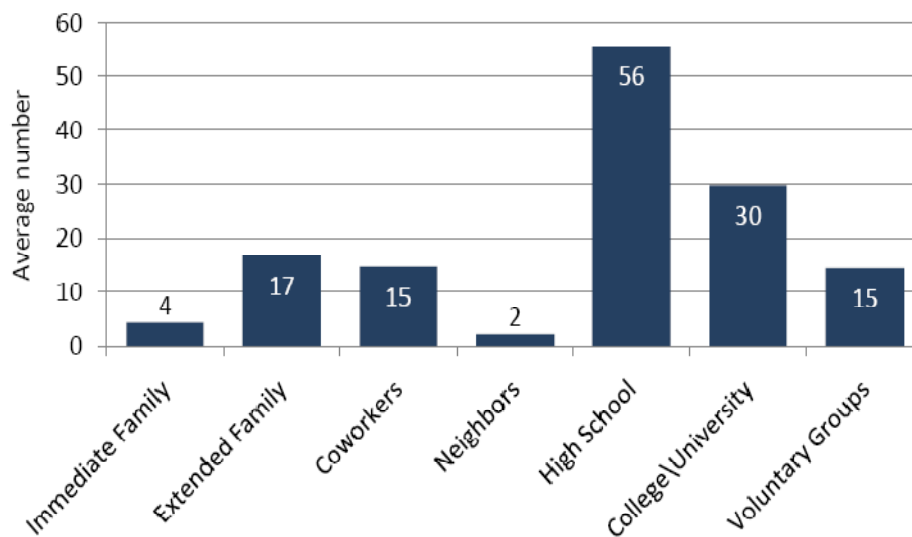
<sup>20</sup> Source: Hampton ,Keith . Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives” . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014.<www.pewinternet.org

<sup>21</sup> Source: Hampton ,Keith . Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives” . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014.<www.pewinternet.org

school with; 12% of their friends' list comprises extended family. Then Coworkers make up 10% of Americans' friends list and college friends 09%. However, immediate family's share of the friends' list covers only 08%, and 07% of Americans' friends list consists of people from voluntary groups. Only 02% of their neighbors are included in the friends' list. (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 26)

### Average number of Facebook 'friends' by relationship origin

*The average number of Facebook users' friends, by origin of the relationship. For instance, the average Facebook user has 56 friends from high school.*



**Figure 1. 12.: Average Number of Facebook 'Friends' by Relationship Origin<sup>22</sup>.**

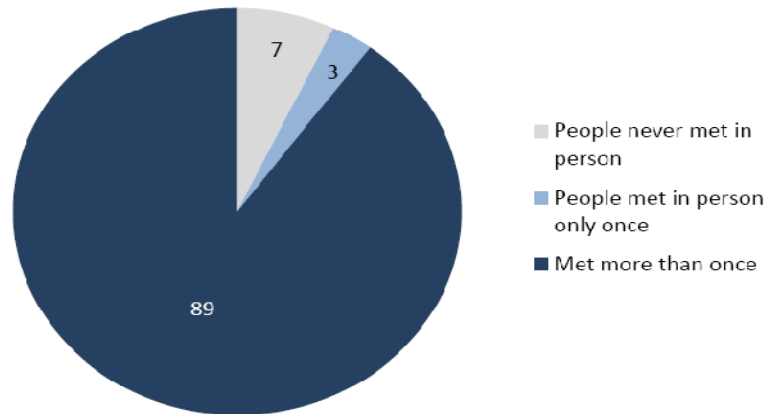
It is also found in the same study that Americans use Facebook and many other social networking sites to stay closely related to their real world social ties. (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 28). The following figure confirms that Americans "friend" mainly people they know and with whom they met more than once.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Hampton, Keith. Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. "social Media Sites and our Lives". 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014. <[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)>



### Percent of Facebook 'friends' who are strangers

The average Facebook user has never met in-person with 7% of their Facebook friends. An additional 3% are people they have only ever met in-person one time.



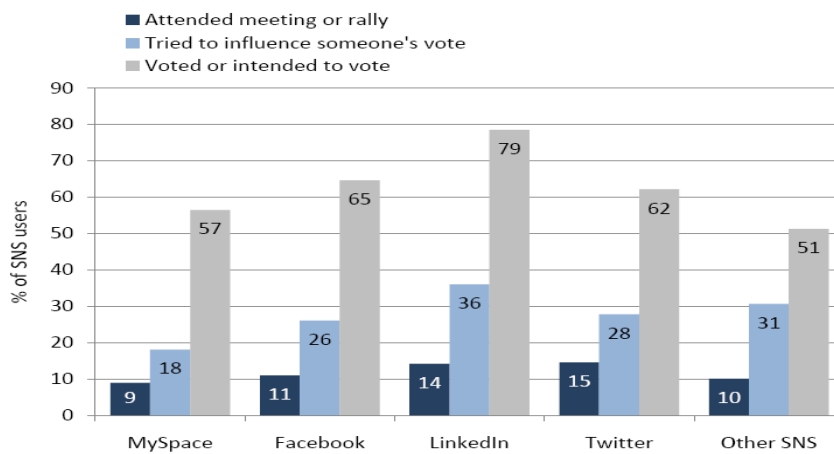
**Figure 1.13.: Percent of Facebook 'Friends' Who are Strangers<sup>23</sup>.**

Concerning social media networking sites and their relationship with political engagement, it has been found by the Pew research center that LinkedIn users are more politically engaged than users of the other SNS. Education plays a great role to increase the likelihood of one's political engagement. What is known is that older Americans tend to have a high level of education, and their membership in LinkedIn is considerable. As result, one may claim that older and well educated American LinkedIn users are politically engaged. However, the 2011 pew Research center survey confirmed in a separate paragraph that *"internet users and Facebook users in particular, were more likely to be politically involved than similar Americans"* (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 40). This seems contradictory. However, one cannot presume that only LinkedIn users are politically engaged simply because this site is used by only a specific category of the American society which is: older Americans with a very high level of education. Paradoxically, Facebook is not used only by the aforementioned category of people, and the survey's statement that "Facebook users are politically engaged" is a very logical one because Facebook's users include people of different ages and educational backgrounds.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Hampton ,Keith . Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. "social Media Sites and our Lives" . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014.<[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

### Level of political participation, by use of social networking site platforms

% of social networking site users in each group who participated in politics in the following ways, by social networking platform. For instance, 9% of MySpace users have attended a meeting or rally.



**Figure 1.14.: Level of Political Participation, by Use of Social Networking site Platforms<sup>24</sup>.**

American companies do use Social media for their marketing campaigns. A recent survey conducted by New York-based InSites Consulting U.S.A reveals that American companies are using social media more than the European ones. Indeed, 80% of the surveyed American companies use Facebook, “45% have a Twitter account, 48% are present on LinkedIn and 31% use YouTube” (Robinson). The same survey states that 04 out of 10 American companies are interested in what clients opine on them on social media platforms. On the other hand, American companies successfully use social media in order to communicate with their customers. As a matter of fact, 83% of the surveyed companies say that they regularly handle their customers’ questions and complaints that are sent by the means of social media (Robinson). This indicates that Social media sites like Facebook are acquiring a new economic function that is beneficial for both companies and their customers. Companies, on one hand, protect their reputation through their use of social media to meet their customers’ exigencies. Customers, on the other hand, build tight connections with their preferred brands through continuous communication on social media sites. A Gallup Survey<sup>25</sup> that was conducted to unveil the impact of social media on Americans’ purchasing habits clearly advances that

<sup>24</sup> Source: Hampton, Keith. Sessions Goulet, Lauren/ Purcell Kristen. “social Media Sites and our Lives” . 16 June 2011. Web 23 October 2014. <www.pewinternet.org

<sup>25</sup> The survey recruited 18, 525 American Adults and was conducted between December 12, 2012 to January 2013.

companies can use social media to engage and boost their customer base. Consumers appreciate the highly personal and conversational nature of social media sites, and they prefer interacting in an open dialogue as opposed to receiving a hard sell. And companies' use of social media to provide timely responses to questions and complaints accelerates brand loyalty and, eventually sales (Swift).

The same survey revealed that despite the fact that Social media networking sites like Facebook are used by a vast majority of Americans, the surprise is that only 05% state that social media do greatly influence their decisions concerning products' purchase. Additionally, 30% state these platforms have “some influence” (Swift). The following table shows the extent to which social media influences Americans regarding their purchasing decisions.

*Influence of Social Media on Americans' Purchasing Decisions*

How much do social media typically influence your purchasing decisions?

	<b>Total</b>
A great deal of influence	5%
Some influence	30%
No influence at all	62%
Don't know	3%

Gallup Mobile Retail Panel Study, December 2012-January 2013

GALLUP®

**Table 1.6.: Influence of Social Media on Americans' Purchasing Decisions<sup>26</sup>.**

Accordingly, The Gallup survey also found that 94% of American social media users state clearly that they utilize these services to stay connected with their friends and family members, highlighting the social function that social media was primarily created for. While 29% say that they use social media to gather information about products and their efficiency, 20% state that that they use social media platforms to post comments on companies' newly launched products (Swift). On the other hand, 34% of those who “like” or follow Brands' activities via SNS like Facebook say that such platforms do not have any impact on their purchasing decisions. However, 53% say that these sites have some impact. (Swift). The

<sup>26</sup> Source: Swift, Art. “Americans say Social Media Have Little on Purchases”. 23 June 2014. Web 26 October 2014.

survey also reveals that “*when it comes to making decisions, consumers are much more likely to turn to friends, in-store displays, television commercials, and even mail catalogs and magazines than to consult a company-sponsored Facebook page or Twitter feed*” (Swift). Paradoxically, American consumers engage with a given brand when they “*are already attached to a product or service.*” (Swift). And the companies which provide their clients with a very satisfactory service and a remarkable in-store experience tend to attract those clients to “*interact with them on social media. Simply promoting products and services on Facebook or Twitter is unlikely to lead to sales*” (Swift).

#### *Americans' Reasons for Social Media Use*

Please indicate whether or not you use social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for any of the following purposes.

	<b>Total</b>
To connect with friends and family	94%
To share with others what you know	53%
To find out information about a company or organization	40%
To find others who have similar interests or careers	32%
To follow trends/To find user reviews or product information	29%
To play games	23%
To network or search for a job	22%
To comment on what's hot or new/To write reviews of products	20%
To build your own reputation or brand	17%
Other	8%

Note: Asked of those who have used social media in the past year

Gallup Mobile Retail Panel Study, December 2012-January 2013

GALLUP®

**Table 1.7.: Americans' Reasons for Social Media Use<sup>27</sup>.**

We consider the necessity of enclosing a very recent Pew research center survey<sup>28</sup> conducted in 2013 that tried to figure out the frequency of Americans' use of Facebook and compare it to that of 2012. It found that 73% of American online adults use social media. Facebook, however, is so far the most popular SNS in terms of the number of American users. In fact, it is stated in the same survey that 71% of American adults now utilize Facebook. 63% of those users visit Facebook at least once a day and 40% consult it several times a day. Instagram and Twitter have fewer users than Facebook does, but they do visit the sites regularly. 57% of Instagram users log in the site at least once a day and 35% visit it many

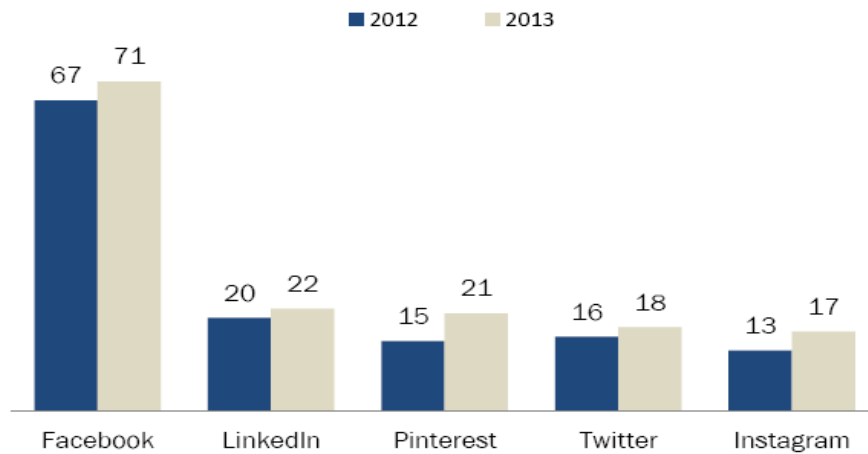
<sup>27</sup> Source: Swift, Art. “Americans say Social Media Have Little on Purchases”. 23 June 2014. Web 26 October 2014.

<sup>28</sup> The survey recruited 1,801 American adults.

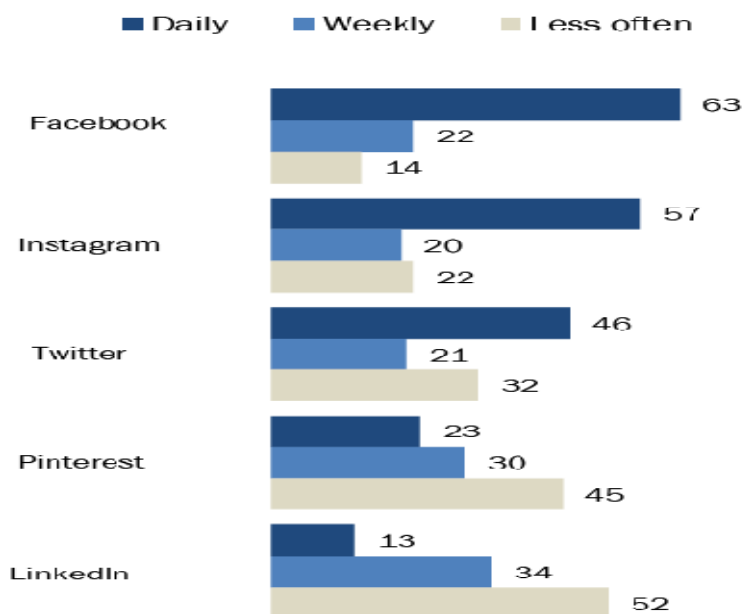
times a day. While 46% of Twitter users consult the site once a day, 29% visit it several times a day(Duggan and Smith 01-2).

### Social media sites, 2012-2013

*% of online adults who use the following social media websites, by year*



**Figure 1.15.: Social Media Sites, 2012-2013<sup>29</sup>.**



**Figure 1.16.: Social Media Networking Sites' Frequency Use<sup>30</sup>.**

<sup>29</sup> Source: Duggan Maeve and Smith, Aaron "Social media update 2013". 30 December 2013. Web 31 October 2014.<[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

<sup>30</sup> Source: Duggan Maeve and Smith, Aaron "Social media update 2013". 30 December 2013. Web 31 October 2014.<[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

Additionally, 42% of American online adults state that they use two or more of SNS. However, 36% of the survey's participants say they use only one social networking site while 22% do not use any of the mentioned SNS in the survey. Additionally, 84% of those who said that they use only one SNS state that Facebook is the solely SNS they visit. The remaining users prefer other platforms. 8% of them use LinkedIn, 4% prefer Pinterest, and 02% state that Instagram or Twitter is their favorite social media networking site (Duggan and Smith 02).

<b>Facebook users</b>	
<i>Among online adults, the % who use Facebook</i>	
	<b>Use Facebook</b>
<i>All internet users (n= 1,445)</i>	71%
a Men (n= 734)	66
b Women (n= 711)	76 <sup>a</sup>
a White, Non-Hispanic (n= 1,025)	71
b Black, Non-Hispanic (n= 138)	76
c Hispanic (n= 169)	73
a 18-29 (n= 267)	84 <sup>cd</sup>
b 30-49 (n= 473)	79 <sup>cd</sup>
c 50-64 (n= 401)	60 <sup>d</sup>
d 65+ (n= 278)	45
a High school grad or less (n= 385)	71
b Some college (n= 433)	75 <sup>c</sup>
c College+ (n= 619)	68
a Less than \$30,000/yr (n= 328)	76 <sup>d</sup>
b \$30,000-\$49,999 (n= 259)	76
c \$50,000-\$74,999 (n= 187)	68
d \$75,000+ (n= 486)	69
a Urban (n= 479)	75
b Suburban (n= 700)	69
c Rural (n= 266)	71

**Table1.8.: Facebook Users<sup>31</sup>.**

As a result of all what has been, we reached conclusions about Americans 'use of social media recently, that Facebook remains "the platform of choice". (Duggan and Smith 10). Even a large majority of Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn users as well utilize Facebook. As a way of example, 83% of LinkedIn and 93% of Instagram users do state that they actively use Facebook. However, only a quarter of Facebook users say that they use the other social networking Sites (Duggan and Smith 10).

<sup>31</sup> Source: Duggan Maeve and Smith, Aaron "Social media update 2013". 30 December 2013. Web 31 October 2014.<www.pewinternet.org

### Social media matrix

*% of users of each particular site who use another particular site (e.g., 29% of Pinterest users also use Twitter)*

	Use Twitter	Use Instagram	Use Pinterest	Use LinkedIn	Use Facebook
% of Twitter users who...	N/A	53	34	39	90
% of Instagram users who...	53	N/A	37	30	93
% of Pinterest users who...	29	31	N/A	29	87
% of LinkedIn users who...	31	24	28	N/A	83
% of Facebook users who...	22	23	25	25	N/A

**Table 1.9.: Social Media Matrix<sup>32</sup>.**

This part of our study seems overloaded with figures and numbers; it is the case but one may state that without these figures the researcher cannot know to what extent Americans use Facebook. Empirical research is mandatory to reach true scientific results. All the previously included figures, indeed, enable the researcher to know precisely Americans' favored social media networking site, the categories of Americans' society (in terms of age, education, income and sex) that are interested in SNS, and for what reasons such sites are used by Americans. There is then a good deal of evidence from the aforementioned surveys that Facebook is taking the lead in social media use in the United States of America despite the existence of a huge number of diverse social media networking sites worldwide. The reasons behind this choice were not revealed. What one may suggest is that Facebook is attractive enough to make this considerable number of Americans use it. The popularity of Facebook can be because of its simple interface, its controllable privacy settings, its very appealing applications, or simply because all the other social networking sites are summarized in one platform which is Facebook. Stated differently, social media activities like blogging, video casting, instant messaging, making free phone calls, playing games, bookmarking, forming common interests groups, and many others can be all performed using one site: Facebook. In fact, Facebook has unique characteristics and features that other SNS lack. It is a very strong social media platform that Americans cannot ignore.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Duggan Maeve and Smith, Aaron "Social media update 2013". 30 December 2013. Web 31 October 2014.<[www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

It is true that Facebook was first designed to American college Students. However, as one has noticed this SNS is used not only by the young generation that is between 18-22, but it is also used by American people of all ages. The frequency of Facebook use differs from one generation to another. The important point that one strives to make is that Facebook is not dedicated to a given category of the American society, no matter what the use frequency of the site is. The reasons behind old Americans' choice of Facebook is again its simplicity. Facebook never requires its users to have technological or computing background for a proper use of the site and its applications. Therefore, Facebook succeeded to remain the most trafficked SNS for more than four years, and anyone can use it anywhere to communicate with his dear ones in real-time.

Motivations for Americans' use of Facebook are various. The site is indeed a means for socializing and staying in contact with ones' friends and family members. Accordingly, Americans use Facebook to connect to their friends, family and old friends with whom they lost contact; interact with other users who share the same hobbies and interests, have new friends, post comments on celebrities' publications, and look for potential dating relationships. Paradoxically, Americans are not very often influenced by marketing campaigns that companies and brands usually launch on social networking sites. Regarding buying decisions, Americans are much more influenced by their friends' opinions as well as TV and magazines commercials rather than by Brands' advertisements on social media. Other Americans interact with their favored brands via SNS only when the engagement to those brands is very intense. The conclusion that one has reached based on the previously mentioned figures is that Americans do use SNS like Facebook to primarily keep up with their close social ties. The importance of the other motivations varies from one individual to another. The other conclusion that one has reached is that there is a close relationship between Americans political engagement and Facebook. Accordingly, Facebook becomes a very crucial tool in the political arena. On one hand, it is a digital space for political news and information; on the other hand, Americans through common interests groups can participate in community-related events and bring considerable changes to the American society. Last and not least, Facebook was and is still used as a tool for voter outreach, making the digital opinion polling more accurate and efficient.



## Conclusion

One has reached, throughout readings that social media is that set of sites that enable users to stay connected and share content in real-time. Social media is the result of a high technology revolution that continues to advance without limits. In addition, social media does not include only networking sites; blogging, bookmarking, and video casting sites are also considered social media services. The list of SNS is very long and each gives importance to a particular social engagement, but all have the same aim: connectedness.

As far as social media use is concerned, one has found that businesses worldwide are benefiting from the various features SNS are offering. As a matter of fact, through social media many brands are now able to interact with their customers, providing them with exclusive content and information. Marketing is, therefore, bolstered thanks to social media. The other conclusion that one has reached is that social media can be used by companies as a recruitment tool, and reliance on traditional hiring sites is substantially decreasing. On the other hand, social media may also be used for educational purposes. Indeed, many universities and colleges in the U.S.A have their own page on social media networking sites, mainly dedicated to interacting with the students and teachers. Last and not least, social media is as well utilized to collect intelligence about potential terrorists. Sites like Intellipedia help the U.S intelligence agencies gather information of the kind. Although social media received severe criticism, it must be admitted that sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. facilitate communication and equip users with unlimited ways of sharing content online.

This dissertation mainly focuses on Facebook and its impact on the United States of America socially, politically and economically. As a result, an overview about Facebook, its history as well as its use have been presented. A cursory of the relevant literature reveals that Facebook is a free social networking site that was primarily designed to serve college students. Mark Zuckerberg and three of his classmates were the launchers of Facebook. That site's valuable principles are "connectedness and openness"; a global village is then installed thanks to Facebook. According to the analyzed history of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg was accused of taking advantage of the ideas of three Harvard Students, Cameron Winklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss and Divya Narendra to create his own networking sites (Facebook). One

may, therefore, state that Facebook came to existence by means of “hacking” that became ingrained in Facebook’s culture.

Before proceeding, it may be useful to address Facebook’s uses. In fact, Facebook is used for social, journalistic, economic and artistic ends. Facebook is a means of socializing that is used by all the categories of any society. Facebook is an excellent tool to maintain strong ties and create new connections. Facebook, as shown previously, is an excellent digital space where the young generation can make a difference in their communities by participating in various activities online and creating Facebook interest groups to organize unlimited events. Facebook indeed bolsters the youth’s civic engagement and local activism. In the same vein, Facebook promotes free speech and enables journalists to work collaboratively with users to create up-to-date stories. Facebook never replaces the traditional news outlets, but it adds new information that is as well valuable to many journalistic contents. Facebook can be also used to enhance an open discussion between companies and their customers. Moreover, Facebook can be efficiently used as an instrument for digital marketing, preserving brands’ reputation and providing engaged users with information about newly launched products. And one cannot leave this discussion of Facebook’s use without a mention that Facebook can also be a space where artists can exhibit their works. One can plausibly state that Facebook can wonderfully serve as a “global museum” and access to it is free for every user. It is true that Facebook has been criticized by many scholars; however, the obsessive use of Facebook is everyone’s responsibility.

The last part of the first chapter provided the readers with compulsory statistics that unveiled Americans’ use of Facebook. The main findings were that Americans use frequently Facebook more than any other social networking site. Additionally, Americans of all ages use Facebook. The reason behind this is that Facebook’s interface is simple on one hand; its proper use, on the other hand, doesn’t require any computing background. As far as the reasons behind Americans’ use of Facebook, it has been found throughout the study that they use this service to contact friends and family members, create new connections, post comments on celebrities publications, search for dating relationships. One may, therefore, assert that Americans use primarily Facebook as a means for socializing. Many other motivations for Facebook’s use exist among Americans, depending on each individual. The last important conclusion that one has come up with is that Americans are occasionally influenced by marketing campaigns on SNS, and they rather rely on friends and TV

commercials for purchase decisions. The social aspect of Facebook in the United States is going to be deeply analyzed in the next chapter.

### **Introduction**

One has tried, in the previous chapter, to introduce social media, shed light on its history, and deal with its different uses within different domains. Facebook, which is the case study of this dissertation, as well as its history and usage have been introduced. The last section of the first chapter tackled American's use of social media and the extent to which social networking sites like Facebook are important to their lives. The second chapter, accordingly, discusses in more detail the ideas that were advanced in chapter one but it will focus on the impact of Facebook on American users.

We shall then examine the impact of Facebook on Americans' privacy. The second part of this section will be devoted to American teens' use of Facebook. We will try to tackle the extent to which they disclose their personal information. The concern will be also on teens' ability to manage their profiles' privacy settings and the different techniques they use to preserve their privacy on Facebook.

The last section will be dedicated to dealing with the powerful role that Facebook is exercising in American society. The researcher will show that Facebook helped and still helps many of American teens construct their identity. The aim behind this point is to prove that Facebook is not only a means of entertainment; it is rather a place where teens can mold their personality far from the norms of the offline realm. Moreover, the last part of this section will tackle the different psychological consequences of Facebook use. The light will be shed on Facebook and self-esteem, Facebook and cyber bullying, Facebook and narcissism, as well as Facebook and racism. To achieve a rigorous analysis to successfully test our hypothesis, we will use data of various recent surveys and research analyses that reached valuable conclusions on the social influence of Facebook in American society.

## 2.1 Americans' Privacy on Facebook

Americans value their privacy be it in the real world or the virtual one. It is confirmed by many scholars that privacy is hard to maintain on social networking sites like Facebook than offline. That is why American users make use of all Facebook features to preserve their privacy online. However, other Facebook functionalities make users' privacy protection a difficult task. The first point of this section will tackle features of Facebook and the extent to which they impact users' privacy. The second point will address what kind of information American teenagers disclose on Facebook, the reasons behind this disclosure, and the techniques they use to preserve their privacy on Facebook.

### 2.1.1 Understanding Facebook Functionalities within Privacy Context

Technology that stores information represents a great threat to privacy because it leads to surveillance, "*massive databases, and lightning-speed distribution of information across the globe*" (Nissenbaum 01). As a matter of fact, privacy has always been considered a social issue repeatedly related to digital information technologies. This concern, however, dates back to the 1960s when governments and many other institutions created substantial databases stored in computers. The issue of privacy got amplified when technology experienced major transformations and many other new systems like the World Wide Web, mobile devices, social networks, databases of compiled information, and data mining emerged as a result of a revolutionary technological advancement (Nissenbaum 01).

A considerable number of personal information is displayed online; as a result, the risk of security and privacy invasion is multiplied. Social networking sites' users struggle to protect their personal data and the privacy settings suggested on such sites do not meet their expectations. In fact, the users of networking sites are not security specialists and find many difficulties in controlling their data. Privacy threats such as privacy infringements<sup>1</sup> are manifold as soon as personal information is shared over years within different social networks and contacts. On the other hand, social networking sites' privacy settings do have many flaws and users' personal information may "intentionally" or accidentally be leaked to third parties<sup>2</sup> or unauthorized unknown organisms (Raad and Chbeir 04). As a matter of fact, a huge amount of a user's personal data can be available on social networking sites like "*date of birth,*

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<sup>1</sup> This term means privacy invasion. This can occur as a result of the violation of the privacy terms.

<sup>2</sup> Someone or an organism that indirectly involves in arrangements, contracts, lawsuit, transactions and in our context data collection, not having a principal role.

*gender, sexual orientation, current address, hometown, email addresses, phone numbers, websites, instant messenger usernames, activities, interests, favorite sports, favorite sports, favorite teams, favorite athletes, favorite music, television shows, games, languages, his religious views, political views, inspirations, favorite quotations, employment history, education history, relationship status, family members and software applications.”* The aforementioned information exposes the user to different groups like advertisers, governments and criminals (Mahmood 47).

Many company employers have relied on social networking sites to recruit or fire workers according to their way of conduct on SNS. American Universities as well gather information about their applicants from SNS. Unsurprisingly, advertisers and marketers do use SNS like Facebook as a tool to promote their products. SNS features have improved criminals’ techniques to target victims online. As a way of example, “*A woman in Indiana (US) was robbed by a social network friend after she posted on her Facebook profile that she was going out for the night*” (Mahmood 48).

Various social networking sites have been criticized as a result of the users’ privacy invasion. The significance of users’ security online have been continuously highlighted and valued in academia as well as in the media. Stories of privacy breaching online are numerous and its consequences are even more fatal (Mahmood 48). Facebook privacy awareness is well presented in an answer by President Obama to a student<sup>3</sup> who longs for being the president of the United States. His reply was as follows, “*Be careful about what you post on Facebook, because in the YouTube age, whatever you do will be pulled up again later somewhere in your life....*” (qtd in Mahmood 48).

According to Nissenbaum, a professor of Media, Culture and Communication and Computer Science at New York University, many scholars tackled the topic of privacy and its relationship with information technology and emphasize that it is “problematic”, making inferences about its value as well as its definition. Many scholars have attempted to define privacy. Some posit it is a “*claim, a right, an interest, a value, a preference, or merely a state of existence*”(2). On the other hand, they did not succeed in reaching an agreement whether privacy is related to “*information, actions and decisions, seclusion*” or all of them (2). Others argue that privacy is one’s right to control others’ access to his information. They have created ties between privacy and “anonymity”, privacy and “secrecy”, privacy and “confidentiality”, and privacy

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<sup>3</sup> She asked the President for a piece of advice concerning presidency.

and “solitude” (02). That is why it is safe to state that “there is no single agreed definition of privacy in academia or in government circles” (Mahmood 48).

As a way of example, for Gavison privacy is “*a measure of the access others have to you through information, attention and physical proximity*” (qtd in. Nissenbaum 68). Jeffrey Reiman defines privacy as “*the condition under which other people are deprived of access to either some information about you or some experience of you*” (qtd in. Nissenbaum 70). Alan Westin, on the other hand, provides another definition of privacy and says it is “*the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others*”. Charles Fried defines differently privacy because he states “*privacy is not simply an absence of information about us in the minds of others, rather it is the control we have over information about ourselves*” (qtd in . Nissenbaum 71). Roger Clarke simply defines privacy as “*the interest that individuals have in sustaining a personal space; free from interference by other people and organizations*” (qtd in Myron 49). Since Privacy is one of the American values that is protected by the American constitution, which was debated in the previous section, the Associate Justice John Paul Steven of the Supreme Court provides an implicit constitution-related definition of privacy and says

The 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protects the individual’s privacy in a variety of settings. In none is the Zone of Privacy more clearly defined than when bounded by the unambiguous physical dimensions of an individual’s home—a zone that finds its roots in clear and specific constitutional terms: the right of the people to be secure in their.....homes.....shall not be violated (qtd in Mahmood 48).

All the definitions above do contain a grain of truth, and one mainly emphasizes that privacy is preserving one’s confidentiality, which includes actions, behavior and life experiences, and controlling it. One goes rather with Myron because his conception of privacy is clearer and can be applied for both, real life as well as the virtual one on social networking sites. He tackles privacy and links it to privacy infringement. He speaks about privacy of the person, privacy of personal behavior, privacy of personal communications and privacy of personal data. As far as privacy of the person is concerned, he refers primarily to stalking people and such behavior is considered as a breach of their privacy. Privacy of personal behavior is linked to all types of behavior, especially the most sensitive ones like habits,

sexual preferences, religious as well as political leanings expressed privately and publicly. This may also refer to what is known as ‘media privacy’. Privacy of personal communications refers to one’s ability to communicate with others without being monitored by other people or organizations. Concerning privacy of personal data, it refers mainly to the degree to which the individual is able protect and control access to his data by other people. This can be called “data privacy” or “information privacy” (49).

The problems that are related to privacy and users’ security online have been well debated and documented. As soon as social media emerged, various cases of “identity fraud and cyber stalking” have been covered (Myron 20). Since users are free to add any content to their profiles, this may result in privacy issues and future risks. Users’ great amounts of data posted online allow data collectors and cyber predators accumulate data in a very easy way. Nissenbaum opines on the issue of privacy online and states “*privacy looms large online. The paradox of the online experience is that on the one hand it offers individuals the possibility of communicating and interacting with individuals, groups, and organizations in the privacy of their homes, while on the other hand it exposes them to unprecedented monitoring and tracking*” (27).

Facebook, as an example of social networking sites, attracted considerable interest, especially its features that are related to privacy. According to the co founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook was designed in a way that enables its users to control “who sees what”. As mentioned in the previous chapter, individuals on Facebook can rectify their privacy settings on their profiles to permit or hinder access. Mark Zuckerberg uttered Facebook’s strategy and said “*I think that where we come out is that you always want to give people control of everything*” (qtd in Nissenbaum 61).

If one is to observe Facebook’s Privacy terms, one notices that they contain a lot of information and not all users do take time to read them all. They contain statements about rights and responsibilities, data policy and community standards. In the section of statements about rights and responsibilities it is clearly stated that “*We do not give your content or information to advertisers without your consent*” (Facebook 2015). This statement promises its users that no information will be unveiled to third parties. In the data policy Facebook says “*We use all of the information we have about you to show you relevant ads. We do not share information that personally identifies you (personally identifiable information is information like name or email address that can by itself be used to contact you or identifies who you are)*”



*with advertising, measurement or analytics partners unless you give us permission*". Facebook in this statement confirms that users' personal information is out of reach and no one can access them unless users grant them authorization. As far as community standards are concerned, facebook claims *"We take the safety of our members seriously and work to prevent attempts to compromise their privacy or security, including those that use fraud or deception. Additionally, we ask that you respect our members by not contacting them for commercial purposes without their consent"* The issue of privacy is tackled for more than once and Facebook, as it is mentioned in the previous statement, asserts that it takes the responsibility for protecting the security of its users.

However, in another part of the statements of rights and responsibilities, Facebook paradoxically claims

We try to keep facebook up, bug-free, and safe, but you use it at your own risk. We are providing facebook as is without any express or implied warranties including, but not limited to, implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, and non-infringement. We do not guarantee that facebook will always be safe, secure or error-free or that facebook will always function without disruptions, delays or imperfections. facebook is not responsible for the actions, content, information, or data of third parties, and you release us, our directors, officers, employees, and agents from any claims and damages, known and unknown, arising out of or in any way connected with any claim you have against any such third parties (facebook 2015).

After reading this passage from Facebook's privacy terms, one may claim that Facebook does confess that its platform may not be all the time safe and its users may experience privacy infringement. Additionally, it clearly states that users are alone responsible if their data are accessed by third parties.

However, it is impossible to state that Facebook does not protect its users' privacy. One may rather argue that Facebook's terms of condition are not effective enough to offer a solid

protection for users' data and profiles. Users' privacy maintenance on Facebook is a cause of concern. As it is stated by Matthew Myron *"nobody can doubt that Facebook's privacy settings if set correctly can be very effective and keep its users safe. Even if a user does not set his settings correctly, Facebook still claims on their terms of service that these can be breached and that they are not responsible for such cases"* (35).

One of Facebook's important features is the news-feed through which many of the users' actions are displayed such as *"who writes a message to, what photos users are in, groups users have joined, and updates of profiles status"*. It is a tool, according to Myron, that violates users' privacy. It has received a harsh criticism by a considerable number of scholars in social media field. Their arguments are based on the fact that the first page a user view on Facebook is the newsfeed. Users are then forced to view it in the first place whenever they log in. It is true that users are provided with the option of opting out of the newsfeed, the default option, however, displays every detail of the users' actions, especially if they do not know how to change their profiles' security settings. On the other hand, disabling the newsfeed tool may have also social implications and consequences. The user's network considers that the user is hiding and avoiding any interaction with other users. This implies that *"users are given the choice between protecting their privacy and facing the social consequences"* (Myron 27).

This feature has been criticized by the users, as well. Some consider it as a violation to their privacy. After a few days of its implementation, users started to protest online forming groups on Facebook like "Students Against Facebook Newsfeed" and "I Hate the New Facebook Format". They protested basing their argument on the fact that the Newsfeed displays the information they have added to their profiles on the homepages of their networks. Before the inclusion of this feature to Facebook, users' information such as relationship status, photos, and public messages could be read only if users intentionally accessed the profile. After News feed, Facebook made updated information visible using a "push model" that results in facilitating access to any information than ever before (Hoadley, Xu, Lee, Rosson 50,51).

Others, though aware of this tool's violation to their privacy, use it to express their opinions to millions of other users. The news feed has launched a distinct kind of "social performance". Matthew Myron takes the same stand and states, *"What's new to Facebook is that rather than worrying about privacy and other people watching what you are doing, users play on this engaging in a new form of impression management"*. He continues adding

“rather than worrying who has seen what message, this is now a platform to broadcast their message to everyone” (27).

Facebook responded to facebook users’ concerns and worked hard to improve the platform’s privacy options “to block feeds and control what might be pushed to whom”. Later, Facebook relaunched the newsfeed functionality but with new “privacy control” options. Mark Zuckerberg made an apology as far as this privacy protest and said “This was a big mistake on our part, and I’m sorry for it.... But apologizing isn’t enough. I wanted to make sure we did something about it, and quickly. So we have been coding nonstop for two days to get better privacy controls” (Hoadley, Xu, Lee, Rosson ,51).

A survey was conducted one month after the implementation of the newsfeed feature. 1000 members of the community of a university (staff, students,users, and non users of Facebook) were recruited to complete the survey. The purpose of the study was to unveil the reasons behind the current users’ use of Facebook, the kind of information they posted and make available, their reaction to the newsfeed controversy, and their perceptions of privacy policies past and present (Hoadley, Xu, Lee, Rosson 52).

As far as user’s motivation of the platform’s use, they stated that they use the different features of Facebook to “maintain a self presentation”, write on friends’ walls, write private messages, join common interest groups, share content and search contacts. The following figure reveals the percentage of respondents who use the features of Facebook.

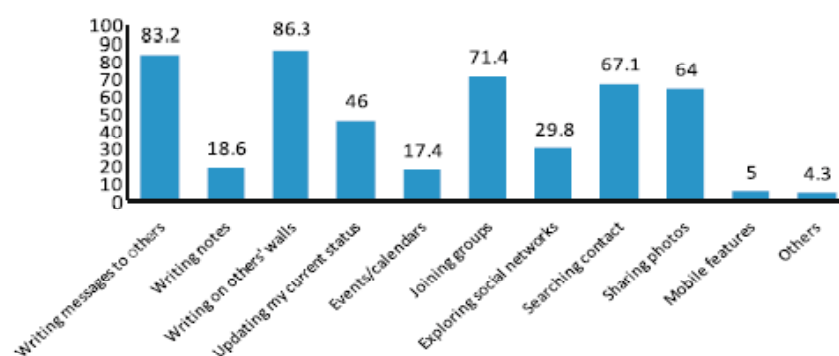


Fig. 4. Percentages of respondents using Facebook features. (What features of Facebook do you use? Select all that apply.)

### Figure 2.1.: Percentages of Respondents Using Facebook<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Hoadley, M Christopher; Xu, Heng; Lee, J. Joey; and Rossoon, Beth Mary. “Privacy as Information Access and Illusionary Control: The case of Facebook News Feed Privacy Outcry”. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 9(2010) 50-60. Web 11 March 2015. Page:53.

The survey gauged the different types of information that respondents disclosed on Facebook. The majority of the users do select the personal information they post on Facebook. As a way of example, many of the survey's respondents publish their "relationship status, sexual orientation, photos birthday" and other types of information with exact and true details. Nevertheless, a respectable majority of the survey's respondents do not disclose "their political affiliation, religious views, class schedule, address, home phone, and mobile phone numbers" to other Facebook users. One of the most interesting survey's findings is that if respondents chose to reveal a given type of personal information, they disclose it in an accurate and complete manner. The following figure provides percentages of respondents who unveil personal information.

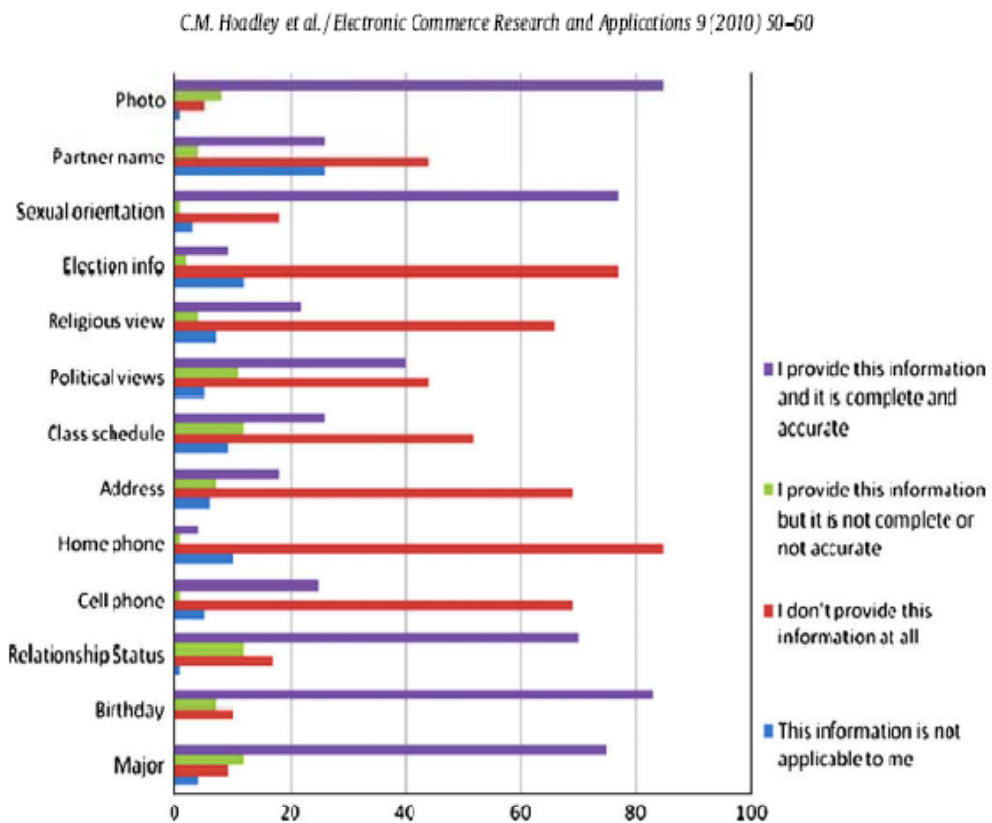


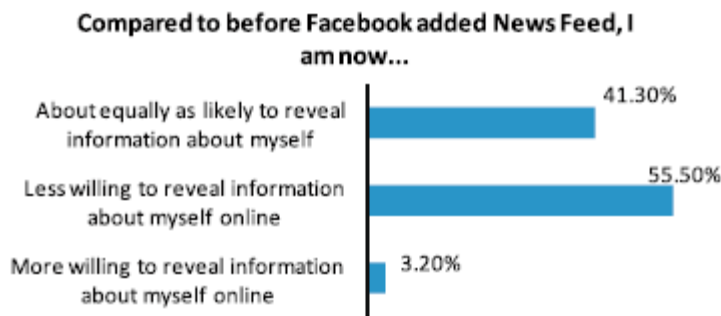
Fig. 5. Percentages of respondents' profiles revealing personal information.

## Figure 2.2.: Percentage of Respondents's Profile Revealing Personal Information<sup>5</sup>.

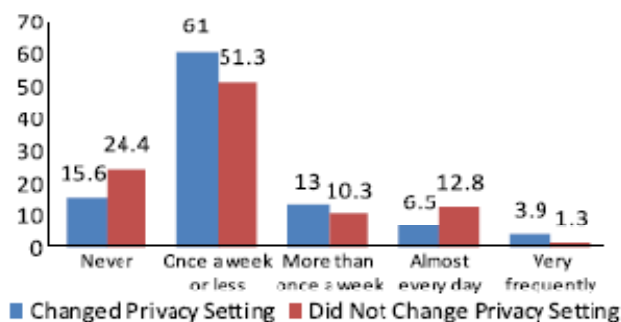
<sup>5</sup> Source: Hoadley, M Christopher; Xu, Heng; Lee, J. Joey; and Rosoon, Beth Mary. "Privacy as Information Access and Illusionary Contro: The case of Facebook News Feed Privacy Outcry". *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 9(2010) 50-60. Web 11 March 2015.page:54.

The results of the same survey indicate that the inclusion of the newsfeed feature to Facebook's interface altered how users perceive control on their personal data. Using the old interface of Facebook, users used to exercise a greater control over their interactions. Stated differently, information like relationship status, photos or public messages "*is visible only when friends initiate the information seeking behavior and carefully read a profile*". After the implementation of the news feed feature, all users' updated information is published by Facebook. And this is done after each change made by the users. As a result, the newsfeed feature facilitates information's access which makes users believe that they have less control over their personal information, "*which in turn could lead to a subjective higher probability of privacy intrusion*". This is confirmed by one of the survey's respondents when he said "[*News feed*] *seems to reveal a bit too much about other people's lives. It almost makes it too easy to 'spy' on people and what they are doing*" (qtd in Hoadley, Xu, Lee, and Rosson 55). The issues related to privacy are reduced when users' are provided with more options that enable them to control the access to their personal information. As a matter of fact, as a solution to the newsfeed privacy concerns, Facebook added other functions that allowed users to choose not to be part of the news feed feature, or simply protect certain information items from public disclosure. The CEO of Facebook was interviewed concerning the newsfeed outcry and he emphasized the significance of privacy control and said "*In general the more control you give people the better. If you give people control over everything they do, you'll never put them in a situation that's uncomfortable*" (qtd in Hoadley, Xu, Lee, and Rosson 55).

The survey as well asked respondents to draw a comparison between their willingness to reveal their personal information before and after the introduction of the News Feed feature. Superior than Half (55.5 %) of the survey's respondents were less likely to unveil their personal information online. However, 41.3% were equally as willing to disclose their personal information. The researcher finds the necessity to enclose two figures of the survey. The first figure summarizes respondents' percentages willingness to reveal information about themselves. The second one reveals the percentages of users' privacy settings change frequency.



**Figure 2.3.: Respondents' Percentages Willingness to Reveal Information about Themselves<sup>6</sup>.**



**Figure.2.4. Percentages of Users' Privacy Settings Change Frequency<sup>7</sup>.**

The other result of the survey is that Facebook users's behavior related to privacy is affected by their concerns over the information "being accessed (by their friends)" rather than concerns over "being released (by themselves)". Stated differently, users are "*much more concerned about what personal information is likely to be accessed than what personal information it is possible to access*" (qtd in Hoadley, Xu, Lee, and Rosson 57). According to Boyd, the meaning of privacy on social networking sites is then "*a sense of control over information and the audience who can gain access*" (qtd in Hoadley, Xu, Lee, and Rosson 57).

<sup>6</sup> source: Hoadley, M Christopher; Xu, Heng; Lee, J. Joey; and Rosson, Beth Mary. "Privacy as Information Access and Illusionary Control: The case of Facebook News Feed Privacy Outcry". *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 9(2010) 50-60. Web 11 March 2015. page. 56.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Hoadley, M Christopher; Xu, Heng; Lee, J. Joey; and Rosson, Beth Mary. "Privacy as Information Access and Illusionary Control: The case of Facebook News Feed Privacy Outcry". *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 9(2010) 50-60. Web 11 March 2015. Page 57.

If we analyze profiles on Facebook, one may notice and claim that it is a perfect space where various kinds of the users' information are published. It is, however, this part that threatens users' privacy. As a way of example, from the profile we can deduce whether the user is single or married, the place he lives in as well as other user's personal information. Information of the kind transforms Facebook to a perfect terrain for "cyber predators". Those predators can have access to any user's information and, thus, can target him easily, especially if the user's profile is public. The danger is minimized if the user handles perfectly his privacy settings and turns his profile from public to private. Facebook users are encouraged then to master their privacy settings in order to avoid many potential risks related to their privacy (Myron 29).

Facebook wall feature is a socially loaded tool used by users to express their ideas and thoughts. In real life, many social practices are not accepted but once on Facebook they become accepted. For example, if someone reads somebody else's mobile phone private message, this is then socially not accepted. However, if the same message is written on the that person's wall and read by millions of other people, this act is not considered socially harmful and people start to believe that reading other people's messages is not a breach of their privacy. Self exposure online becomes a new social norm that is well accepted by people of the modern world.

As it is mentioned earlier, networks' or groups' objective on Facebook is to connect people that share the same interests and facilitate their communication. However, joining a network may jeopardize one's privacy because his profile can be displayed by all members of the network he joined. Matthew Myron goes with one's line of reasoning and asserts "*The idea of connecting people is such a way is a good idea in theory, however realistically it can lead to issues relating to the users safety*" (30).

Tagging<sup>8</sup> on Facebook can also endanger users' privacy online. When a Facebook user is tagged in any photograph, the name of the tagger is visible to the user by rolling the computer's mouse on their name. It uncovers "tagged by" as well as the name of the tagger. (Mahmood 54).

Facebook users can make their profiles more appealing and personalized by adding new developers' applications. Reading Facebook's terms, one has noticed that there is no clear

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<sup>8</sup> To tag someone online means creating a link to someone's profile. The tagged post can be part of the user's timeline. As a way of example, one may tag a photo in order to unveil who is in the photo or post a new status to reveal who he is with (Facebook 2015).

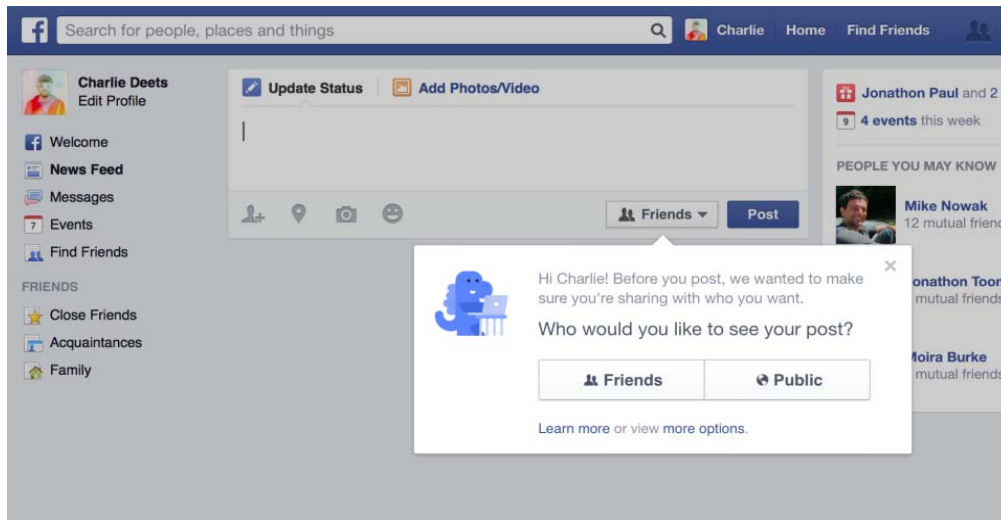
statement showing that developers may have access to users' data; it does not ,however, prohibit them from using such data for business and advertising ends. In fact, *“Facebook policy makes it possible for other users, applications and Facebook themselves to infringe on other users data. With the introduction of Facebook advertisement, data from profiles is made available to Facebook partners to allow for ‘personalized’ adverts to be displayed”* (Myron 51).

It is “sharing by default” that generated concerns among Facebook users. In fact, in November 2007 Facebook introduced Beacon<sup>9</sup> feature through which users' information was shared with many business organisms. Many commercial sites like Fandango, The New York Times, TripAdvisor and forty four other sites were active on Beacon, enabling Facebook *“to send automated updates on purchases from these sites to a buyer's friends listed on Facebook.”* Facebook did not ask the users' approval before including this service. More importantly, Beacon became part of the user's profile by default. Users protested against this service which invaded their privacy. As a result, Zuckerberg made apologies and in September 2009 Beacon was removed from Facebook. On the other hand, *“the problem with Beacon was that the company was too explicit about the intentions inscribed in its protocol”*. The other concern was that by using this service, Facebook was primarily serving the interests of companies at the expense of the those of the users (Dijck 48).

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<sup>9</sup> Beacon is a “a social advertising” program that displayed users' pictures as well as their private actions and transformed into “advertising bulletein. As a way of example, if a user bought a product online, the information reached Facebook and was spread to the user's network in a form of a “personal ad (Melber).





**Figure 2.5 Facebook Sharing Button<sup>10</sup>**

Furthermore, Facebook’s interface has been criticized by many scholars. In fact, Ari Melber in his Article “About Facebook” stresses how Facebook’s architecture facilitates “*all kinds of surveillance of unsuspecting users by the public*”. He continues arguing stating that “*what many users may not realize is that the company owns every photo. In fact, everything that people post is automatically licensed to Facebook for its perpetual and transferable use, distribution or public display*”. Dijck as well criticized Facebook’s settings and argued that if users want to master their use, they must have a great technological background. He adds that “*Facebook has every interest in preserving its default settings that make information as open as possible*” (53).

By invading users’ privacy, Facebook violates the federal American laws like the Federal Trade Commission Act. The following are the federal’s allegations against Facebook:

1- In December 2009, Facebook changed its interface in a way that users’ friends list became visible when they used to be private. Facebook did not warn its users that this would happen or asked for their prior approval.

2- Facebook insured that third party applications set up by users would not have access to users’ personal information. The application, however, did access any type of users’ data, including the ones they did not need.

<sup>10</sup>Source :Web 01 December 2016  
[https://www.google.dz/search?q=sharing+by+default+%2Bfacebook&biw=1366&bih=657&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwir15CDstPQAhWJnBoKHQb1AbgQ\\_AUIBigB#tbm=isch&q=sharing+by+default+facebook&imgsrc=3foYf44tE9FZeM%3A](https://www.google.dz/search?q=sharing+by+default+%2Bfacebook&biw=1366&bih=657&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwir15CDstPQAhWJnBoKHQb1AbgQ_AUIBigB#tbm=isch&q=sharing+by+default+facebook&imgsrc=3foYf44tE9FZeM%3A)

3- Facebook promised its users that their shared data can be restricted only to a given category, for instance “friends only”. However, this feature did not stop the flow of information to third parties applications. As it is confirmed by Drucker and Gumpert, “*Facebook had shared users’ information with outside application developers, contrary to representations made to its users*” (10).

4-By using the “verified apps”, Facebook confirmed to its users that their data are secured and certified, when they were, however, not.

5- Facebook claimed that users’ data would be shared with advertisers. However, they were.

6-Facebook said that when a user quit Facebook, his photos and videos would be out of reach. Facebook, however, allowed access to users’ content, even if they deleted their profiles. This was also confirmed by Drucker and Gumpert when they said “*Even after a Facebook user deleted an account, according to the Federal Trade Commission, the Company still allowed access to photos and videos*” (10).

7-Facebook asserted that “*it complied with the U.S – EU Safe Harbor Framework that governs data transfer between the U.S and the European Union. It didn’t*” (lee 17).

Additionally, in 2010, Mark Zuckerberg received a letter (see appendix 4) from senators Charles E. Schumer, Michael Bennet, Mark Begich Al Franken in which they demand bringing changes to Facebook’s privacy settings. They say in this letter “

Publicly available data. Facebook’s expansion of publicly available data to include a user’s current city, hometown, education, work, likes, interests, and friends has raised concerns for users who would like to have an opt-in option to share this profile information. Through the expanded use of “connections”, Facebook now obligates users to make publicly available certain parts of their profile that were previously private.

Jose Van Dijck in his book the *culture of connectivity* asserts that Facebook underwent a gradual shift from “user-centered connectedness to owner-centered connectivity” that impacted Facebook’s structure and altered it from a database to a narrative one (54). In fact, during the first days of Facebook’s existence, content was ordered around users’ contacts,

friends' updates, news and recent discussions. Facebook's interface was a database of users that made each user's page a record of his life, "*making this social network site a collection of collections*" (qtd in Dijck 54). Users, considered their pages as personal archives, a perfect space for sharing their life experiences and memories with their friends as well as the public, depending on their privacy settings. After a given period of time, Facebook experienced changes and many narrative features were introduced.

Timeline, which was implemented in 2011, was one of these recently introduced functionalities. With the advent of such a feature, Facebook's interface was not a "random database" anymore, but it became seen as a "*biography chronicling one's life up to the present*". The left side of every user's page contains a lot of information about his preferences, the stories he shares, pictures and many other kinds of content. Users opined on Timeline and noticed the extent to which all the details of their lives became intrinsic to the Facebook experience. In the same vein, "*The Timeline format cues members to post pictures from the pre-Facebook days of their youth—a baby picture, family snapshots, school classes, old friends, college years, wedding pictures, honeymoon—and thus experience content in terms of their life's story*" (Dijck 55).

While Timeline was welcomed by American users because it boosted their feelings of "intimacy" and "connectedness", some other users criticized it because it revealed too much about their personal life. (Dijck 55). This feature became related to privacy issues. With this new feature introduced in 2011, the user is unable to change some of his profile's privacy settings. As a way of example, users before the inclusion of this feature used to hide their mutual friends, which is no longer possible after Timeline. Additionally, when a user switches to Timeline, all his previously added personal data are accessed by default publicly even if the user has formerly restricted the access to them by "friends only" (Dijck 55). On another hand, the limitation of the user's cover photos view is no longer feasible. These photographs are usually personal pictures or display the user's political views and their pervasive sharing may cause "short-term" and long-term" repercussions for that user. Using Timeline to share likes with a given list of friends may unveil many other details such as the exact date when those contacts became part of the user's friends as it reveals the date when that user liked given pages. All these pieces of information enable any online attacker to analyze that user's sentiments and viewpoints and use them against him (Mahmood 55). Users expressed their concern as far as their privacy on Facebook is concerned. They mainly argue that identity thieves may use Timeline to rob naïve users of personal and sensitive information (Dijk 56).

One of Facebook's popular features is the "like button" through which a user can approve a given idea and share it with the other users. As a way of example, if a user finds a book in an ebook database, he can tag it and his preference is displayed in an automatic manner in the newsfeed of his friends. After three months of this features' implementation, more than 350,000 other websites set up this feature. Thanks to the like bottom, Facebook is capable of recording the presence of its users on various sites. It can also allow Facebook figure out the number of users as well as their friends who pushed the like bottom. Personal data, as a result, can be accessed by anyone as soon as the like bottom becomes part of the other internet's sites (Dijck 49). Journalists as well severely criticized Facebook. They revealed the different technical details that are part of the platform's hidden tactics. For instance, In October 2011, Byron Acohido, a USA Today journalist, was capable of revealing the techniques Facebook uses in order to record information of its users. He discovered that Facebook monitors active and logged-off users by introducing cookies in the users' browser. The cookies<sup>11</sup> save the time and date of a user's visit of any site through the like box. This can cause "*correlations between personal data and web-browsing habits*" which are utilized to disclose the user's political and religious beliefs, sexual orientation or health problems. On another hand, "*the contextual meanings of 'connectedness' and 'sharing' thus shifted from interaction inside the social networking site to interaction with all virtual life outside Facebook's territory*" (Dijck 48). After a confrontation with these findings, "*Facebook claimed it was using these tactics for security reasons, but, obviously, tracking these kinds of correlations could become a tempting business model*" (Dijck 53) as well as endangers users' privacy online.

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<sup>11</sup> Webopedia defines cookies as "A message given to a Web browser by a Web server. The browser stores the message in a text file. The message is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page from the server".

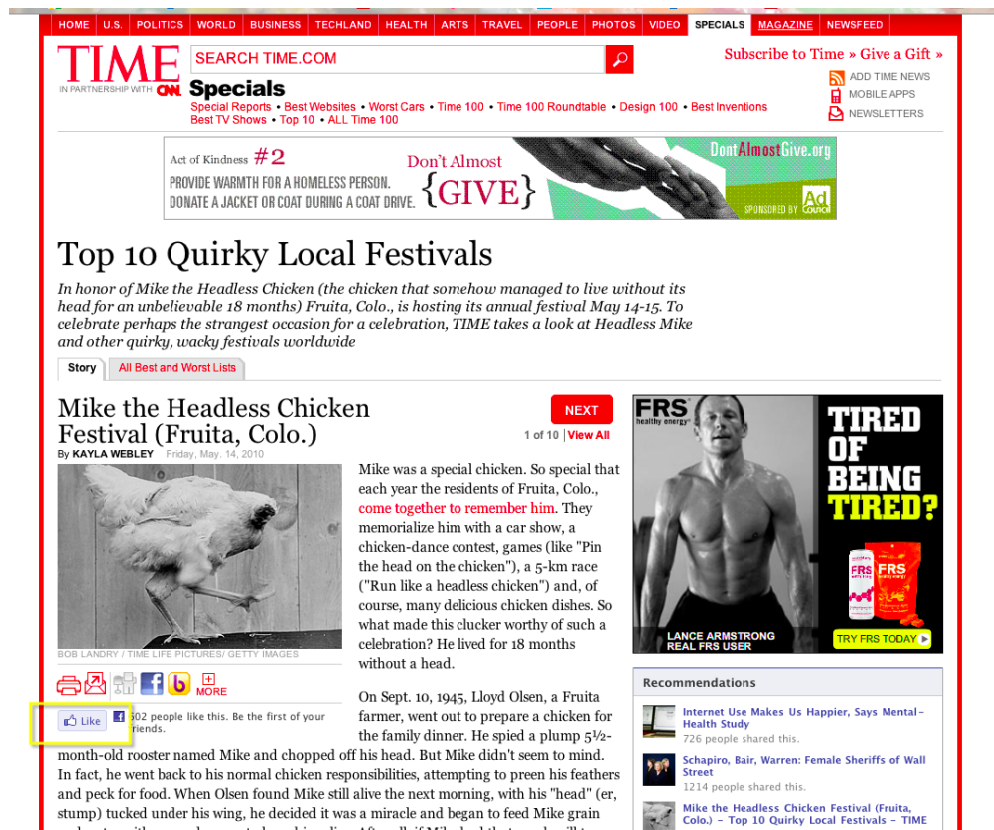


Figure 2.6.: Facebook’ Botton Like in other Sites<sup>12</sup>.

### 2.1.2 American Youth Self Disclosure on Facebook

When tackling hazardous behavior on social networking sites and as mentioned in the previous studies, the majority of scholars give importance mainly to users’ disclosure of personal information as well as the use of privacy settings. According to the authors of article “How Safe do teenagers behave on Facebook?” teenagers post a lot of personal information on their profiles and they rarely use the privacy settings. In fact, it was confirmed by a survey that American teenagers post a great amount of personal items on their profiles; Eighty percent post their real names and Seventy nine percent add photos of themselves. Negative consequences of such risky behavior comprise “*damaged reputation, gossip, stalking identity-theft and the use of personal information by third parties like advertisers or by superiors like teachers*” (Vanderhoven, Schellens, Valcke, Raes 1-2).

<sup>12</sup>Web 01 December 2016.  
[https://www.google.dz/search?q=sharing+by+default+%2Bfacebook&biw=1366&bih=657&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwir15CDstPQAhWJnBoKHQB1AbgQ\\_AUIB#tbm=isch&q=facebook+like+botton%2Bvarious+sites&imgrc=ndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A%3BndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A%3BJGsaioY\\_5NDwM%3A&imgc=ndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A](https://www.google.dz/search?q=sharing+by+default+%2Bfacebook&biw=1366&bih=657&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwir15CDstPQAhWJnBoKHQB1AbgQ_AUIB#tbm=isch&q=facebook+like+botton%2Bvarious+sites&imgrc=ndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A%3BndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A%3BJGsaioY_5NDwM%3A&imgc=ndhzaLsYYM40ZM%3A)

An observation-study was conducted to reveal the kind of information teenagers post on their profiles, and the extent to which they protect their personal information making use of privacy settings. The study included 1050 public and non-public teenagers' (13-19) Facebook profiles. The study reached the conclusion that teenagers post various kinds information like pictures, interests and other personal information. This can be considered as a part of identity construction online. Girls, however, tend to post more personal pictures, wall posts, and interests. As a matter of fact, content like pictures and interests plays an important part in *“building and revealing one’s identity. Although this process has always existed, SNSs give the personal and social identity construction a new dimension”* ( Vanderhoven, Schellens, Valcke, and Raes 07).

Additionally, the same study found that a great amount of risky information is posted by teenagers on their profiles like “alcohol abuse, partying, or nudity”. It was as well observed that older teenagers tend to post more risky information on their profiles. As a result, the authors of this article reached the conclusion that teenagers’ use of privacy settings remain restricted which implies that teenagers’ *“awareness of privacy risks has not increased over age, and that they lack adequate technical skills to manage profile pages in a safer way”* (Vanderhoven, Schellens, Valcke, and Raes 07).

An interesting survey was conducted by the Pew Research center<sup>13</sup> in which they presented valuable information about teens’ information sharing and their management of privacy settings on social media. The survey’s sample included 802 teens aged between 12 and 17 years old who live in the United States. The results show that teenagers share a great variety of personal information on social media. According to the survey, 92% of teens post their real names, 91% post a photo of themselves, 84% post their interests, 82% post their birth date, 71% post their school name, 71% post the city where they dwell, 62% unveil their relationship status, 53% post their email address, 24% add videos of themselves, and 20% post their cell phone number (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 30). The survey confirms also the findings of the aforementioned study that older teens are more willing to share personal information than their younger counterparts (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 31).

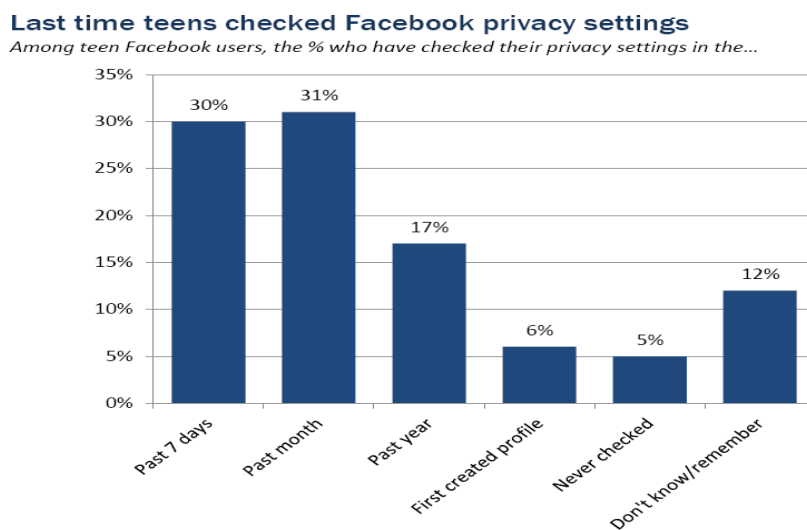
According to the same survey, teenagers do not value sharing on Facebook; however, what matters for them is the social interaction that Facebook offers to them. Additionally,

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<sup>13</sup> The survey was conducted in May 2013.

reputation management seems to be the most important element teens tend to focus on while using Facebook. This is confirmed by one of the interviewed female teenager (age 15) when she said “*I think something that really changed for me in high school with Facebook is Facebook is really about popularity. And the popularity you have on Facebook transmits into popularity you have in life.*” Other teenagers consider Facebook an “*extension of offline social interactions*”. Some respondents portrayed standards that are related to tagging, photos, likes and comments. The likes feature seems to be very important for teenagers in the sense that it determines social status. As a way of example, teens tend to keep photos with maximum number of likes and delete the ones with few likes (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 36).

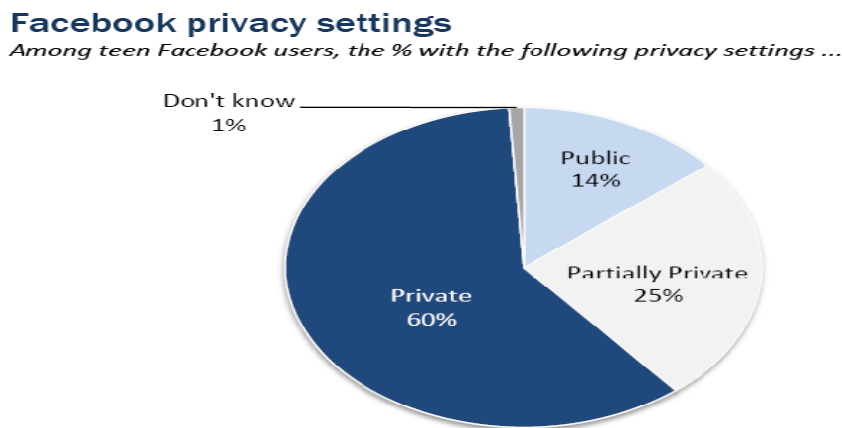
As far as Privacy settings are concerned, teens use different ways to manage access to their personal information. On Facebook, which is according to the survey the most popular SNS among American youth, teens can choose their friends as they can unfriend some. The survey reveals that most teen Facebook users limit access to their profile, while few restrict access to the material they post. The following figure highlights the percentage of teenagers who check their privacy settings (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 41).



**Figure 2.7.: Last Time Teens Checked Facebook Privacy Settings<sup>14</sup>.**

<sup>14</sup> Source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page 42.

The findings of the survey show that 60% of teenagers choose to have a private profile and that only their friends can see it. And 25% prefer the partially private profile which means friends of friends can view their profiles. Besides, 140 of teenagers have a public profile. The following figure summarizes these findings (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 43).



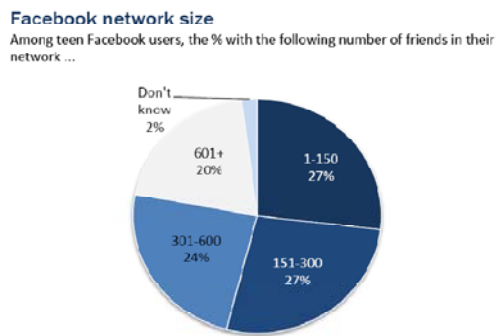
**Figure 2.8.: Facebook Privacy Settings<sup>15</sup>.**

Additionally, 56% of teens said that it is “not difficult at all “to set the privacy functions of their profile. However, 33% said it is “not too difficult”. Only 8% of teens said that using the privacy settings is “somewhat difficult” and 1% portrayed it as “very difficult”. This implies that teenagers master privacy settings’ management (.Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 44)

Furthermore, to comprehend the implications of the information that teens share on Facebook, it is significant to comprehend as well the size of their Facebook social networks. As a matter of fact, sharing personal information with 100 friends is not at all the same as sharing the same content with 1000 individuals. The following figure displays teens’ Facebook network size (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 51).

<sup>15</sup> Source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page 44.





**Figure 2.9.: Facebook Network Size<sup>16</sup>.**

According to the findings of the survey, teens with a large network tend to share a great variety of content on their Facebook profile pages. The ones who have an above-average number of friends are more willing to post information of themselves like their name, relationship status, and cell phone number compared to below-average number of friends on Facebook. (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 55). These findings were confirmed by a study that recruited 212 college students from four U.S universities. The results of this study indicate a positive relation between time spent on Facebook and personal information disclosure. Stated differently, *“the more time college students spend on Facebook, the more likely they are willing to reveal their personal information”*. On another hand, the more they have friends on Facebook, the more they disclose personal information on Facebook. (Chang, Heo 84). The following table compares the size of the teens’ network with their shared personal information.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page 51.

**Network size vs. shared personal information**

*% of teen Facebook users with the following number of people in their Facebook network who say the profile they use most often includes...*

	All teen Facebook users n=588	1-150 friends n=152 (a)	151-300 friends n=152 (b)	301-600 friends n=150 (c)	601+ friends n=123 (d)
Your real name	93	89	94	94	95
A photo of yourself	92	83	92	97 <sup>a</sup>	96 <sup>a</sup>
Your interests, such as movies, music, or books	85	82	81	87	90
Your birthdate	83	80	81	87	86
Your school name	73	59	72	81 <sup>a</sup>	80 <sup>a</sup>
The city or town where you live	72	67	70	74	81 <sup>a</sup>
Your relationship status	63	48	58	75 <sup>ab</sup>	82 <sup>ab</sup>
Your email address	54	53	49	53	65 <sup>b</sup>
Videos of you	25	16	27	27	33 <sup>a</sup>
Your cell phone number	21	8	19 <sup>a</sup>	30 <sup>a</sup>	32 <sup>a</sup>

**Table 2. 1.: Network Size vs. Shared Personal Information<sup>17</sup>.**

When asked about third party access, 40% of teens said that they were “very or somewhat” concerned that the information they shared on SNS might be accessed by third parties without their consent. Nevertheless, few translate a high level of concern. Additionally, teens who come from low income families are more likely to be concerned about third parties’ access to their data than those who come from high income families (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton<sup>57</sup>). The following table provides percentages of teens expressing concern over third parties access to their personal data.

**Third party access concern: Demographics**

*Among teen social media users, the % who express concern over third party access to their personal information, by demographic group*

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
All teen social media users (n=632)	9	31	38	22
<b>Sex</b>				
a Boys (n=308)	9	30	36	25
b Girls (n=324)	10	33	39	19
<b>Age</b>				
a 12-13 (n=151)	17 <sup>b</sup>	20	37	24
b 14-17 (n=481)	6	35 <sup>a</sup>	38	21
<b>Income</b>				
a Less than \$50,000/year (n=241)	12 <sup>b</sup>	24	34	29 <sup>b</sup>
b More than \$50,000/year (n=351)	6	37 <sup>a</sup>	43	14

**Table 2.2.: Third Party Access Concern: Demographics<sup>18</sup>.**

<sup>17</sup> source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page:56.

<sup>18</sup> Source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page 57.

Teenagers who own public Facebook profiles show no concerns over third party access to their personal information online when they are compared to the ones who have private Facebook profiles. 41 % of the ones having a public profile said they are “not at all concerned” about third party use of their personal data, “*compared with 13% of teens with partially private profiles and 20% of teens with private profiles who are not at all concerned about third parties*”. Additionally, teens who have a partially private Facebook profile tended to be “not too concerned” or somewhat concerned” about third party access to their personal information (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton 58). The following table sums up the survey’s findings that focus on third party access concern taking into consideration privacy settings and network size.

**Third party access concern: Privacy settings and network size**

*Among teen social media users, the % who express concern over third party access to the information shared on the social network site they use most often, by privacy settings and network size*

		Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
	<b>All teen social media users (n=632)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Privacy Settings</b>				
a	Public (n=77)	10	21	26	41 <sup>bc</sup>
b	Partially Private (n=143)	5	38 <sup>a</sup>	44 <sup>a</sup>	13
c	Private (n=359)	10	31	39	20
	<b>Network Size</b>				
a	1-150 friends (n=152)	13 <sup>c</sup>	33	35	20
b	151-300 friends (n=152)	7	32	34	28
c	301-600 friends (n=150)	5	33	42	19
d	601+ friends (n=123)	9	27	41	21

**Table 2.3.: Third Party Access: Privacy Settings Network Size<sup>19</sup>.**

The conclusions that one has reached from the previous survey is that American teenagers share more and more information about themselves. However, they are aware of the dangers of the inefficient management of their profiles’ privacy settings online. They do master Facebook privacy settings and most of them prefer the private-set profile.

American teenagers consider Facebook not only as a means of sharing content, but it is also considered in the first place a means of socializing. On the other hand, American teenagers tend to value online identity management on Facebook more than anything else and they report confidence in their ability to manage their profiles’ privacy settings to promote their reputation online. Most of them report positive experiences on Facebook and according to them Facebook benefits outweigh its privacy deficiencies. In fact, American teenagers do

<sup>19</sup> Source: Madden, Mary; Lenhart, Amanda; Cortesi, Sandra; Gasser, Urs, Duggan, Maeve, Smith, Aaron, Beaton, Meredith. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy”. 21 May 2013. Web 30 December 2014. <<http://pewinternet.org/report/2013/Teens-Social-Media-and-Privacy.aspx>. Page 59.

not show a great concern about third party access to their personal information. Online identity promotion on Facebook seems to be the primary concern expressed by most American teenagers.

Another study entitled “Facebook and Online Privacy” was conducted to figure out the extent to which Facebook users are aware of privacy issues as well as the advantages and risks of using Facebook. It confirms also what has been previously claimed. An online survey was conducted which recruited 119 students of a large university in the Midwestern United States. In addition, eight respondents of the online survey were chosen for an open-ended in depth face-to-face interviews. The findings of the survey show that a considerable number of Facebook users claim their comprehension of privacy settings and they add that they use them. However, they misperceive the consequences of its use. On the other hand, the survey’s results indicate that the advantages of online social networking were considered much more salient than the risks of unveiling personal information. Risks related to privacy were rather attributed more to other users than to the self. Additionally, Facebook users are more likely to change their privacy settings when their personal information is invaded than when they learn that privacy breach is happening to others. The interview, on the other hand, reveals the extent to which Facebook is deeply linked to “daily routines and rituals”. The regular use of Facebook and its intense presence in daily life implies that Facebook becomes an essential if not requisite tool for people’s social networking and connectedness. The study reports that *“the benefits of Facebook outweigh privacy concerns, even when concrete privacy invasion was experienced”* (Dabatin, Lovejoy, Horn, and Hughes 100).

Carruth and Ginsburg take the same stand in their article “Social Networking and Privacy attitudes among college students”. The article’s survey included 284 Texas State University undergraduate students. It was found in this study that Facebook self-efficacy and Facebook personal privacy breach were important factors of social media privacy concerns and worries. Nevertheless, the use of Facebook was not a salient determinant of social media privacy concerns. Indeed, *“perceived benefits of Facebook generally appear to outweigh risks of disclosing personal information”* (82).

Another interesting survey conducted in 2010 entitled “Exploring Privacy Management on Facebook” aimed at examining Facebook active users’s perceived motivations and effects of volitional revelations. The survey administered students (36 female and 23 male respondents) from a university in the Midwestern United State. The study reached the

conclusion that there are four main motivations behind users' personal information disclosure on Facebook. The first reason of those who expose themselves on Facebook is utilizing the site to share content of various types with other. Others use Facebook to store information that is important to them as it can be used for entertainment ends. Some other users stated that they were encouraged to reveal their personal information "to keep up with trends". The last reason that motivated users to disclose was their quest for popularity and showing off. A positive result of self disclosure on Facebook is that "*users feel somewhat in control of relationship management/psychological well-being*". A negative consequence is that users may spend a very long time using Facebook (Waters, Ackerman 112).

Furthermore, teenagers look for privacy and they do manage it to flee adults' surveillance. Teenagers, on the other hand, do not give importance to governments' as well as corporation's monitoring online. They are rather concerned with surveillance that is practiced by their parents, teachers and all the people who hold power over them. As Danah boyd expressed in her book *It's complicated the social lives of networked teens*, "*[teenagers] want the right to be ignored by the people who they see as being 'in their business'. Teens are not particularly concerned about organizational actors; rather they wish to avoid paternalistic adults who use safety and protection as an excuse to monitor their everyday sociality*" (56).

According to Boyd, a great difference exists between "being in public and being public". Teens love to socialize, but at the same time they hate disclosing every expression publicly. However, being part of a network increases teens' interactions visibility to adults, and social media usage to form such networks makes the distinctions between these two dynamics even harder. It may appear contradictory that teenagers want to be in public at the same time they seek privacy. It is significant then to comprehend how teenagers perceive privacy to understand the privacy means they use in a networked public online (57). The CEO of Facebook once talked about teens' perception of privacy and claimed that their engagement with social media networking sites denotes the end of privacy. However, instead of taking such a claim for granted, one has rather to deeply understand the engagement of teens with social media and try to emphasize the complex relationship between publicity and privacy in teens' networked lives online (59).

Teens do not conceptualize privacy as "*something they have; rather it is something they are actively and continuously trying to achieve in spite of structural and social barriers that make it difficult to do so*" (Boyd 60) As a result, Teens use various strategies and tools

available to them to reach privacy. As a way of example, teens make use of “Social steganography”, which includes the use of various linguistic and cultural tools like lyrics jokes, for the sake of encoding their messages which are understood by their peers and meaningless to adults. Teens use a given number of code words to share content that cannot be interpreted by adults. Even school gossip is encoded online and teachers, for example, are unable to decode and interpret them (Boyd 66). Using encoded content and all forms of social steganography is one of the techniques used for regaining “agency” intertwined with attempts to obtain privacy in online networked publics. Teens understand that limiting access to content online is not effective; they rather opt to limit access to the meaning of the messages they publish online in order to successfully achieve privacy (Boyd 69).

Danah Boyd conducted a survey<sup>20</sup> in which she unveiled the impact of social media on teens’ lives. One of the interviewed teens was eighteen years old named Mikalah who suffered a lot from his parent’s surveillance online and offline. She was afraid that one day they will discover what she published on Facebook, therefore this pushed her to erase her Facebook account. However, after taking such a decision, she received a message that influenced her decision to think twice before quitting Facebook. Her friends also posted photos in which they discouraged her from leaving Facebook and that they would miss her. Facebook helped her to take a decision in a sense that it provided her with an option which is deactivating her account. When she deactivated her account, her profile would vanish. However, when she logged in and reactivated her Facebook account, her profile would appear again. Mikalah then succeeded to maintain her accounts with its content, friends as well as its settings (70). By doing so (deactivating and reactivating her Facebook account), Mikalah made Facebook “a real-time tool” (Boyd 71). People who looked for her when she logged in would easily access her profile. Nevertheless, if they checked her when she logged out, her profile would simply disappear. According to this teen, the option of deactivating and reactivating her account was effective to achieve privacy. She used to log in at night because the adults who hold power over her logged in during day time. Mikalah then “*found a way to control the social situation to the best of her ability*” (Boyd 71). Teens’ perception of privacy and how to preserve it is different from that of most adults. Additionally, teens are aware that they are watched, “*so they try to find privacy within public settings rather than on opposition to public-ness*” (Boyd 74).

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<sup>20</sup> The survey interviewed American 166 teens

Taylor, one of the interviewed teens in Boyd's survey, did not like to disclose too much about her life on Facebook. She hated when people intervene in her life. To stop her friends' questions, she created what was called by Boyd "a light version of her life" and she shared content on Facebook just to avoid her friends' questions about her personal life. This teen came to a conclusion that sharing a little helps her preserve her privacy and it is much more effective than sharing nothing (Boyd 74). By sharing content online, Users may seem open while a great part of their lives is kept private. Additionally, when people share, they do not only want to preserve their privacy, but they also want to stop the power of others on them (Boyd 75).

Danah Boyd defined privacy as "*a process by which people seek to have control over a social situation by managing impressions, information flows, and context*" (76). Privacy is of high import because it is an essential element in teens' personality' development. Teenagers are continuously seeking privacy and never seem to give up even if people who hold power on them hinder their efforts. In fact, teens are making use of new and modern techniques that are Privacy-achieving practices. Instead of limiting access to content, teens' strategy now is to limit access to meaning (76).

As it was mentioned earlier, publicity and privacy seem to contrast each other and most of social media sites compel us to choose between being private or public. Privacy and publicity, according to Boyd, are blurred and teens seem they have succeeded to preserve their privacy within networked public by using modern tactics. The fact of finding new tools to preserve privacy, teens claim and reclaim power. Privacy is not dependant on agency. The ability to achieve privacy "*is an expression of power*" (Boyd 76).

While it was confirmed that Facebook violated users' privacy online, it has been confirmed by many scholars that Facebook can be a fertile environment for online identity construction and its use helps users enhance their self esteem. The positive as well as the negative social consequences of Facebook use on American youth, who are the most frequent users of this site, will be tackled in the next section.

## 2.2 The Social Effects of Facebook

The conviction is unshakable that Facebook impacts the American society. This is confirmed by many studies whose findings stress the influence of Facebook over the identity of American youth. Additionally, the psychological consequences of Facebook among Americans cannot be neglected and need to be deeply addressed. Thus, the researcher suggests an analysis of the different social as well as psychological outcomes of Facebook use in this section.

### 2.2.1 The Role of Facebook in American Youth's Identity Construction

Social media enable its users “to engage in self-presentation identity” as well as, as mentioned earlier, to interact with family members. However, online interactions are distinct from face-to-face conversations. On social media networking sites, people express themselves and they disclose amounts of personal information that cannot be not unveiled in offline social interactions (Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 04). Facebook is one of those social networking sites that provide a virtual sphere in cyberspace in which users can build identities and unveil them to their friends and much of their larger public. Facebook allows college students to communicate and interact with their classmates in an effective way. Since college is academic-mediated context, students can join common interest communities on Facebook which give the lonely student an opportunity to have a great sense of belonging (Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 05).

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, when users join Facebook, they create a page that contains information about the users' identity. While creating a profile on facebook, the user is asked a series of questions. Later, the user can personalize his homepage by adding Facebook applications. The fact of personalizing profiles on Facebook provides users with the ability to express identity online and they can change the content of their profiles at any time. For a considerable number of users, adding and modifying online information “*is becoming an integral means of managing identity, lifestyle, and social relationships*” (Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 05).

Facebook does not include a homogeneous group of people. On Facebook, people can put into existence subgroups where they can gain acceptance among their counterparts. As a matter of fact, aspects of minority for Facebook users have been studied. Such online networks may provide a sense of belonging and possibilities for expressions that may not take



place in the real world where problems of acceptance and stereotypes may emerge. Stated differently, “*Facebook offers a virtual reality where users can display, identify, and find others like themselves*” (Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 06).

Facebook is very popular among college students because of its uses and functions. Facebook does not only display identity, it is also becoming “*deeply integrated in users’ daily lives through specific routines and rituals*” (qtd in Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 06). In fact, Facebook has added six functions to the lives of users: pastime, affection, fashion, share problems, sociability, and social information (Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith, Zakeri 06).

Kaveri Subrahmanyam and David Smahel in their book *Digital Youth* talk about internet “virtual identity” and “online identity”. They claim that they have two meanings. The first meaning is related to the self presentation of the individual online (on the internet). The second meaning refers to online identity from a psychological perspective, and the authors of the book refer to it as “*a sophisticated conceptualization of an individual’s online self or persona*” (62). The first meaning refers to individuals’ “virtual representation” and not their physical presence in digital situations and contexts. And virtual representation according to the same authors is a set of digital information about an individual in his virtual world which comprises a name or a nickname/ username, email address, status, online history and other personal information that the user chooses to disclose. Stated differently, it is rather the face and body of the user online. Users have the possibility to have multiple digital representations in various digital contexts, as they can have various online representations within the same digital platform (62).

The second meaning of online identity includes the thoughts, opinions, and visions that individuals associate with their virtual self-presentations. All their aspects of their lives like emotions, thoughts and ideas are transferred to the digital world. Virtual representation becomes then known as social virtual identity which determines the virtual world the individual belongs to as well as his status within those networks (Subrahmanyam and Smahel 63). The construction of individuals’ identity online comprises also the online representation and the various methods through which users portray themselves in the digital sphere. Self-presentation is substantial because users have the ability to decide which aspect of their lives to disclose. As a way of example, the individual may display information like gender, interests and opinions on his social networking profile, but he/she prefers eschew other

aspects. It is considered by Subrahmanyam and Smahel that the construction of online identity is not a monolithic process and the ways in which it happens is contingent upon the different features and tools of each given digital platforms.

The same view was shared by Special and Barber in their article “self-disclosure and students satisfaction with Facebook”. They claim that Facebook gives its users the capability to give birth to an online identity which includes revealing personal information to other users like viewpoints, thoughts and feelings. According to them, Facebook provides its users with the possibility to choose which personal information to unveil to others, building an online identity that can be either similar or different from their real selves. Self disclosure can be done either explicitly using written statements on their walls or implicitly uploading photos to their Facebook profiles(625). Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin agree that Facebook helps its users construct an online identity but they are looking rather to create the hoped-for selves that they are unable to create in the real world. They go on to add that “*digital selves are real, and they can serve to enhance the users’ overall self-image and identity claims and quite possibly increase their chances in the offline world*”(1832).

Danah Boyd talked about virtual identity and mentioned that face-to-face conversations are quite different from the digital ones and that people online are “*typing themselves into being*”. In other words, people online are trying consciously to create their digital presence. She added also that the internet can be a useful tool to separate people from the burdens of their physical identities, giving them the opportunity to be a much better “version of themselves” (37).

Danah Boyd, as mentioned earlier, is also interested in issues of virtual identities but she mainly focuses on teenagers, the most influenced category of the society by social networking online. She interviewed an American teen girl who was a well informed internet user, and very comfortable navigator of virtual identity in different platforms, making use of her comprehension of community norms. She knows perfectly how to present herself online, exactly as she does offline. She is not separating her virtual world from her real one, but she is rather changing social settings and behaving in accordance with them (41).Accordingly, teens are not creating imagined selves in the digital world. They find no reason why they should hide accurate information of themselves because the users who read what they published online already know them. Dominic, one of the interviewed teens, confirmed and said “*because all my [social media] friends are actually my friends; they’ll know if I’m joking*

*around or not.*”Therefore, one can reach the conclusion that understanding social context allows teenagers decide what to share and what not to share (46).

Teens create profiles on social networking sites and they are aware that they are dealing with various audiences, including their best friends. Media scholars Paul Hodkinson and Sian Lincoln draw an interesting comparison between “bedroom culture” and the construction of digital profiles. According to them, teenagers personalize their bedrooms and decorate them using posters and photographs. Similarly, teenagers, once creating a homepage on Facebook, they decorate their digital representation using a wide range of tools and media available online. However, teens complain that reaching privacy online is much harder than achieving it in offline intimate spaces. As a result, teens find it difficult “*to meaningfully portray the nuances of who they are to different and conflicting audiences*” (qtd in Boyd 47)

Teens are making constant efforts to understand social contexts to present themselves and act accordingly. However, what must be taken into consideration is that the internet is not an ideal space where users are not subjected to the rules of the real world. Teens, therefore, are attempting to portray who they are in the digital world and how they can be part of the society they belong to. They undergo the same battles as adults do, but under the surveillance of the people who hold power over them and without a complete understanding of their identity. According to Boyd, teens are searching their identities within a cultural labyrinth(53).

Rybas Natalia takes the same stand after conducting in-depth interviews but with 15 students of a mid-western American university. She concluded that people create real profiles of themselves on Facebook. One of the interviewees named Jema said “*you know, you’ve got the basic information of who I am, where I am*”. The interviewed students emphasize that they share a given cluster of information online because it remains stable and that elements of their personality is unchangeable. While others give importance to sharing likes and dislikes on Facebook, they consider posting their tastes and preferences as a real reflection of their identity. As a result, their profiles are really who they are and draw “*a syllogistic matrix for creating one’s presence on Facebook*” (97).

According to the same scholar, there is a tight link between the person and his online profile. Social media networking sites are patterned with perceptions of communication, identity and community in mind. In fact, Facebook, as mentioned in chapter one, asks his users to provide information like “current city”, “Birthday” “college and work position”. All

these details can be interpreted by other users to be the real reflection of one's self. It is true that these data can be altered, but they are still firmly connected to one's persona and his account. In fact, Mark Zuckerberg stresses the importance of authenticity and real representation of one's self on Facebook. The fact that each user has a single account refers to the motivation for singularity in social networking platforms. After the creation of the profile on Facebook, users manage to develop it. If the users understand well the functionalities of the social networking site and create their profiles in an authentic and real manner, one can state then that their self –presentation is deeply embedded in the architecture of Facebook (Rybas 98).

A study was conducted by Ping Yang to comprehend how students express their cultural selves online. It included students from a large Southwestern university in the United States. The results of the study reveal that students' cultural identities<sup>21</sup> online are real and anonymous, clear and ambiguous at the same time, depending on the digital network they use. As a matter of fact, students unveiled how they express their identities via emails, chat rooms, online forums and social networking sites. It has been found by this study that sites which students visited impacted the stability of their identity online. Teresa and Jeffry, both were interviewees of this study, stated that students do not disclose their identities in chat rooms and online forums and they are rather anonymous. Nevertheless, when they use the social networking site Facebook to interact their friends, they tend to unveil real representations of themselves. Another interviewed students named Jacob shared the same stand and said,

The creation of sites such as [.....]Facebook[...], allows individuals to express their identity more specifically. While you can still learn a person's labels (i.e age, religion, orientation, etc), you can further learn about different aspects of that person's identity. For instance, pictures can communicate an individual's age identity, race identity, gender identity, family identity, religious identity, religious identity, etc., all without words (117)

Another study was conducted by Martinez Alemàn and Katherine Lynk Wartman in which they shed light on students' online social networking on campus. It has been found that

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<sup>21</sup> Cultural identity comprises an individual's language, gender, religion, ethnicity and race, geographical territory and economical status.

the social networking site Facebook is a crucial part of college student' lives as well as a substantial component of campus culture. According to the interviewed students of the study, Facebook became a reflection of "late-adolescent, undergraduate concerns" that are related to agency and identity issues. Students use Facebook to strengthen online identity, to mold the culture of campus and to ameliorate communication within and beyond college campus (84).

Similarly, Park and lee in their study which sampled 1.500 students from a Southwestern U.S university take the same stand and claim that Facebook use can entail psychological impacts on college students such as sense of belonging and satisfaction with campus life. Since Facebook was designed to meet a social need which is networking, it is reasonable to state that Facebook is highly related to a sense of belonging, which can as well participate in the life of students on campus (603). Indeed, Facebook is used by a great number of college students for communication purposes and relationship maintenance within the campus context. Additionally, Students can use Facebook as a means to circulate news that concerns campus life, "*which can in turn increase feelings of community and membership*" (607).

Additionally, though students report counterfeiting on Facebook profiles, they claim authenticity on Facebook and that most of students' profiles are real representations of themselves. Students talked about their self-presentation online and described others' representation on Facebook as synchronic, denoting that their friends' profiles are considered authentic and real at a given period of time, and diachronic that is changing throughout a given period of time. Moreover, "*students' authenticity on Facebook is like real-world performances of gender or race or sexuality, of social class or ethnicity, performances that reveal cultural narratives of normative and counternormative behavior*" (Amelàn and Wartman 85). Chen and Marcus found in their study conducted at a southeastern university in the United States of America, that sampled 463 students, that students construct identities on Facebook that are honest and realistic because any false information can be questioned by their counterparts (2092).

It has been also found that students judge each other according to his/her friends. A person's connections online can be considered as social capital because it unveils to others the person's contacts within his online social network. Similarly to social capital, student's network connections are of high import because it is thanks to these networks that students show engagement in campus culture as well as in the process of self-development. The

importance of social networks is the masterpiece of social networking sites and the students of this study value and recognize their networks. Additionally, whether Facebook is used to maintain offline relationships or create new groups and networks, the study stresses that “*Facebook is a conduit of social capital on college campuses today*” (Amelàn and Wartman 88).

According to the study conducted by Amelàn and Wartman, Facebook is the first space where students interact with each other as it is the primary campus information provider. This remarkable change in communication has as well impacted the way students advertise campus events and students’ organization into groups. Indeed, students who are engaged in campus organization confirm that Facebook is their first channel to notify other students of various campus events and activities. As a way of example, students usually create a group on Facebook, and send invitations to other students to join it. Later, the members of the group are provided with messages that contain crucial campus-related information. Steph, one of the study’s interviewees, takes part of a capella singing group on her campus. She mentions that the group uses Facebook events to inform people about their concerts. She claims that Facebook is a successful tool to stay in touch with her classmates by saying

People would be much more likely to check an event and see what is going on, or join a group, and then see what events the group is hosting than to open up random e-mail from people because a lot of people get spam e-mail and get tired of it, but people still think that Facebook things are valid, when there is stuff going in, on campus, so they are more likely to read what is actually going on, and that is a new thing this year (Amelàn and Wartman 101).

Students prefer Facebook to e-mail as an efficient method of communication because Facebook messages are taken more seriously. Another interviewed student named Diego emphasizes how Facebook’ is effective in advertising events by stating “*I think it is a lot better way of communication. I think it is because I think for the most part everyone usually checks Facebook..... I think what really increases the number of people that will attend an event is that they post it on Facebook than word of mouth or through flyers*” (Amelàn and Wartman 101).

Taking the same stand, some scholars contend that Facebook is not simply a place to hang out online; it is rather a space where teenagers can negotiate identity, uncontrolled by the real world social norms. Teens' virtual selves online are an extension of their real selves. Because teens encountered many difficulties in the process of identity construction in the real world, they chose Facebook as a place to negotiate their "unfixed identity". By the means of their Facebook profiles, they try to construct their identity at the same time they value the importance of privacy and their need for popularity. Facebook is important to teenagers because it is a safe place for identity negotiation and it facilitates communications with peers and helps maintain relationships (Conde, Mennecke and Townsend 364). To sum it up, "*Facebook acts as a venue for young people who might just want some time to deal with themselves-a time to decide who they are-with their 'friends' in the virtual realm*" (Conde, Mennecke and Townsend 360). Facebook, on the other hand, enables its users to bring changes to their profiles as a response to their peers' comments and likes or by personal choice using Facebook "timeline". This ability to enhance one's identity "*in real time provides a unique multimedia view of the self*" (Moreno, Kota, Schoohs and Whitehill 509). The authors of the article "The Facebook Influence Model: A Concept Mapping Approach" perfectly summarized Facebook Influence and used a sample of 80 college students from a large Midwestern university in the United States. They provided the following table that one finds its inclusion important to this dissertation.

TABLE 2. FACEBOOK INFLUENCE MODEL CLUSTERS AND EXAMPLE ITEMS

Domain	Cluster label	Example items within cluster
Connection	Connection to people	Allows people to constantly stay updated with others' lives; may to get to know acquaintances almost instantly; keep in touch with people you wouldn't call or text
	Far reaching	Ability to reach many people with one Web site; can reach anyone, young and old, rich and poor; bonding across cultures and distances
	Fast communication	Feel connected and in the loop constantly; puts everyone you know and what they're doing in one place; updates on people's lives faster than with a cell phone
	Business and promotion	Ability to plan influential events such as protests or sit-ins; statuses provide a way to blog instantly about events or political topics; every company uses it to promote business or provide deals
	Accessible and adaptable	Largest network in human history; easy to use and navigate; widely known and talked about
	Data and information	Huge database of information; compiled data from millions of individuals; news feature
Identification	Identity expression	Freedom to express things and let it be heard; present the best side of yourself; show off accomplishments to everyone you are friends with on Facebook, not just close friends
	Influence on identity	Provides others with pictures that can influence perceptions; display aspects of yourself that you wouldn't share in offline life (sexuality, substance use); wonder if you should be doing what you see everyone doing in pictures
Comparison	Curiosity about others	Can know what people are up to without asking them about it and without them knowing you know; creep culture/stalking; see who associates with whom with pictures and comments
	Facebook establishing social norms	Reinforces beliefs or opinions by seeing that others hold same beliefs or opinions; can see what is popular by observation; can follow norms
Facebook as an experience	Distractions	Procrastination; addictive; huge distraction
	Positive experiences	Facebook is referenced in daily life; provides entertainment at any time; status updates can promote a good mood
	Negative experiences	Changes the nature of communication from face to face to screen to screen; people willing to sacrifice privacy; inspires competition in people

**Table 2.4.: Facebook Influence Model Clusters and Example Items<sup>22</sup>.**

Facebook does not only enable students to spread information about events to an infinite number of people, it also provides them with multimedia tools to display photos of their activities online. Another interviewee student named Miguel who is a member of an all-male step team at his university says that the members of his team post videos of their performance and they tag each other in the videos so that it becomes part of each member's profile. Thanks to these posts, "*students have an alternate way to let others know about events, retrospectively—they can post photos or videos following an event*" (Alemán and Wartman 101).

Facebook has impacted other university-based domains like alumni relations and development. Facebook has provided alumni relations offices with possibilities of broadening their alumni base and has bettered their data connection. They also organize class reunions such as on-campus parties on Facebook. Additionally, Facebook is regarded by alumni associations as an important tool in their fundrasing as well as professional activities. For

<sup>22</sup> Source: Moreno, A. Megan; Kota, Rajitha; Schoohs, Shari; Whitehill, M Jennifer. "The Facebook Influence Model: A Concept Mapping Approach". *Cyberpsychology, Behavior And Social Networking* 16 (2013) 504-511. Web 07 April 2015. Page 508.



example, Binghamton University Alumni Association<sup>23</sup> gathers its alumni data via its Facebook group that has more than 900 members. Facebook is used by individual alumni to reconnect with university and college classmates; however, others use it for professional and career development purposes. The ones who are looking for employment use Facebook to communicate with alums who are currently working for given companies. Those companies can make use of Facebook alumni groups to hire potential workers. Most University alumni university association officers use Facebook for the aforementioned ends (Alemàn and Wartman 129).

Other researchers do recognize the benefits that Facebook is offering to the society, but they highlight as well addiction to online social networking. Danah Boyd, for example, claimed in her book *it's complicated* that United states media has usually described American youth in their dark bedrooms with the light of their high tech gadgets covering their faces, “*implying that there’s a generation of zombified social media addicts who are unable to tear themselves away from the streams of content from Facebook*” (78). Boyd explained well youth addiction to social media and added that if teenagers use social media sites, this does not necessarily mean they are less social. It is absolutely the opposite: their engagement with social media proves their sociability. When Boyd listened to her interviewees, she figured out that teens are not addicted to technology and social networking sites but to each other. Her arguments are grounded on the fact that teens’ addiction to technology is a new form of human engagement. Teens tend to be addicted to any space that allows them to stay connected to their friends. So Boyd stresses that teens are not actually addicted to social media, they are rather living an addiction to one another (80).

As a matter of fact, Tara, one of Boyd’s interviewees, states that she likes Facebook because it allows her to interact with her friends. Like any other teen, she spends hours a week watching her friends’ Facebook uploaded photos, writing comments, and posting content. Tara considers Facebook as a social necessity, a substantial element of her life. This does not mean that this is the only social part of her life or the privileged one; she rather explains that she prefers Face-to-Face interaction with her friends and that, however, was not possible. That is why teens turn to Facebook as an option to hang out with friends but online (84). As Boyd explains it “*social media has become a place where teens can hold court. Their desire to*

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<sup>23</sup> One of New York State’s public Universities.

*connect, gossip, and hang out online makes sense in response to the highly organized restricted lives that many teens lead” (91).*

Another Boyd’s interviewee named Bianca talked and defended online socializing. She claims that online social networking enables her to learn “social skills”. She indeed says “*you learn how to deal with different situations and different people, and you just to work with people you don’t like so much. So it just helps you*”. When teens communicate with each other, they become involved in “informal learning”, enhancing their identity in relation to others at the same time comprehending deeply the social world (92). Stated differently, When teenagers get engaged with social networks like Facebook, they are attempting to exercise control over their lives as well as their relation to society. They start understanding how people are related to each other and how “*information flows between people*” (93).

Among the social skills that Facebook is helping teens to gain is the possibility to create politically-driven networks. Teens receive criticism because they are apolitical; however, a considerable number of teens are politically active in the online as well as offline worlds. Some teens are able to express their offline political engagement online and social networking sites like Facebook give them the opportunity to be political (Boyd 206). As a matter of fact, a study was conducted by Sebastian Valenzuela, Namsu Park and Kerk F. Kee to determine the extent to which Facebook is in relation to behaviours and attitudes that augment users’ social capital. The sample of the study included students from two large public universities in the southwestern U.S state of Texas. The results show that there exists a close relationship between Facebook use as well as Facebook group use and students’ “*life satisfaction, social trust, and civic and political participation*”. The findings of this study then contradict the widespread belief that active Facebook users are more isolated and less connected than occasional users (893).

Facebook use, as it mentioned in the first chapter, entails psychological consequences on American users. Therefore, the next section will be devoted to discussing these consequences with the help of the different studies that endeavored to understand the complex relationship between Facebook and self-esteem, Facebook cyber bullying, Facebook and narcissism, and finally Facebook and racism.

### 2.2.2 The psychological Consequences of Americans' Use of Facebook

Many studies have proved that Facebook use enhances self-esteem by the means of augmenting the sense of belonging of users. Indeed, a study shedding light on the relation that exists between Facebook use and subjective well being of a group of students of a large Midwestern University in the United States determined if the number of friends on Facebook and the promoted positive representation on Facebook had any impact on “subjective well being”. The study’s findings revealed that both aforementioned factors are positively related to subjective well being. The other conclusion that the authors of this study reached is that since Facebook “*enables visualization of social connections it also validates and enhances users’ self esteem*” (Nadkarni and Homann 246). Tazghini and Siedlecki in their study confirm that there exists a link between self-esteem and Facebook online activities. Indeed, it has been found that users with lower self-esteem are more likely to have a more significant sense of belonging to the community of Facebook. The reason behind this and suggested by the authors is that the communication that is offered by Facebook is easier than any other social networking platform, including the possibility to know new friends more efficiently. Furthermore, those of low self-esteem tend to accept friendship invitation on Facebook from strangers and acquaintance because they are often willing to compensate their low-esteem by having more friends. Consequently, lower self-esteem individuals are more likely to gain social capital via Facebook than higher self-esteem individuals (832).

While dealing social media, it seems impossible to ignore online safety and sexual predators. Online safety, be it on Facebook or any other networking site is a complex issue, because according to Boyd a fear culture is “omnipresent” in United States society, and American parents are not ready to place their children’s safety in jeopardy. Despite statistics that highlight the improbability of harm caused online and the unveiled reality that all publicized stories tend to be fake ones, parents still worry about their children that one day they can be a victim of an online predator (Boyd 102). The advent of technology may result in anxiety. When Parent’s worries about their children’s safety become uncontrollable, they result in the production of what the sociologist Stanly Cohen calls “moral panic” (qtd in Boyd 105).

These moral panics do impact youth lives and lead them to live in a conflicted situation within American society. In some situations, authorities consider teens as “nuisances”<sup>24</sup> that

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<sup>24</sup>Teens can be considered a threat to the society because they may cause trouble.

have to be controlled; in others they consider them as “innocent people” who need protection. As Boyd says, “*society is afraid of them and for them*”. The tension that results from these two conflicting views mold adults’ relations with teenagers as well as society’s beliefs about teens. Consequently, this separation of views entails a conflict between teens and adults and crafts the activities and chances of teens. Parents’ fear and teens reaction to it “*complicates the lives of teens as they’re coming of age*” (Boyd 107).

American parents are afraid of another online danger which is cyberbullying. But before addressing this social issue, one finds it crucial to determine the term bullying. According to Boyd, there is no unitary definition of bullying. However, she considers the definition suggested by the Swedish psychologist Dan Olweus an accepted one. For him, three important elements are related to bullying: aggression, repetition, and imbalance in power. He claims that youth aggression can be considered bullying only if the situation manifested the presence of the three aforementioned elements. This definition implies that anyone who is physically and socially powerful makes another person suffer from “*repeated psychological, physical or social aggression*” (131). Similarly, Cyberbullying was defined by Juvonen and Gross as “*the use of the internet or other digital communication devices to insult or threaten someone*” (qtd in Subrahmanyam and Smahel 190). Accordingly, cyberbullying involves “*insulting, threatening harassing and intimidation behavior*” by the use of any of the online digital means. These actions aim at spreading rumors, secrets insults as well as death threats to harass and manipulate the targeted person. According to Subrahmanyam and Smahel, cyberbullying “*includes impersonating others online, posting personal information about others, and forwarding private e-mail and instant message conversations*” (191). Raskauskas and Stoltz provided an illustrating description in which a 14-year-old girl portrays how teens use text messages to harm their peers:

I went on this trip with my family. When I came back everyone at school was avoiding me. They moved away when I came by and whispered and pointed at me. Finally a friend told me that my friend (name omitted) had sent text messages to everyone that I had been out of school because I’d had an abortion. I was so embarrassed (qtd in Subrahmanyam and Smahel 191).

For Boyd cyberbullying is not a new phenomenon and that social networks like Facebook simply add a new platform to bullying (132). For her, Facebook and other social media sites

did not bring changes to bullying, but it rather made bullying more visible to more other people. It is so naïve to censure technology and consider that bullying may disappear if social media use is reduced (152).

On another hand, social media sites like Facebook help American teens to be famous. However, celebrity through social media can be satisfactory and harmful at the same time. As it is mentioned in the first section of this chapter, Facebook can be used to share one's accomplishments with other users. However, in other instances it may affect negatively people's reputation. As Boyd puts it "*Teen celebrity culture is created by and is a byproduct of attention seeking and visibility that can be both healthy and unhealthy*" (149).

Many other scholars tackled the psychological consequences of Facebook use but they mainly focused on the relationship between Facebook usage and narcissism. As a way of example, it has been claimed by Special and Barber after that narcissist users are satisfied with Facebook because it gives them another option to admire themselves (629). Sanja Kapidzic takes the same stand in a study conducted at a large Midwestern U.D University that recruited 288 students. The author of the study gives an overview of narcissism and claims that individuals who are high in narcissism consider their physical appearance positively, esteem too highly their attractiveness; they, thus, believe that their good looks may help them get admiration from other people (15).

Mehdizadeh in her article "Self-presentation2.2: Narcissism and self-Esteem on Facebook" defined narcissism as "*a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and an exaggerated sense of self-importance. It is associated with positive self-views of agentic traits, including intelligence, physical attractiveness, and power*" (358). According to the same author, narcissist individuals use virtual platforms like Facebook to post self promoting pictures (358). She also found in her study that there was an important negative correlation between self-esteem and Facebook activity. Individuals with lower self-esteem spent more time on Facebook. Additionally, she found a relationship between narcissism and self-esteem. She meant that individuals with lower self –esteem tended to post self-promotional pictures on Facebook. For her, Facebook can be described as a fertile environment for those individuals who strive to construct a hoped-for identity online they are unable to establish during face-to-face circumstances (363). Indeed, Narcissistic individuals are more likely to select pictures of themselves that stress their attractiveness and post them online than those who are less narcissistic. Additionally, narcissists consider that they own

unique personality traits that many other people lack. To gain more admiration from others, they choose pictures that display more visibly positive facets of their personality and lifestyles. The same author added that narcissists value interpersonal relationships with the intention of promoting their self-concept. Stated differently, they need these social relationships not for the sake of approval; they are rather looking for admiration from others, with no import to their needs and concerns. Therefore, narcissist individuals are less willing to be interested to post pictures of themselves that highlight interpersonal relationships than those who are less narcissist (Kapidzic 15). Indeed, *“narcissistic individuals strive more than others to present the best possible image of themselves to their online audience”* (17). Facebook provides narcissists with an audience as well as a *“stage for highly controlled self-presentation”* (14). Facebook, among many other social networking sites, can be described as an excellent social environment for narcissists (Deters, Mehl, and Eid 166). On the other hand, Facebook provides an extended terrain for racist practices that already existed and still exist in the American offline world.

In fact, Boyd in her book tackled the relationship between racism and social media. She said that the internet is designed to become a tool for tolerance because it allows people engage in worlds that are not theirs. Teens, the main focus of Boyd’s studies, are the first category of the society who got advantage of this recent “cosmopolitanism”. Nevertheless, when one analyses how social media is utilized by teens, the conclusion is very clear that the internet and social media in particular doesn’t solve the issue of inequality. Other social practices like prejudice, racism, and intolerance are still pervading online. Segregation that exists in the offline world gets also amplified in the online one. These social schisms mold how teens engage with social media and content they find online. The reason behind this is that teens use social networks like Facebook to reinforce existing connections and not to create new ones. Boyd describes it in a very clear way in the following words *“Existing social divisions –including racial divisions in the United States–are not disappearing simply because people have access to technology. Tools that enable communication do not sweep away distrust, hatred, and prejudice. Racism takes on new forms in a networked setting”* (159). Indeed, the internet makes social divisions more visible online because when teens interact online, they transport their offline worlds with them. Their attitudes, cultural values and prejudices are as well visible online (Boyd 160). Despite the fact that technology enables people to communicate with whoever online, in reality teenagers interact with people whom they know and have many social aspects in common (Boyd 166).

Teens think that they are connected to various groups of people; however, their tastes reveal their racist attitudes. Indeed, what confirms social divisions online is teens' preference of Facebook over other social networking sites. Besides, they judge their peers according to their tastes with regard to their engagement with a particular networking site. Craig, one of Boyd's interviewee, illustrated why students prefer Facebook over Myspace, and highlighted the visibility of social and cultural divisions online,

The higher castes of high school moved to Facebook. It was more cultured, and less cheesy. The lower class usually were content to stick to MySpace. Any high school student who has a Facebook will tell you that MySpace users are more likely to be barely educated and obnoxious. Like Peet's is more cultured than Starbucks, and Jazz is more cultured than bubblegum pop, and like Macs are more cultured than PC's, Facebook is of a cooler caliber than MySpace (Boyd 169).

People have the tendency to impact the digital practices of those who belong to their networks. That is why the spread of technology entails elements that mirror offline social networks. When teens, as a way of example, use social networking sites like Facebook to communicate with their peers, they recreate networks that are bound by the same social distinctions of their daily lives, including the social and economic differences that are present in their offline peer networks. In fact, "*teens go online to hang out with their friends, and given the segregation of American society, their friends are quite likely to be the same race, class, and cultural background*" (Boyd 171).

What can be also deduced is that when teens create social networks, they start deducing their position in their society. Via social networks like Facebook, teens express their dreams, and hopes, struggles and challenges. Digital spaces render teens' challenges visible; at the same time they neither produce nor keep undesirable events from occurring. Social media networking sites reflect various everyday life components be they good or bad (Boyd 212).

### Conclusion

Chapter two tackled surveys which confirm that American teenagers share important personal information on their Facebook profiles. Nonetheless, this does not mean that they are not aware of the perils of any inadequate management of their profiles' privacy settings. They do understand Facebook's privacy settings and they do use them wisely. The claim that Facebook is exercising a great influence on American society is apparent when American teenagers assert that Facebook for them is not only a means of sharing information or entertaining, but it is as well their primary means of socializing. Additionally, what matter for American teenagers are their online identity and its management on Facebook. American Teenagers' efficient management of their profile's privacy settings directly affects their reputation online; one may therefore conclude that online identity promotion on Facebook is the most significant concern advanced by most American teenagers. In fact, Facebook is a perfect place where teenagers can negotiate identity, unbridled by the norms of the offline world. They do not create imaginary selves online, but they rather construct virtual identities that reflect their offline selves. Since many teenagers face many obstacles to construct their identities in the offline world, they shift to Facebook as a perfect space to negotiate their "unfixed identity". To sum it up, for most American teenagers, Facebook may be considered as a safe place for identity negotiation, a perfect place for the ones who are seeking popularity, and an efficient means of communication to maintain relationships.

According to many recent studies, Facebook has psychologically affected American users. In fact, the authors of these studies focused mainly on Facebook and self-esteem, Facebook and cyber bullying, Facebook and narcissism, as well as Facebook and racism. To start with, it has been confirmed that users with lower self-esteem tend to have a stronger sense of belonging to the community of Facebook than those with higher self-esteem. Additionally, other scholars suggest that Facebook enhances self-esteem. Users with lower self-esteem prefer using Facebook because it provides them with an easier means of communication than real world options may offer. One may therefore suggest that lower self-esteem users have the tendency to gain social capital by means of Facebook more than higher self-esteem users. As far as Cyber bullying and its relationship with Facebook is concerned, one may rather agree with the scholar Danah Boyd when she claimed that cyber bullying is not new to the American society and Facebook has rather added another venue for bullying.



Facebook did not bring any new dimensions to bullying, but it rather renders bullying more visible to other people. It is therefore unwise to condemn technology and believe that bullying may vanish as long as social media use decreases. Concerning Facebook and narcissism, it has been confirmed by many studies that Facebook is an excellent social terrain for narcissists who long for constructing a hoped-for identity on Facebook that they are unable to have in real world situations. Last and not least, when racism has been studied in the context of Facebook, it has been found that sites of the kind did not bring an end to inequality and social practices like prejudice and intolerance still exist online. More importantly, racism gets amplified in the online world. The reason behind this is that most users use social media platforms like Facebook to maintain existing connections more than creating new ones. Stated differently, users tend to communicate with people with whom they share common social aspects. As a matter of fact, when users communicate with each other, they bring their offline worlds with them. Therefore, their attitudes as well as prejudices are as visible in the offline world as in the online one.

From what we have reached, Facebook did not affect only American society. Facebook impacted as well American politics but the questions that must be answered are in what way? How could a social networking site with entertaining objectives influence American politics? In which instances did Facebook ever make a difference in the conduct of any political process in the United States of America? These questions and others are going to be plausibly answered in the next chapter.

### Introduction

In the course of this chapter, one is to be dealing with four topics: Facebook's role in fostering political engagement among American youth, the impact of Facebook during American election campaigns, Facebook's helping role to promote American foreign policy goals, and Facebook's involvement in American surveillance programs.

In the first point of this chapter, one will tackle how Facebook and its features are helping Americans, American youth in particular, become politically more engaged. Different studies are going to be presented to unveil that social media networking sites like Facebook are a perfect terrain for political deliberation among American youth.

The second point of the first section posits that traditional campaign tactics are losing ground in our modern times and social networking sites like Facebook are successfully used to target voters and influence their voting choices. The purpose of this part, therefore, is to unveil the remarkable role Facebook has played during American election campaigns. As an illustrating example, Barack Obama's campaign is going to be tackled to enhance the contention that Facebook's power in political campaigns cannot be ignored, and that Facebook is a new tool for campaign mobilization, fundraising, and voting influence.

The third section will tackle briefly American foreign policy after 9/11 attacks. Later, one will argue that Facebook is used as a modern tool to render American public diplomacy as a facilitator of America's conduct of foreign affairs. The last section, on another hand, aims to shed light on Facebook's participation in American surveillance programs. To achieve the aforementioned goal, one will use Snowden's leaked slides of NSA's surveillance programs to confirm Facebook's recent involvement in American surveillance programs.

### 3.1 American Local Politics and Facebook.

Research literature in political science confirms that social networking sites like Facebook are impacting American political landscape. On one side, they foster citizen's political engagement; on the other side, they provide American political election campaigns with innovative strategies to reach citizens and influence their voting choices. Therefore, in the first part of this section the researcher attempts to address the impact that Facebook may have on Americans' political engagement. The second part examines the role of social media and Facebook in particular in American election campaigns.

#### 3.1.1 Political Engagement and Facebook

People can be interested in politics due to their taste exactly like the ones who are interested in sports. Their political preferences depend on the political information they have which develop to form effective attitudes. People form their opinions according to a process called *political socialization*. The individual is provided with information from his parents, peers, school, the media, and the country where he lives (qtd in Ghermaoui 17).

The political socialization of any individual begins at the early stages of his life. In fact, during his preschool years, the child is unable to identify the president. His political perceptions are mixed with his religious ones and he thinks that it is God who runs the country instead of the President (qtd in Ghermaoui 17).

During his early childhood, the child begins to develop his political knowledge and can easily identify the President and many other political authorities. On another hand, the child learns his primary attitudes from his parents. This can be very noticeable as far as political parties are concerned. Children often imitate what their parents say. They get, therefore, influenced by their parent's political preferences. That's why one may assume that the family has the greatest impact on child's political perception. In fact, when parents do not like a President or any other political figure, the child automatically develops the same opinion and leans less positive towards that authority (qtd in Ghermaoui 17).

Moreover, there is a great relationship between personality and individual attitudes. Personality forms what we call political behavior. Since the family is the most important factor, it shapes the personality of the child as well as his political behavior. By way of example, when the family fosters their child's self confidence, the child becomes more

predisposed to participate in the world of politics than any other child who does not live in the same circumstances (qtd in Ghermaoui 17-18).

In addition, another study confirms that the child is very loyal to his parents' political preferences. The loyalty is more intensified as far as partisanship is concerned. In fact, "*it has been found that as early age of 7/8 years old, children identify with one of the two major political parties. In most cases, the political party of the parents becomes the party of the child.*" Another study of High School seniors "*showed that only 7% differed in party loyalty from their parents and as over two thirds of all voters continued to favour the political party their parents supported.*" (Remy 570) Additionally, during the late childhood, it means by the age of 11, the child begins to distinguish between political concepts. He starts to notice, for example, that there is a difference between President and Presidency. He begins to construct sophisticated political attitudes.

Political knowledge among adolescents becomes more developed than it used to be during the late childhood. In fact, they spend a lot of time with their parents during their pre adulthood; therefore, they have the opportunity to discuss many of the political issues. Family at that age can have a remarkable influence on the individual's preferences. It may transmit the political values to its offspring through three ways: communication, rational adaptation, and genetics. As far as the last way is concerned, some scholars argue that the similarity between the family's and the child's opinions is due to genetic inheritance. However, one may suggest that the third way needs to be scientifically proved and confirmed (qtd in Ghermaoui 18).

It has been proved that children who were in constant exposure to political discussion at home are more willing to participate in civic and political activities once they are adults than children who grew up in homes- free political discussions. Indeed, adults who were regularly involved in political talk during their childhood are more likely to volunteer frequently than the ones "*reared in homes with no political discussion*". Additionally, when parents encourage their children to express their points of view freely at home, they motivate them to do the same beyond the borders of the family, as they can get informed about different issues in the media, become involved in political talk with others, and participate in various civic causes (Perloff 102).

Nowadays, the role of the family has changed and so is its impact. Indeed, parents no longer hold an entire control over the child's opinions. This is due to the fact that parents work and

time devoted to their children diminished. This implies that there is less daily contact between the parents and the child and of course here comes the role of the school (qtd in Ghermaoui 18-19).

In addition to the impact of the family, school has also a crucial impact on child's opinion through political socialization. In fact, children learn the political system of their country at school. In the U.S, children are taught the principles of democracy, they recite the pledge of Allegiance to the flag, they sing patriotic songs, and they honor the nation's heroes. The school clubs, for example, contribute to secure the democratic values that the child has already learnt at school. Teachers, on another hand, encourage their students to participate in school votes in order to introduce them to the world of politics. Furthermore, the school helps increasingly create good citizens in the sense that it makes the individual accept the political authorities. This leads one to suggest that school facilitates the job for the state and prepares children to be loyal citizens in the future (qtd in Ghermaoui 19). Perloff takes the same stand when he said "*Although research results vary, the findings from an extensive national study offer convincing support for the notion that exposure to a high school civics curriculum significantly increases knowledge of American politics and government*" (104). He adds as well that "*in recent years, American schools have become increasingly involved in programs designed to encourage civic participation voting and deliberative discussion. Some of these programs have exerted positive effects, producing increases in political knowledge, discussion, and even a commitment to activist protest*" (106).

Meanwhile, Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin espouse the idea that school has a great impact on individual's political perception. They go on to claim that there is a great relationship between education and political tolerance. For them, education leads to enlightenment, and enlightenment leads to liberalism. To clarify this relationship, Robert and Kent say,

Students learn in school. They become more sophisticated, Knowledgeable, broadened, and allured to the world outside, and this is why they become more liberal and politically aware...Education promotes enlightenment; enlightenment promotes Liberalism, political interest, and participation(146).

One may, therefore, conclude that school helps students have very sophisticated and objective political points of view.

The individual can go through the impact of peers. However, the influence of peers may not be as strong as the family's influence over the child's political socialization. The individual can be influenced by his peer groups like friends, church clubs, work place colleagues...etc. Sometimes, a conflict may arise between individuals' parental and peers socialization. The winner depends on the nature of the issue that the conflict is all about. If the issue has a strong relationship with problems of youth (if the individual is a young adult or teenager), the peers are more likely to win. If the issue, however, deals with partisanship, the family wins (qtd in Ghermaoui 20).

As mentioned earlier, parents play a great role in forming their children's political views. However, a university researcher from the Colorado, Michael McDevitt argues that adolescents can impact political communication at home and thus influence their parents' political opinions. The influence that was supposed to be in a top-down manner can take the opposite direction, making children impart their political attitudes to their parents. Teenagers who are politically active because they are constantly exposed to civic programs in schools or involved in political discussions with peers often can cause their parents to change their political views. Teenagers can also be influenced by movies and music and form their political views and defend their position on a given issue once involved in a discussion with their parents accordingly. Consequently, *"the result can be a more argumentative, but thought-provoking, series of reciprocal parent-child discussions that transform the family political communication dynamic"* (Perloff 101). The possibility of children's influence over their parents political views has as well been confirmed in the article "Political Influence across Generations" in which its authors claim that *"It has been argued that when children have been socialized by external influences, they have the potential to shape parents' perspectives if family communication patterns reflect a concept orientation in which disagreement between parents and children is allowed as part of an open exchange of ideas"* (Loader, Vromen and Xenos63)

The political socialization does not occur only at the level of childhood. It develops during adulthood too. In fact, it is a lifelong process that will never stop until the person dies. The more the individual experiences increase, the more his opinions and attitudes may

change. As a matter of fact, there are other factors that contribute to the construction of public opinion. The social and economic status, for example, may affect people's opinions. Social classes are indeed different from each other. The poor are different from the rich and their interests are vividly different as well. On another hand, American people's opinions can also fluctuate according to the geographical regions. For instance, southerners endorse military spending and military intervention more than any other people in the U.S. Americans'. Opinions may also change according to the situation of the individual; factors like marriage, divorce, unemployment, and a move to a new location may influence their political points of view (qtd in Ghermaoui 20).

According to a great many scholars, media play a key role in shaping Americans' political views. Americans get information about the world from the Media like television, newspapers, and magazines. Television, however, is influential; it brings the events as they unfold to the homes of Americans. This suggests that television is a powerful instrument in shaping public opinion. Political leaders, therefore, are aware of the role of television and other media, and they use it as a means to shape public opinion according to their agendas (qtd in Ghermaoui 20-21).

Media can affect public opinion at three levels: agenda setting, priming, and framing. As far as agenda setting is concerned, it refers to the fact that media decide the issues on which the public must focus. In fact, Bernard Cohen says that Media “*may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling [people] what to think about.*” (qtd in Erikson and Tedin 247). Priming refers to the fact that the media give a great importance to one issue and completely neglect other issues. While priming and agenda setting concern the importance of the issue, framing concerns the way the media present the issue. They may shed light on some sides of the issue, and make other sides subtle. Obviously this sways Americans' political views (qtd in Ghermaoui 21).

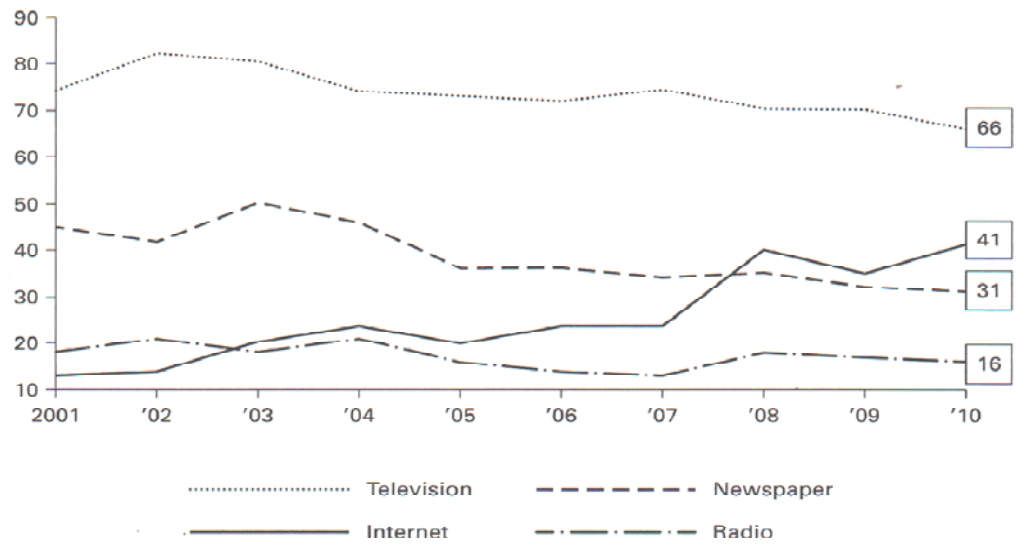
In the meantime, for Plato we are supposed to “*imagine the condition of man living in a sort of cavernous chamber underground. Here they have been from childhood, chained by the leg and also by the neck, so they cannot move and can see only what is in front of them, because the chains will not let them turn their heads.*” (Fishkin 13) This can also be valid for the American citizen because he sees only manipulated images on TV and thinks that the information presented on TV shows is the reality that must be believed.

The impact of television starts to diminish as technology starts to play a crucial role in politics; that role, however, is having more impact nowadays than any period before. This can be noticed in the important volume of political information and the instant nature of communication between policymakers and citizens. Additionally, the advance that revolutionized technology resulted in two important consequences. First, the availability of information has increasingly augmented with the help of conventional media, websites, blogs and social media networking sites with politically driven publications providing a myriad of points of view and facts in politics. In the same vein, Perloff in his book *The Dynamics of political communication* talked about the role that technology is playing in facilitating communication between citizens and their leaders by stating “*Contemporary technologies made it easier for citizens to communicate with leaders. With close to 50 percent of Americans reporting they get most of their news from the Internet, there is little question that the Internet has increased opportunities for access between voters and their elected representatives*” (38-39).

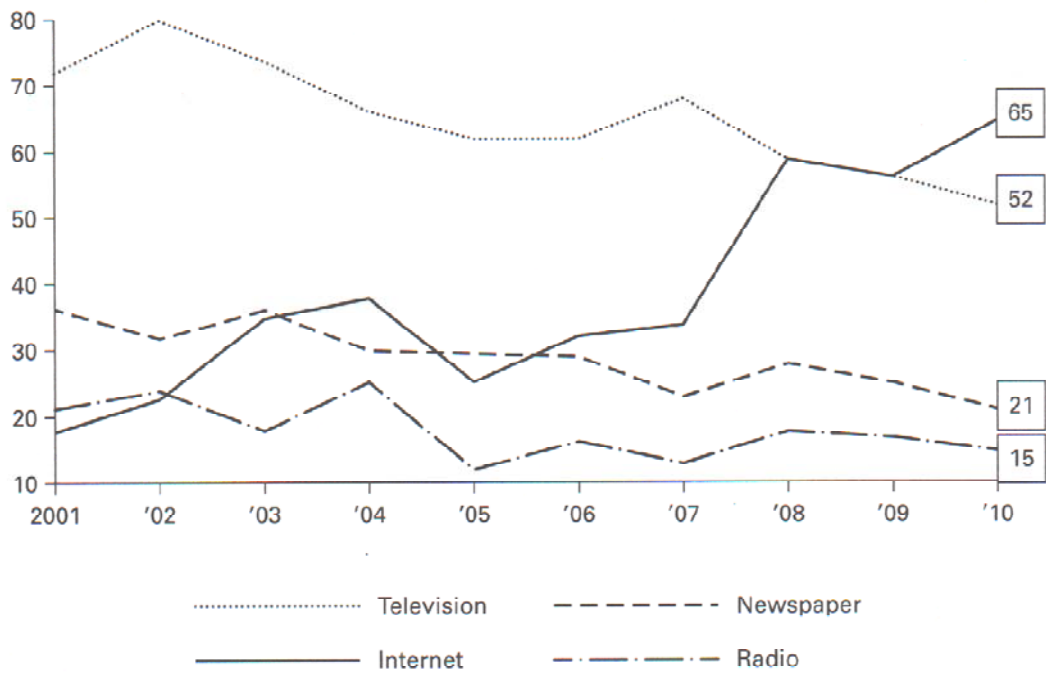
The most significant advantage of political communication technology is that any person with the ability to create a Facebook page or post a video on YouTube can make a difference in politics. The best example that illustrates this occurred in Cairo 2011 when Wael Ghonim, a Google executive, started to oppose his country’s autocracy. Thanks to his marketing skills he succeeded to create a Facebook group that allured a huge number of Facebook users, enabling them to translate their anger into protests that overthrew the Egyptian government in 2011 (perloff 42). As Ghonim said “*If you want to free a society, just give people Internet access*” (qtd in Perloff 42).

Additionally, the internet is competing with television to be the first news provider for young adults (under 30). According to Pew research center, the number of young adults of 18-29 who consider the internet as their first news provider has increased, from 34% in 2007 to 65% in 2010. Other young adults added that they get news as well from social networking sites. On another hand, the internet is an important source of information not only for American young adults; all Americans of all ages (41%) also report that they get informed about national and international news from the internet. On another hand, the number of Americans who consider television as their first news provider has decreased during the past years.





**Figure 4.4b Where Do Americans Get Their News from?**  
(See Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2011a.)



**Figure 4.4a Where Do 18- to 29-Year-Olds Get Their News from?**

**Figure 3.1.: Where Do Americans Get Their News From?<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Perloff, Richard M. *The Dynamics of political Communication. Media and Politics in a Digital Age*. New York: Taylor and Francis. 2014.P 88.

Since research confirms that the internet is increasingly becoming the primary source of news for young people as well as a third of adults use social networking sites to read news, it is then safe to state that young people are using cool media that are in accordance with the modern era. It is argued also that the content available on traditional channels can be equal to the one that is on the internet, including social networking sites. What differentiates between the two channels is the manner in which people are receiving news, “*the interactive capacities the Internet affords news consumers and the wide diversity in content that was not available in earlier times*” (Perloff 89).

Furthermore, social media can promote political participation in events like elections, protests, and partisan causes. According to Perloff, a considerable number of social media users reported that they reposted a political content posted by another user, used social media to motivate other individuals to vote, and employed social media to convince others to participate in events that they consider crucial. Young adults are the ones who use such features of social media to reach the aforementioned ends (114). Xenos, Vromen and Loader share the same view in their article “The Great Equalizer” and claim that social media has new features of enabling individuals to engage in online traditional and nontraditional acts of political involvement like “*participating in political discussions, persuading others how to vote, as well as engaging in a variety of forms of online activism*” (21). They go on to state that social media added qualities do stimulate political engagement in other ways. According to the research literature in the field, social media’s promotion of social capital and informal discussion about politics is the most recent form of political engagement online (21).

Many researchers believe that young people are not interested in any form of political and civic participation and they describe them rather as “*self centered, narcissistic, competitive, confident and individualistic*”. However, this widespread belief that young people are politically disengaged and unable to participate in the different democratic and civic activities started to be refuted by many academics in the last years. Indeed, the optimistic scholars assert that young people have found their voices and are looking for ways for change. Other scholars advance that young people are politically engaged and participate in events that are outside the traditional political forms of groups like trade unions and political parties. They assert that young people are true agents of social change. Their arguments are grounded on the fact that since young people spend long hours on social media, this may as well be considered as a crucial tool for promoting civic participation and activism (Teruelle 201). On another hand, socialization is another factor that influences the relationship

between social media and political engagement. Indeed, young people who are encouraged to be politically involved via exposure to social media political discussions are more likely to participate in different political and civic activities, unless they have already acquired civic competencies at home and during school years (Xenos, Vromen and Loader 22). Furthermore, the political environment plays a remarkable role in the process of socialization. The amount of information that is available in abundance on news outlets and different social media platforms and the clarity of the parents' political views enable young people to decide their ideological positions and participate in political activities offline or online accordingly (Vraga, Bode, Yang, Edgerly, Thorson, wells and Shah 61) .

Another study was conducted to comprehend the role of forces outside the home, and the findings confirm that the statement that civic education at school and political social media use allow children to be independent in their political views. Additionally, children who use social media for political ends show a remarkable autonomy in their political positions. It is safe then to state that children's social media use for political purposes may result in disagreement with their parents' political views, and may decrease the probabilities that the family would "*maintain a harmonious relationship with regards to party affiliation*". Other results of the study support the contention that "*engagement in political discussion and activity through social media offers children an alternative way to understand their political identity to what is available at home*" (Emily K; Vraga et al, 79).

Young people are trying to transform the world but using ways and methods that are unfamiliar to adults. Youth's engagement in activist activities can be either unnoticed or regarded as non-activism because they are challenging the traditional staid norms of political engagement. However, the recent technological revolution in communication invites everyone to re-evaluate and understand political activism among young people. Recent research refers to this new activism as "networked activism"<sup>2</sup>, "alter-activism"<sup>3</sup>, "subactivism"<sup>4</sup> and "ethical consumerism". All these new concepts and versions of political activism do have something in common which is "respective re-conceptualization of youth activism today" (Teruelle 202). Alter-activism nowadays utilizes technology as a means for political activism which includes the use of emails, and many electronic platforms and sites as well as the creation of web pages on social networking sites in times of mobilization, in order to provide contact lists,

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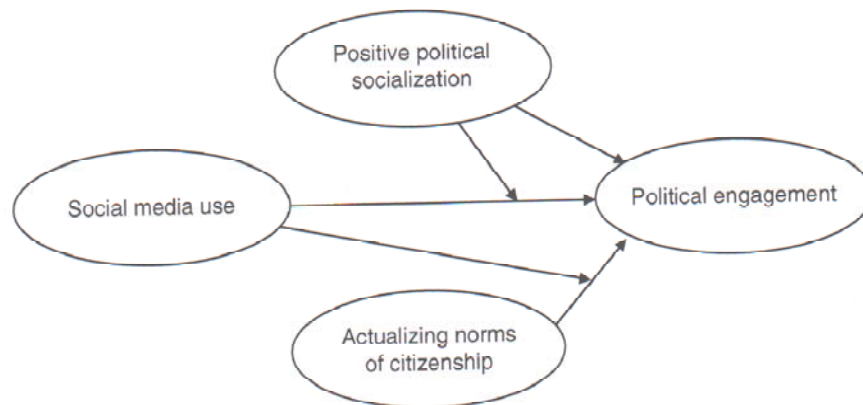
<sup>2</sup> Refers to the use of the electronic communication technologies like social media for activism purposes like enabling faster communication among citizens or delivering local information to a large audience.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to altering the framing of crucial issues of our modern times using social media.

<sup>4</sup> Means another form of activism, using social media.

information, calls to action, and online interactive forums to discuss crucial current issues. Nevertheless, the traditional lens of activism do not consider alter-activism as a form of activism and the reason behind this is that “*the actions do not conform to tradition*” (Teruelle 203)

One may not, however agree with the traditional vision of what constitutes activism and a comparison between activism in the 1960’s and today’s activism would be very thoughtful to this piece of research. The American student activists of the 1960’s were as concerned about the issues that affected their lives as today’s student activists are. Additionally, students of the 1960’s utilized the media that was available to them in order to promote their cause and so do today’s student activists. In fact, activism today experiences important changes and “*it now incorporates and takes advantage of modern technology and current media formations; in particular, social media*”. The internet and social media in particular undoubtedly are facilitating activism which leads to social change. A growing number of studies confirm this and their findings posit that technology and social media in particular are used in an efficient way by young people who are giving birth to new forms of activism. These researchers, besides being optimistic, highly value the internet as well as social media’s ability to facilitate social change, relying on nontraditional ways and forms of youth activism. Valenzuela, Park and Kee take the same stand and state “*the development of SNSs dedicated to fostering civil and political engagement among users, particularly young people, speaks in a loud voice to the potentialities of social media as a tool for collective action*” (qtd in Teruelle 205). The following figure posits that the three elements: positive political socialization, social media use and actualizing norms lead to political engagement.



**Figure 3.2.: Model of Social Media and Political Engagement (control variables omitted)<sup>5</sup>**

On another hand, it has been found that people engage politically offline as long as they engage online. As a matter of fact, if we take the case of American youth, who are the focus of this dissertation, they spend long hours engaging with online communities and promoting more online civic engagement. They postulate that online social network activity boots offline political engagement. What are called “online participatory communities” which concern youth interests introduce young people to various political views and increase their interest in politics. According to Marichal Facebook users “were 53 percent more likely to vote than non-members, 78 percent more likely to try and influence someone to vote, and over two and a half times more likely to attend a political meeting or rally” (24). Facebook does not replace offline social networks; it rather acts as a compliment to them .A relevant example is the 2008 US presidential elections when Obama used social networking as an online organizing coordinator. Social networking at that time was a tool to facilitate face to face offline mobilization actions. Stated differently, the web was used by the Obama campaign as

<sup>5</sup> Source: Xenos, Michael A.; Vromen, Ariadne, Vromen, and Loader, Brian D. “The Great Equalizer”. *The Networked Young Citizen*. Ed. Loader, D. Brian; Vromen, Ariadne ; and Xenos, A. Michael. New York: Taylor and Francis. 2014. P24.

a tool to maintain pre-existing offline relationships. The internet, and social networking in particular, was used to realize traditional political objectives (Marichal 25).

Furthermore, the features of Facebook groups foster political communication. Since there are no verbal cues that may watch over people's behavior online, Facebook groups operate as a "bullhorn"<sup>6</sup> that allows users to express their political views as it can as well serve as a forum to discover what others might think in politics. One of the groups that best exemplifies this is a U.S group called "I support the students sent home for wearing the American flag". The groups was described as follows "*for those of you who support the students in California for getting sent home from high school for wearing Red, White, and Blue in Cinco De Mayo, please join this group and help us get the word out about this disgrace to America.*"The members of this group expressed collective outrage. It is then reasonable to sate that Facebook groups play a significant role in translating people's dissatisfaction (Marichal 73). On another hand, the blogosphere<sup>7</sup> nature of Facebook can be considered "participatory, interactive, and emancipator". It is a suitable place for people who want to express themselves politically. It enables "*the marginalized to tell stories previously relegated to private life, and this can equate to gains in a form of power*" (Marichal 92-93).

Facebook's newsfeed feature enables deliberative conversation and alters the way information is received because it exposes its users to multiple political views. This can be noticed when notifications of liked groups appear in an unselected stream of content. Facebook then serves the people who are looking explicitly for political information. As it can enable people to discover groups with a hyperlink to the page without intentionally looking for it. Stated differently, people might engage with information that they were not necessarily searching for. Moreover, Facebook's newsfeed enables users to have a brief look of other's social networks. As a way of example, when a user posts a status update and others comment on it, many other users can see who else commented on that status update ,being friends or not, so the status update operates as an important tool for interaction. As it can as well furnish Facebook users with heterogeneous interpretations of news events (Marichal 95). Facebook can promote social change and can serve as "*[a space where oppressed voices can perform politics through the use of stories and symbols. By combining offline, street-level protest activity with narratives and symbols that represent the marginalization and oppression of a*

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<sup>6</sup> This is a metaphor. Facebook is considered as an electrical loudspeaker or megaphone to express one's views.

<sup>7</sup> Facebook enables a personal web page as blogs do (refer to chapter one).

people, Facebook's personalization of politics can foment social movement activity]" (Marichal 123).

An interesting piece of research aimed at assessing the relationship between online political group membership and political engagement. The sample of the study included 455 American undergraduate students. The findings of this research indicate that Facebook groups feature provides the same functions as offline groups do. Additionally, the authors of the article found that Facebook, among many other social networking sites, have succeeded to bridge the gap between users by means of recent interactive technologies<sup>8</sup> that promote political engagement and discussions among Facebook users. On another hand, the similarity between online political Facebook groups and offline political groups lies in their faculty to foment political engagement. As the creation of online Facebook political groups offer the same benefits as face-to-face groups do. Group members can “*link to other related websites, view photos or videos, and post on the wall or discussion board*”. All the aforementioned actions are described by the article's authors as “interactive and participatory”. The applications of Facebook groups enable users to participate deeply in their community via online participation as they can as well foster offline political participation. To sum up, the main result of this study is that “Facebook is fostering political engagement” (Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero 1544). The following table demonstrates the kind of information Facebook political pages provide to its users.

Political Facebook group page content	Percentage of groups	
	No (%)	Yes (%)
Provide additional contact information	39	62
Provide web links in the “links” section	18	82
Provide video links	41	59
Event information posted	80	20
News posts provided	26	74
Photos posted	13	87
Discussion topics posted on “discussion board”	13	87

Note: Data from content analysis of 39 randomly selected political Facebook groups.

**Table 3.1.: Political Group Page Content<sup>9</sup>.**

<sup>8</sup> All technologies that provide their users with instant communication (interaction) in real time are called interactive technologies.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Conroy, Meredith; Feezell, T. Jessica, and Guerrero, Mario. “Facebook and Political engagement: A Study of Online Political Group Membership and Offline Political Engagement”. *Computers in Human behavior*. 28(2012) 1525-1546.print

Another study was conducted to examine motivations and political predispositions among political Facebook activity. The sample study included undergraduate students in an introductory mass communication course at a large Midwestern University. The results emphasize that Facebook is used by the study's respondents to comment on political wall publications and they do so to stay socially engaged with other users and to share content with them. On another hand, some other users tend to "like" political figures on the networking platform because they want to present themselves to their Facebook counterparts. The most significant finding of the study is that the users who engage in offline political activities utilize also Facebook which in fact facilitates their political engagement offline as well as online (Macafee 2773).

The Pew Research Center<sup>10</sup> confirms the above findings and adds that the youngest (18-24 years old) Americans are most likely to use social networking sites to engage politically. Older adults postulate that they use these sites for political purposes but they are unlikely to utilize them in the first place and 13% of Americans who are 65 years and above use such sites to engage politically. The following table summarizes the different civic activities Americans engage in. The other figure demonstrates the percentage of users who utilize social networking sites for civic activities.

### Political engagement on social networking sites

*60% of American adults use social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter; these are some of the civic behaviors they have taken part in on these sites:*

	% of SNS users who have done this	% of all adults who have done this
"Like" or promote material related to political/social issues that others have posted	38%	23%
Encourage other people to vote	35	21
Post your own thoughts/comments on political or social issues	34	20
Repost content related to political/social issues	33	19
Encourage others to take action on political/social issues that are important to you	31	19
Post links to political stories or articles for others to read	28	17
Belong to a group that is involved in political/social issues, or working to advance a cause	21	12
Follow elected officials, candidates for office or other public figures	20	12
<b>Total who said yes to any of the activities listed above</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table 3.2. Political Engagement on Social Networking Sites<sup>11</sup>.**

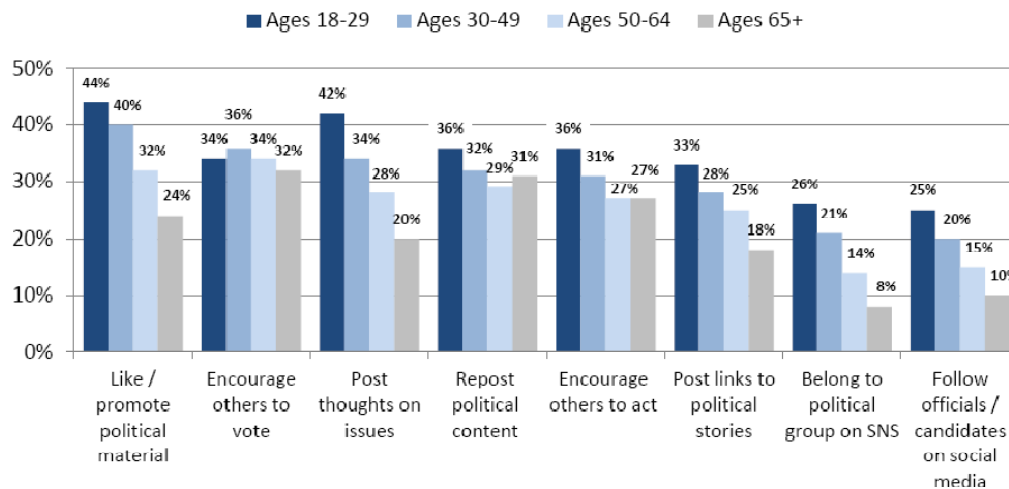
<sup>10</sup> The study was conducted from July 16 to August 7, 2012, and included a sample of 2,253 adults, age 18 and older.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Smith, Aaron. "Civic Engagement in the Digital Age". 25 April 2013. Web 08 August 2015. <<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/civic-Engagement.aspx>



## Younger social media users are more likely to use the tools for civic activities

% of users of social networking sites or Twitter who use social media these ways



**Figure 3.3.: Younger Social Media Facebook Use for Political Activities<sup>12</sup>.**

All the aforementioned studies confirm that Facebook fosters political engagement. The next section will concern Facebook and its use during American elections, which constitutes an example of political engagement.

### 3.1.2 American Elections and Facebook

Advances in technology, the internet in particular, impacted considerably the landscape of recent political campaigns. Technology has been widely used in political campaigns in different world countries. Campaigns have got advantage of technology in order to “inform, target and mobilize voters”. As a way of example, strategists utilise database management and web-based tools for the sake of identifying, monitoring, and communicating with voters. On another hand, Campaigns rely on software tools to hire and direct staff and volunteers as well as to realize campaign plans. Indeed, Software enables campaigners observe the different contributions and expenses and disclose such information to the appropriate regulatory authorities. Pollsters as well utilise web-based tools to interview voters (Panagopoulos 1).

<sup>12</sup> Source: Rainie, Lee; Smith, Aaron; Schlozman, Kay Lehman; Brady, Henry; Verba, Sidney. “Social Media and Political Engagement”. 19 October 2012. Web 08 August 2015. <<<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/political-Engagement.aspx>

Social media, on another hand, transforms media landscape and structures that guide political communication. It is a substituting environment used by opinion leaders, politicians and citizens to engage with one another which can be described as multidimensional and unique in the history of American political system. Social media has a new character that technology did not have before. Social media is not only a progression in communication technology, it rather conceptualises a recent paradigm on how individuals communicate and engage with each other. The networker on such platforms does not wait for traditional media to explain news; he is rather able to interact with news as well as with his networks of friends and acquaintances not being hindered by the borders of geography. Social media platforms do not rely on editors or gatekeepers; they are controlled by given rules and codes that started to be developed in our modern times (Gainous and Wagner 03).

Furthermore, social media, as mentioned in chapter one, is characterized by being a two-way form of mass communication. More clearly, it functions in both ways enabling political parties, in the case of politics, to interact with one another instead of one speaking and the other listening. Campaigns used to convey a singular message from candidates via mass media to constituents and voters. Politicians utilized mass media to distribute political messages and citizens were a passive audience. Nevertheless, social media enables users to select the network they want to join as well as to be active members in it. Users can even be news designers not only receptive. This revolutionary change in technology allows a new projection of politics and values in advertising and campaigning moments. While new political behaviours are introduced, such as the inclusion of short video messages and virtual town halls, traditional political behaviours, like printing and sending brochures, are no longer effective. Digital strategies are much less expensive than direct interactions generated by retail politics and reach much more people. Social media augments political communication efficacy and “create a new calculus” in the political realm (Gainous and Wagner 05). In fact, social media networking sites “*lower the cost of acquiring information on candidates and issues for the voter. It also is much less expensive way for the candidates and political groups to reach potential voters with a message or relevant information*” they continue to add “*the ability to campaign through social media is a particularly appealing approach, as the reach of the internet is vast, targeted, and relatively inexpensive*” (Gainous and Wagner 138-139).

As stated earlier, the internet changed political campaign communication. Because American public’s access to the internet has reached more than 70 percent, the internet has become one of the most salient political campaign strategies (Panagopoulos 2). The first part

of this section will be dedicated to unveiling a brief history of the use of media, and technology in particular, in American political campaigns.

A good start would be the presidential elections of 1992 which took place simultaneously with networked computational technology revolution that altered the way people communicated with each other and the concept that portrayed people's exchange of ideas using such a technology was "information superhighway". At that time platforms like AOL, CompuServe, Prodigy and TelNet were used as channels for emails, bulletin boards and chat forums. In 1994 another site called WhiteHouse.gov was launched by the Clinton administration as a conduit for emails in order to keep in touch with the White House. This way of communication was brand new and emails at that time were gathered, printed and answered through White House form letters. However, this technology was not utilized for internal, interbranch or external communication for a considerable number of years (Katz, Barris, and Jain 22).

In 1996, presidential candidates were able to create websites and for the first time these websites were featured by the Republican and Democratic nominees. Each party did its best to engage a broad sweep of the electorate. However, the Clinton-Gore and Dole-Kemp websites did not have a great impact because users were unable to use such a new technology. On another hand, both campaigns failed at making a link between technology and political content in a proper manner. For instance, both posted audio and video files that contained speeches and rally appearances, allowed interested citizens to receive emails that contained campaign updated content, and unveiled information that concerned press releases and event schedules. Nevertheless, users at that time considered the content that was available online repeated what was already transmitted on television and via direct mail, telephone and many other traditional means of communication. Stated differently, such websites served as projections of existing content into the online world. Moreover, internet users of the time were rather using basic dial-up modems, and the websites required a much higher connection speed, "*so the impact of any audio-visual content or interactive features were severely curtailed*". However, the scandal of Monica Lewinsky was a turning point in the White House's capabilities to control the press, and its relationship with the American public. And the role of the internet could not be ignored as it operated as a communication medium between the public and the White House. On another hand, the internet played a remarkable role in constructing public opinion that supported Bill Clinton and helped him survive impeachment proceedings. The scandal of Monica Lewinsky not only showed that that the

damaged information flows created by a scandal could be efficiently controlled , but it illustrated also that the White House was no longer able to turn a blind eye on the digital media content and features (Katz, Barris, and Jain 24).

As a matter of fact, in 2000 presidential candidates created websites that contained biographical information. The primary objective of these sites was to inform users of the candidates' issue positions (Perloff 248). The campaigns' websites posted various other information like Schedules, links to endorsements, links to relevant news stories, full drafts of policy documents, events videos, campaign advertisements and contacts for volunteering and donating (Katz, Barris, and Jain 25). The sites provided biographical content that aimed at forging a connection between the campaign and the sites' users. However, the sites were rather primitive if evaluated by nowadays' standards (Perloff 249). Additionally, the administration of George W. Bush preferred to use emails to communicate with the public and emailing the White House at that time was more sophisticated and less anonymous. Users were requested to give their name, address and organizational affiliation and unveil whether their email was intended to support or oppose a given administration policy. Despite the fact that the Bush administration created "Ask the White House", and created discussion forums that replied to users' questions, the platform used filtering tools that restricted interaction and enabled the White House to select which questions to answer (Katz, Barris and Jain 26).

Technology knowledge and access to the internet grew rapidly among citizens and politicians as well between 2000 and 2004. Indeed, Bush and Kerry campaigns had websites that not only provided information, but they also played the role of organizational resources. Additionally, both campaigns used their websites to both manage the press, and post campaign advertisements and schedules; they as well efficiently utilised their online talents for organization and mobilization. On another hand, the Bush Cheney website offered event information and gave permission to registered users "*download lists of registered Republicans in their voting precinct*". It provided innovative ways of physical outreach and recommended a narrative for door-to-door meetings. (Katz, Barris, and Jain 29)

Furthermore, in 2004, online communication witnessed a remarkable change when Democratic Presidential candidate Hoard Dean became the first presidential candidate to create and use a blog. He successfully gathered campaign volunteers and supporters by means of the internet. He altered as well campaign donations as he was able to raise forty million Dollars online from gifts given by online contributors. By doing so, "*he consummated a shotgun marriage between new technologies and time-honored constant of politics, money*"

(Perloff 249). Moreover, in 2004 video files started to be used in the political world. As a way of example, a JibJab video was launched at that time which pictured John Kerry and George W. Bush in cartoon-like form singing “this Land is Your Land” and it got 65 million hits (Perloff 249).

Between 2004 and 2008, the launch of social media sites started to exercise a drastic affect on the American political realm, the Obama campaign in particular. What makes these platforms different from any previous online platform is that they put interactivity at the forefront of their interfaces. More importantly, the features of email, bulletin board and news media access are all included in one platform thanks to web 2.0<sup>13</sup> technology. Additionally, 2008 witnessed “*an interesting transition in the race between politics and industry*”. While the commercial realm had not yet considered social media as a requisite, the Obama campaign decided to engage itself in social media sphere. Teddy Goff, Director of New Media for Obama’s 2008 campaign, described Obama’s commitment to social media use in politics and claimed “*First of all the candidate himself, Senator Obama, was a person who cared about the internet. Cared about technology. And it was important to him that he be a savvy operator.*” He later added “*I think the Internet is sort of animated by a lot of the values that caused him to become a community organizer when he was young. I mean, he famously moved to Chicago with his goals of forging connections between people and empowering people and all that. And that is sort of what the Internet does.*” (qtd in Katz, Barris, and Jain 30)

According to Slotnick, the inclusion of social networking sites like Facebook in the world of politics is not new. Since the site evolved from serving students to fulfilling the social needs of the general public, allowing people to communicate with one another, Politics as well found its place on the Facebook platform. In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, worked as a field organizer for Democratic presidential candidate, John Kerry. He presided GOTV<sup>14</sup> and mobilization actions. Because the launch of Facebook coincided with the 2004 primary season sessions, it is possible then to state that Zuckerberg’s political as well as computing skills were commingling. To pattern a site that “*encourages group formation, the basic skill*

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<sup>13</sup> Web 2.0 is the newly designed online technology that enables simpler interactivity, more pervasive network connectivity and sophisticated communication channels.

<sup>14</sup> GOTV is an acronym for Get out to vote. This step precedes campaigns and it is a very important one. The techniques used during this phase include telephoning or sending audio messages to known supporters days before the election or on the election day. Supporters are provided with transport and opinion polling that occur during this period of campaigning (Wikipedia).

*required to make Facebook success, is quite similar to the ultimate goal of any political campaign-mobilization of voters behind a single candidate on election day”(251).*

Before the advent of social media, candidates used to rely on themselves in order to create an adequate presence online. However, social networking sites, particularly, Facebook, have opened new venues for candidates and furnished them with the proper platforms required to enter the online realm safely. As it has been mentioned in chapter one, at the very beginning Facebook was elite- based community and after two years it became public-based one. Thanks to this change (development) political candidates became capable of delving into the world of Facebook as they use its advanced features to achieve their political goals (Slotnick 250).

In 2006, Facebook developed its platform to meet the exigencies of users as well as candidates who wanted to utilize the site for political purposes by adding within the same platform a section called Election Pulse. The aforementioned feature enabled candidates who were running for a congressional or gubernatorial seat to have a generic profile that included the candidates’ name, office, state, and party affiliation. Members could easily locate candidates making use of a listing of candidate profiles grouped by state and congressional district. According to Facebook’s statistics of the 2006, 2.64% of its users supported a candidate and 1.5 million users either connected to a candidate or to a Facebook issue-based group. When the 2006 elections ended, Facebook altered its design in order to permit officeholders at all levels of office to create personal profiles (Williams and Gulati 274).

It is also confirmed that Facebook displayed on each candidate’s profile the number of supporters and unveiled a glimpse of every candidate’s percentage of votes in the race. Democrats as well as Republicans had an average of 2.146 supporters. Senator Hillary Clinton succeeded to gain the support of 12,038 Facebook users, which was considered the most considerable online support a candidate did ever have during that time. Other Democrat candidates like Bob Casey, Harold Ford, Sherrod Brown and Ned Lamont had 500 supporters. The Republican candidate who succeeded to gain the most support was Senator Rick Santorum registering 4.980 Facebook users as supporters (Williams and Gulati 275).

The remarkable efforts of Facebook of including Election Pulse within its site and the creation of virtual networks that connected candidates with their supporters encourage a considerable number of candidates to use the site as part of their online strategies. In fact, approximately 32% of the candidates who were running for the senate and 13 % candidates

running for the house brought updated information and content to their Facebook Election Pulse profile. However, only 21% of the senate candidates and 2.7% of the house candidates owned profiles on MySpace. Additionally, a small number of senate candidates, about 13 to 130 candidates, and no house candidates created their channels on YouTube. It is reasonable to state that candidates seemed to prefer Facebook over other social media channels while utilising their online techniques to mobilize supporters (Williams and Gulati 275).

The researchers Williams and Gulati used data from 2006 which indicate that Democratic candidates were more likely than Republican candidates to embrace the Facebook community during that year. Two years later (2008), Campaigns showed a higher level of office and became more experienced and professional and they demonstrated their understanding of the importance of online social networking during campaign moments. Additionally, the total number of Facebook supporters of each party's candidates determined the partisan differences in their mobilization and political techniques. Democrats, on another hand, were more willing to use the internet and social media in particular as a communication means and a campaign strategy than Republicans (277). The researchers Williams and Gulati confirmed that Facebook played a role in both the 2006 congressional races and the 2008 nomination contests. Their research indicated that social networking sites like Facebook do have the ability to transform future campaigns and electoral processes (284).

Furthermore, during 2008 presidential election, social media sites exercised a revolutionized effect on campaigns. The campaign altered the ways that presidential candidates utilise in order to mobilize and influence voters as well as raise money. Obama's campaign made an important financial and staff digital communications' investments surpassing Dean's 2004 attempts to raise money online. It succeeded to raise a great amount of money via online donations and it created its own social network, My.BarakObama.com<sup>15</sup> through which the campaign requested money, enlisted volunteers, and encouraged people to take part of the campaign using various methods (Perloff 250).

The site MybarackObama.com connected the social networking site Facebook with the common traditional methods of political mobilization and added new media functions like creating a blog. Via the platform, users can be friends with fellow supporters and home in on the ones who dwell in their district. The site met most of the exigencies of Obama's campaign: it benefitted the campaign as well as created a tracking system through which

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<sup>15</sup> Chris Hughes, one of the co-founders of Facebook, helped the Obama Campaign to reach young supporters by designing the site My.BarakObama.com.

supporters could use the site's tools to give birth to new networks and invite other supporters to join them. This is the most important principle of Facebook: to find a common interest (eg. a school in the case of Facebook, a candidate in the case of Obama) and furnish users with the necessary tools to create that network and forge a mobilized force that comes from the general public instead of the elite (Slotnick 254). This view was supported by Gainous and Wagner and added that Social media "*creates an opportunity to capitalize on the flow of information in the intimacy of a social network. If the information is effectively constructed it will encourage the members of the network to distribute it, making the information more likely to be considered that if it were from a stranger*" (140-141).

Additionally, the tech-savvy<sup>16</sup> staff of the Obama campaign used YouTube to post 1800 Obama's videos, as well as a music video by hip-hop singer Will.i.am that used Obama's "yes we can" campaign words in music. The candidate Obama succeeded as well to distribute political messages online in order to reach young people who use the internet to politically engage them. It is also confirmed that Obama's sophisticated use of digital media of the kind mobilized young voters, making them believe that they could make a difference in politics. YouTube provided the campaign with free advertisements and Facebook was also another platform for the electorate mobilization. In fact, Obama reached more than 2 million supporters on various Obama Facebook sites (Perloff 250). According to Slotnick, Obama's campaign was the only one present on the first day of the Facebook platform launch. The networking site enabled users to access videos and direct messages from the campaign and share them with their friends. (253). The use of interactive technology was very beneficial in the sense that "*it provided an inventory of grass roots supporters who could be contacted and mobilized throughout the campaign and for the future Democratic party efforts*" (Perloff 250). This is what one may call politico-social capital. Gainous and Wagner in their book *Tweeting to Power* acknowledge the power of social media networking sites in the political arena. In fact they claim, "*it is in the group formation and maintenance that the power of social media and the Internet may be most significant. If the Internet and SNSs in particular are bringing people together in not just social groups, but political ones, there is a large potential for the creation of social capital*" (99).

Furthermore, online videos, personal messages and many other new media outlets are as well used as an effective tool to create "informality" between the candidates and their supporters. Candidates usually include brief videos with their emails to give people a glimpse

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<sup>16</sup> This term is used to describe someone with advanced skill in computer use.



into their lives that are unknown. As a way of example, Obama's campaign included to its email a ten minutes video of a dinner during which he held a meeting with five small donors. It displayed him discussing with them different topics, including comic books to his children. Such initiatives are intended to reinforce connections with ordinary citizens by emphasizing "*a candidate's down-to-earth image*". It is through the creation of a sense of intimacy that candidates can gain the support of ordinary citizens who are politically disengaged as well as collect an important online base of small first-time donors (Panagopoulos 3). During the 2008 elections, Obama's use of viral videos was "odd quirk"; however, in 2012 this strategy became widely accepted and one of the standards of a successful political campaign (Gainous and Wagner 135).

It is, therefore, reasonable to state that American politicians have succeeded to personalize themselves online. Social platforms like Facebook and their architectures enable politicians and candidates in particular to construct their online self-presentations. By giving access to personal information and observations to social media users, candidates can look as "a real person". For Example, Obama's online strategy focused on utilising the personal as a "hook" to get the greatest number of engaged citizens. Facebook, as one of the social networking sites, was a "feeder system" to encourage people participate in offline campaign activities like donating, participating in events and of course voting. The most efficient method to achieve this was to put into existence a "you centred campaign" that made supporters feel that they owned and controlled the campaign (Marichal 141-142).

In fact, Barak Obama was portrayed as a social media story: via social media "*the president could commune with the people, and every voice could be heard. Thus, social media represented an opportunity to achieve a fully democratic society*" (Katz, Barris and Jain 33). Furthermore, "Hearing the voice" of the people was a substantial subtheme of the Obama Campaign and administration. Social media was the channel through which those voices could be heard and impact policy. In the majority of his speeches, Obama mentioned "active citizenship" and this could not be achieved without the help of social media (Katz, Barris, and Jain 13).

**Barack Obama**  
is addressing the College Democrats of America at their national convention, hosted by the University of South Carolina.  
Updated on Thursday

Networks: Chicago, IL, US Politics  
Sex: Male  
Relationship Status: Married  
Birthday: August 4, 1961  
Religious Views: United Church of Christ

**Election 2008**  
Position: President  
Party: Democratic Party

**Information**

**Current Office**  
Current Position: Senate  
Current State: IL  
Current Party: Democratic Party

**Contact Info**  
Land Phone: 366.675.2008  
Current Address: P.O. Box 8102, Chicago, IL 60680  
Website: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=23...>, <http://www.myspace.com/barackobama>, <http://youtube.com/barackobama>, <http://students.barackobama.com>, <http://digg.com/users/obamaforamerica>

**Personal Info**  
Interests: Basketball, writing, loafing w/ kids  
Favorite Music: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Johann Sebastian Bach (cello suites), and The Pogues  
Favorite TV Shows: Sportscenter  
Favorite Movies: Casablanca, Godfather I & II, Lawrence of Arabia, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest  
Favorite Books: Song of Solomon (Toni Morrison), Moby Dick, Shakespeare's Tragedies, Parting the Waters, etc.

**Supporters**  
118,194 Supporters See All

Kavi Tolani, Will Maulbetsch, david 'lindy' lindeman, Brad Dorner, Annie Capron, Robert Lach

FIGURE 14.4 A Snapshot of Barack Obama's Facebook Page

**Figure 3.4: Barak Obama's Facebook Page<sup>17</sup>.**

However, the question that one asks is what do candidates' Facebook pages contain? If we take the Facebook page of Barack Obama, according to slotnick, it is noticed that the candidate uses "About me" section and unveils his favourite books (Moby Dick, the Bible), favorite TV show (ESPN Sportscenter) and interests (Basketball, writing, loafing with kids). He also included links to different other social networking sites and posted a considerable number of notes that unveil the different opportunities to take part of online polls as well as text messaging. From this, we can reach the conclusion that Obama's campaign well-understood the virtual realm and the importance of integrating many interactive means into the campaigns strategies. (Slotnick 160-161).

Weeks following the 2008 elections, the idea that the United States of America started a new epoch of citizen participation in governmental decision-making arouse interest of the technology enthusiasts. The reason behind this is the Obama campaigners' great work in

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Source: Slotnick, Allison. "Friend the President. Facebook and the 2008 Presidential Election". *Politicking Online. The Transformation of Election Campaign communications*. Ed. Panagopoulos, Costas. The United States of America: Rutgers, The State University. 2009.p262

using social networking sites to rise to power, and the support of the internet-savvy followers who contributed in putting the first African-American US president in office (Katz, Barris and Jain 41). Additionally, on January 21, 2009, president Obama issued a memorandum on “transparency and open government”. He also focused on the creation of a climate of openness. A section of that memorandum allowed social media enthusiasts to consider that a new epoch of citizen participation in governmental decision making began. In fact it declared: *“Executive departments and agencies should offer Americans increased opportunities to participate in policymaking and to provide their Government with the benefits of their collective expertise and information. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public input on how we can increase and improve opportunities for public participation in Government”*. This section has provided those with the chance to encourage citizens who wanted to engage in politics electronically (Katz, Barris and Jain 112)

The period between 2008 and 2012 witnessed remarkable developments in social media platform technologies. Indeed, technologies developed faster, and they became more efficient and integrated. The most important developments that occurred between 2008 and 2012 are as follows:

- 1- Existing social media platforms extended their presence on various interface technologies. These platforms are now accessed via desktops, laptops and mobile devices.
- 2- Social media engagement became an essential tool for any political or commercial operation that rely heavily on interaction with the public; and
- 3- The rate of engagement has augmented: *“social media coverage of news and events involves markedly more rapid cycles of observation, dissemination, interpretation, reuptake, and amplifications by both journalist and audiences alike”* (Katk, Barris and Jain 34).

It must be admitted then that online campaigning is becoming the most salient tool of elections, and what is also noticed is that every election is more interactive than the previous one. Statistics confirm the important impact that technology, and social media in particular is, exercising on campaigns. More than 77 % of Americans have cell phones, 81 % of 18- to 29- years- olds are active internet users, more than 72 % of the 18- to 29- years-olds utilize social networking sites. Since the majority of the young voting population spend much of their time online, it seems impossible for campaigns to reach this group of people via newspapers, radio

or TV. In order to have much influence on these individuals, campaigns have to communicate with them using websites and social media in particular (Perloff 251).

Additionally, other statistics confirm that Americans indeed used social media networking sites during the 2010 elections. Fourteen percent of Americans received information about candidates from the aforementioned platforms. Seventeen percent of Americans asserted that they knew their friends' as well acquaintances' voting preferences via social media sites. Eleven million Americans "friended" a candidate or became a member of a group that served campaign purposes like a political party. Twelve percent published information that is related to politics and the campaign. Nine percent claimed that they became part of a political group on social media sites that supported a cause, and approximately 210,000 Americans advanced that they created a political group on social networking sites that supported a cause (Gainous and Wagner 27). All these numbers indicate that social media networking sites are strongly present in election campaigns.

Perloff in his book *The Dynamics of Political Communication* summarizes the five most significant characteristics of the modern online campaign:

- 1- Campaigns' websites become more interactive. They include biographical and issue information, videos, blogs, invitations to the public to join campaign groups on social media, news stories, and various fast ways to donate.
- 2- Social networking becomes a centerpiece on online campaigning. As a way of example, in 2011, the former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty succeeded to create a committee for the Republican nomination through Facebook.
- 3- Modern campaigns post on a regular basis videos and political ads on YouTube, launching publicity online that is much less expensive than the television ads.
- 4- Campaigning's speed and "pulse" has augmented, "producing a fast-paced environment characterized by instantaneous messaging.
- 5- Modern campaigning master than ever before political persuasion techniques. For example, the 2012 Obama campaign invested \$100 million on technology, gauging citizen's political preferences, and crafting political messages that corresponded to various voter profiles. And during the 2012 general election campaign, campaigns used voters' personal information in order to "tailor persuasive messages to fit them like a political glove". Consultants purchase demographic data that help them unveil voters' age race party affiliation as well as shopping preferences. Campaigns may

use such information, which is referred to as microtargeting, to influence voters' choices. (Perloff 251-253).

1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presidential candidates create websites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign websites become commonplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic candidate Howard Dean becomes first presidential candidate to develop blog.</li> <li>• Dean changes the nature of fundraising, raising money online from many small contributors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YouTube videos become more powerful as a video sinks Virginia Senate candidacy of George Allen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obama brings campaign into the digital age, raising record amounts of small online donations; creating a campaign social network; posting numerous YouTube videos; and harnessing social media to link campaigns to volunteer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media use grows, becoming a regular part of campaigns.</li> <li>• Twitter becomes a major force in campaigns.</li> <li>• Microtargeting matures and expands.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.4.: Timeline of Campaign Changes in the Digital Age<sup>18</sup>.**

Social networking sites' role in campaigns cannot be ignored as they influence political behavior. Social media allows users to create online social networks that work the same as traditional communities whose members meet, communicate, exchange ideas and information as well as encourage each other to take action but all this is done virtually. Social networking sites like Facebook enable the inclusion of various topics, and events and politics. The possibility of forming large online networks concerning candidates, issues and ideas without giving importance to any geographic boundaries is a characteristic of contemporary campaigning. On another hand, candidates can communicate with their supporters by means of social networking sites' applications. As a way of example, Hillary Clinton created an interactive Facebook application which could be added to a Facebook user' profile as well as could attract the user's "friends" since it appeared in their social network minifeed. Another example is when the ABC News utilised a Facebook application through which members could take part of debates, "*answer surveys, voice their support for a candidate, discuss*

<sup>18</sup> Source: Perloff, Richard M. *The Dynamics of political Communication. Media and Politics in a Digital Age*. New York: Taylor and Francis. 2014. Print. Page 249.

*important issues, and even have the chance to get their responses aired during an ABC News broadcast*". Information garnered from such applications enabled candidates to analyse the significance of voters' concerns as well as allowed them to reach voters who were not interested in politics (Panagopoulos 9).

In the past, personal interaction via either volunteers going door to door or participation in a town meeting used to be the primary elements campaign networks relied on. However, in our modern times, a global network of individuals who meet virtually has indeed substituted this sense of local and personal relationship building. Additionally, these virtual networks are created by means of the internet that enables individuals connect with each other. Platforms like Facebook allow the creation of such framework and help users design networks that help them communicate constantly and instantaneously. This change from personal networks to virtual ones has indeed influenced different aspects of life, including politics. The other advantage that Facebook is offering is that it allows election candidates to reach masses using inexpensive and practically free ways. Candidates, therefore, do not spend time updating the campaigns' online content because their consultants are the ones who are in charge of handling, creating and monitoring the candidates' Facebook profile page (Slotnick 255).

As a matter of fact, the role of Facebook during election campaigns cannot be dismissed. This is confirmed by a study conducted by the authors of the article entitled "It's complicated: Facebook Users' political Participation in the 2008 Election" by which they wanted to observe college students' trends in Facebook use during the weeks prior to the 2008 presidential election. The results show that the social networking site Facebook fosters political activity by means of its social and technical tools. The platform allows users to encounter other users who share the same political attitudes and that was possible with the help of Facebook features like political groups and pages. On another hand, the website gives the users the possibility to communicate with a large network of "friends" via private and public communication tools, providing those with a political cause to create political messages for evangelizing purposes. The findings of this piece of research also confirm that Facebook can be an effective environment for political engagement, allowing young people to express and share political opinions. The most important result of this study is that political activity on Facebook is linked to political participation (Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Elison, and Lampe 113). This was confirmed by another study that attempted to understand the activities that took place on the 2008 presidential election Facebook pages. The study claimed that

Obama supporters on the page not only justify their support by Obama's performance, but they also motivated by the strong affective association to exchange information, opinions, and mobilize actual actions among their peers. These activities are all meaningful forms of political engagement. Looking at Facebook posts provides a curious window through which the patterns of young people's political engagement can be better understood (Wu).

Another study was conducted during the 2010 midterm election in which the authors wanted to determine the extent to which networks on Facebook are influential on the choice of voting. The users taking part of the experiment were shown a non partisan "get out to vote" message on their newsfeed section of their Facebook profile and that on the election day. The message included "a reminder about the election, a clickable 'I vote' button, polling place information, and a counter" visualizing users who did vote as well as the pictures of the users' friends who confirmed that they voted. Control groups with reminders or without reminders that contained no information on their friends were as well utilized by the study's authors. The findings of the study confirmed that the users who received the message containing pictures of their friends were the ones who were more willing to vote (Gainous and Wagner 98). The study illustrates the power that Facebook can exercise on users' voting behavior.

In 2012, Facebook was also used by president Obama as an attempt to engage American citizens in decision-making. A vote via social media was organized by the White House and the decision was left to Facebook users. Citizens were required to save one of two turkeys by consulting the Facebook page of the White House. Users used Facebook to get more information about the birds, observe their pictures and have an idea about their preferred songs. The Facebook users were supposed to save one of the turkeys, whose names were Gobbler and Cobbler. This step was a very clever one: first it brought more traffic to the page of the white house; second the fact of voting provided users' profiles which can be utilized in later times to give birth to a much more sizable network for the president and his administration. It is true that the voter was giving his support to one of the turkeys; however, he was indeed connecting to an important social media community. In the end, the president pardoned and supported both turkeys.

The aforementioned tale may seem banal, but it confirms that social media is continuously adopting and integrating the political realm. Policymakers have started to use

effectively social media networks as well as other digital strategies, and the turkey voting is one of them. It is safe then to state that social media is successfully and rapidly integrating into politics. Such strategies do not only allow candidates and political actors to market themselves, but they also alter the way we communicate. Social media tools and applications affected the way the electorate organizes itself, put limits to the traditional forms of political communication, and opened the door for others. Changing “*the calculus of information exchange is not just an abstraction. It has very real and durable consequences*” (Gainous and Wagner 151).

In fact, Facebook is playing a remarkable role in sustaining the political process. Networking platforms, like Facebook, not only enable campaigns to communicate their theme and information on how to participate in the world of politics, but they also have the ability to render candidates more accessible and authentic. They may also help supporters discuss political issues in a professional manner. Facebook can personalize candidates as well as “*facilitate interpersonal connections around activities*” including politics. More than that, off-line meetings and connections are possible simply because Facebook organizes members according to their regional and organizational networks and makes profiles accessible within one’s network. What is noticed in our modern times is that membership in traditional associations decreases and online virtual platforms like Facebook are taking the lead in fostering social capital which is used by candidates, elected officials and civic leaders to mobilize citizens for political purposes (Williams and Gulati 287-288).

As mentioned earlier, Facebook, have played a remarkable role in fostering American’s political engagement, especially during election campaigns. On another hand, Facebook proved its effectiveness even in American foreign policy operations. The role of Facebook in American foreign policy will be deeply tackled in the next section.

### **3.2 American Foreign Policy in the Facebook Era**

This section offers an analysis of American foreign policy after 9/11 attacks and deals with Facebook as a modern tool to make public diplomacy meet the new exigencies of U.S conduct of foreign affairs. Facebook, as it will be shown in this part, is a democracy promoter, securing U.S interests abroad. Our contribution in this area of research concentrates on the relationship between American foreign policy and Facebook and how the latter is completing the American foreign policy multilateral approaches.



### 3.2.1 -American Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Context

After the dramatic 9/11 attacks the U.S started to reconsider its approaches to foreign policy. Additionally, modern digital practices such as using Facebook and many other social networking sites to enhance the newly adopted foreign policy approaches started to gain ground. Facebook, as the case study of this section, and its features are a tremendously perfect tool for what the researcher calls American foreign policy 2.0., creating more friends than enemies worldwide. One cannot understand the urge behind Facebook's inclusion in American foreign policy operations without unveiling the dilemmas the U.S faced in its conduct of foreign policy right after the 9/11 attacks.

The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 have emphatically impacted U.S foreign policy priorities and approaches. Americans, be they the American public or the American policy makers, reconsidered the U.S role in the world; the fact that divided Americans into two categories: unilateralists and multilateralists. The Unilateralists believe that the U.S.A should interfere all alone in world affairs without consulting or cooperating with any other nations. Paradoxically, the multilateralists argue that the U.S should cooperate and work with other countries in order to share the consequences of any decision even if this act may result in making compromises or affecting U.S interests. The responsibility is rather shared by all the nations involved in the decision making of any international issue. Holsti tackles the differences between unilateralists and multilateralists asserting that “[u]nilateralists prefer that the United States go alone unbridled by the need to consult, coordinate, and cooperate with other countries. In contrast, unilateralists favour acting and sharing burdens with others even doing so requires some compromises”(Holsti 106).

An extensive body of evidence indicates that the most significant lesson learnt from the September 11<sup>th</sup> dramatic events is that the United States has to work more closely with other countries. By acting as a “cooperative good neighbor,” the U.S A should not worry about its interests. Consequently, the multilateralist approaches to foreign policy are much more efficient than the dysfunctional nature of the U.S unilateral foreign policy. Stated differently, the hegemonic character of American foreign policy since the cold war is neither achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century American foreign policy goals nor does it respond to the U.S interests. Fitzpatrick takes the same stand in her book *U.S Public Diplomacy in a Post 9/11 World from Messaging to Mutuality* by stating “What this means for U.S public diplomacy is a shift from ‘telling America’s story to the world’ as it did both during the cold war and in the early post 9/11 period to ‘engaging with the world’” (Fitzpatrick 06).

American foreign policy after 9/11 was characterized by what is called the “war on terror”<sup>19</sup>. When the war started, the American public with the widespread belief that Bin Laden was hiding in Afghanistan was convinced that a war should be declared there to capture him. Americans supported and blessed the war believing that it would make them safer. This support, however, did not last and a wide proportion of U.S population was strongly willing to bring an end to the war, especially as the number of casualties was growing.

The U.S war on Iraq had the same scenario. In fact, the public was persuaded by the Bush administration that Iraq owned weapons of mass destruction; thus, most Americans strongly supported the war only if it would be successful and take a short period of time. Nonetheless, the war took a very long time and the public started to lose temper. The number of casualties was increasing and the amount of money spent on the war, on another hand, was inconceivable. It became clear that the war was costly and detrimental. Consequently, anti war movements started across America, requesting the Bush administration to stop the war. In the same line of thought, Americans considered that the war on Iraq made the other countries disrespect the U.S.A and increased the tendency towards other terrorist attacks. Both wars are examples of American unilateral operations which are neither favored by the American general public nor by a respectful majority of U.S policy makers.

One may, therefore, argue that embracing moral principles and caution was an important element in U.S foreign policy. Multilateralism, on another hand, should be the appropriate approach to American conduct of foreign affairs because it increases U.S popularity and reduces the tendency to other terrorist attacks. Additionally, multilateralism, as the newly embraced approach to American foreign policy in the post 9/11 attack era, should be adjusted to information age realities. More precisely, social media networking sites, which are the result of high tech efforts to make the world a small village, ought to be highly used in conducting American foreign policy operations. This may result in protecting U.S interests abroad and promoting a friendlier image of the United States of America and its public. In other words, social media networking platforms do meet American multilateralism objectives, transforming it to multilateralism 2.0.

Indeed, President Obama came to office with a different agenda and a different perception of world affairs conduct. His foreign policy stressed multilateralism and

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<sup>19</sup> It is also called “global war on terrorism”. It refers to the campaign that the United States and its allies started after September 11 Attacks to counter terrorism.

encouraged dialogue between the United States of America and the other foreign countries. The reason behind promoting such an approach to foreign policy is that the U.S.A is no longer ready to assume the consequences of any international events alone. The role of world gendarme is no longer favored by the U.S.A and its public. It is worth noting that America is now always aiming at working in collaboration with other nations, taking shared decisions about what is best for the world. Furthermore, the U.S.A under the presidency of Barack Obama was supporting diplomatic programs to promote international understanding. Indeed, Fitzpatrick states “*the Obama administration has made significant progress toward the operation of a more relational approach to public diplomacy based on principles of dialogue and mutuality*” (Fitzpatrick 8). She goes on saying that “*the new public diplomacy is not promoting policy but is also about involving and consulting other players in the policy development process*” (Fitzpatrick.10).

Moreover, the Obama administration acknowledged the importance of individuals’ participation in prominent international affairs. It was also encouraging any tools that facilitate Americans’ communication with the citizens of foreign countries. This led to spreading American ideals and promoting positive images of the United States’ policies. Fitzpatrick embraces the same view saying that “*America could gain the ‘cooperative advantage’ in global affairs by incorporating network communication and connective relational strategies into its public diplomacy*” (Fitzpatrick 13). She carries on to add

[t]he election of president Barack Obama signaled a new direction in U.S public diplomacy both the new president and new secretary of state Hillary Clinton quickly set a new tone in international relations and made great strides to reset America’s relationships with foreign nation and peoples. The guiding principles were mutual respect and understanding” (Fitzpatrick 22).

It may be noticed that the author of this dissertation is using the terms foreign policy and public diplomacy interchangeably though they are two distinct concepts and may not be considered synonymous. Indeed, they are not synonymous, but they are closely related, going hand in hand achieving common goals. Accordingly, in the post 9/11 attacks era the U.S faced many challenges. It became clear that America is accomplishing its national interests and promoting its favored foreign policies through public diplomacy tools. The U.S.A is conducting foreign policies through direct outreach and contact with the populations of

foreign countries. After the dramatic events and the combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S.A reconsidered the role of public diplomacy in the process of foreign affairs conduct. With the rise and rapid evolution of Internet and communications now, the American public diplomacy's direct interaction with the citizens as well as the leaders of the foreign countries became easier than ever. The collaborative work of American public diplomacy and U.S foreign policy aims at boosting a much more positive image of the U.S.A abroad, including its culture, values, and policies. The most salient element that leads to public diplomacy success is *"expanding and strengthening people-to people relationships" which "build mutual trust and respect through expanded public diplomacy program and platforms"* (Fitzpatrick 30).

Fitzpatrick's claim of building mutual respect via expanded public diplomacy platforms compels us to ask many questions: is it possible to make the American public communicate with the other publics? If the answer is yes, so how? What kind of platforms can be used in order to facilitate America's direct conversations with the citizens of the foreign nations? The Internet, as mentioned earlier, plays an important role in public diplomacy. Though the Internet is considered as the most recent means of communication, emails and different types of chatting sites are regarded by the researcher as traditional ways of communicating. What is then the best social platform that increases connectedness between Americans and the other peoples of foreign countries? Is it not conceivable that social media networking platforms like Facebook can play a remarkable part in helping U.S public diplomacy respond to American foreign policy goals?

### **3.2.2 Facebook as a Promoter of American Foreign Policy Goals**

Advanced electronic resources and communications are indeed influencing American foreign policy, by creating new sorts of important strategic issues and changing the old methods of dealing with them. This may alter the kinds of diplomatic relations the world nations are trying to have, what is called by Dizart "a responsive digital diplomacy". (01).

Modern Embassies, if we can say so, improve their resources by computer access, satellites, and many other digital advances. All the previous tools combined together do exercise a substantial impact on diplomacy. They enable the American elite groups of diplomats to be in a constant contact with their foreign colleagues. American foreign policy, on another hand, is adopting new electronic practices, gradually abandoning the old ways of dealing with diplomacy (Dizart 02)

Knowledge is, indeed, power. The country that controls world data information is, therefore, the most powerful one in the world. The country that holds such a power is the America which has always been militarily and economically strong. What is recent is that it is becoming a digital power, collecting and processing information. Computer science professionals are increasingly recruited to computerize American foreign policy operations. The conviction is unshakable that if the U.S.A maintains its lead in information resources, its strategic interests abroad will undoubtedly be protected.

The United States of America is exercising a new form of power. It is the major distributor and generator of all digital information data and resources. According to Dizart at the very beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, approximately half of the users of the internet were Americans. Six percent of the most viewed internet sites were also in the U.S.A, and 40% of the mentioned sites were in California. Currently, the United States is holding power over 5000 important data banks; therefore, it is exercising a new type of hegemony.

As a matter of fact, in 1997, a neoconservative think<sup>20</sup> tank came to existence called The Project for the New American Century (PNAC). Promoting globalization and increasing U.S military dominance throughout the world was its main mission. The other goal of this think tank was to defeat all regimes that opposed U.S interests. It recognized later the necessity for the American government to control the internet to achieve its aforementioned aim. In a document called “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” in 2000, The PNAC claimed

An America incapable of protecting its interests or that of its allies in space or the “infosphere” will find difficult to exert global political leadership....[A]s with space, access to and use of cyberspace and the Internet are emerging elements in global commerce, politics and power. Any nation wishing to assert itself globally must take account of this other new “global commons” (Cohen 83).

The use of social media in public diplomacy to maintain a successful conduct of U.S foreign policy is another episode of U.S digital power. Social media enables Americans to be in direct contact with the citizens of foreign countries. American diplomats do use social media to interact with other countries’ publics to explain American values, policies, and to promote positive perceptions of the United States, making them differentiate between

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<sup>20</sup> It is an institution whose mission is to find solutions to technological, social, political strategy and armament problems.

American policy makers as the most important foreign policy actors and the American general public.

Before talking about how Facebook is used to bolster American foreign policy and public diplomacy objectives, let us first retackle how Americans understand democracy and the means they use in order to stay politically engaged. The relationship between Facebook and American democracy promotion worldwide is going to be tackled afterwards.

Americans educate each other about political issues and can also have their common will through regular conversations. This is the perfect way through which the American citizens can have effective roles in the realm of politics. On another hand, Americans introduced what we call political deliberation in order to talk about issues and discuss their consequences to reach a common ground. It can be in a form of forums like NIF for National Issues Forum network which involves NIF Institute and annual Kettering foundation workshop at Miami University. People can as well promote their political deliberation by joining interest groups. By creating associations, Americans can express their opinions, deliberate, defend their interests, and solve problems. These associations do not only give the opportunity to the American public to deliberate, but they also build bridges between people and their leaders.

If we look at the Facebook platform, we can notice that its application and features enable people to get actively involved with dialogues through forming groups of common interests. If one has a political cause or any other cause, he can form a group and invite many other people from his contact list as well as his friends' contact list to join his group. Such groups, that can be considered virtual associations, enable people to make their voices heard. When they speak and interact via Facebook, they are valued by many other people; thus, these multiple voices can make a difference and stop the tyranny of the ones who are holding power.

We can conclude that the American democratic model of forming associations to make the government respond to the public preferences is imposed on the world. Americanness is indeed revealed through Facebook. We can vividly notice that the United States is spreading its ideals of free speech, democracy, and communication action through associations using Facebook. Netchitailova confirms one's argument by saying

online social networks should be autonomous spaces, where people should be free to express themselves as they want, and that privacy, as we know it, is undergoing important transition. The main emphasis in this approach to privacy is on sharing. The idea behind is that online social networks such as Facebook allow for greater transparency and cooperation, thus leading to increased democracy (684).

Among U.S constant foreign policy goals, one can find promoting democracy and helping other countries to have a more democratic government. Accordingly, Facebook is playing a plausible role in achieving the former goal. This social media networking site is not only a means of socializing among people, it is also a democracy promoter. The use of Facebook tools to organize protests in the Arab world is a plain example of how a simple networking site can cause political upheavals and drastic changes in any country's political arena on one hand, enhance democracy, on the other hand. To bring an end to the longtime governments in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and many other Arab countries, activists used Facebook to organize and publicize protests, leading to what is called the "Arab Spring." Facebook played a major role in shaping opinion and mobilizations. It was a true vehicle for political change. What confirms one's claim is the statement made by Rosen in her article "So, was Facebook responsible for the Arab Spring after all?" that "*Facebook and elsewhere online is where people saw and shared horrifying videos and photographs of state brutality that inspired them to rebel. Second, these sites are where people found out the basic logistic of the protests- where to go and when to show up.*"<sup>21</sup>

In fact, Facebook was considered as the most crucial "catalyst" of the Tunisian revolution. The reason behind this is that the network provided "*trusted identity and visibility defined networks, exclusiveness and news feed*". The fact that there were 850.000 Facebook users among 3.6 million Tunisian internet users is considered as the "*first massive use of an active online social networking platform as an alternative militant media*" (Marzouki et.al 237).

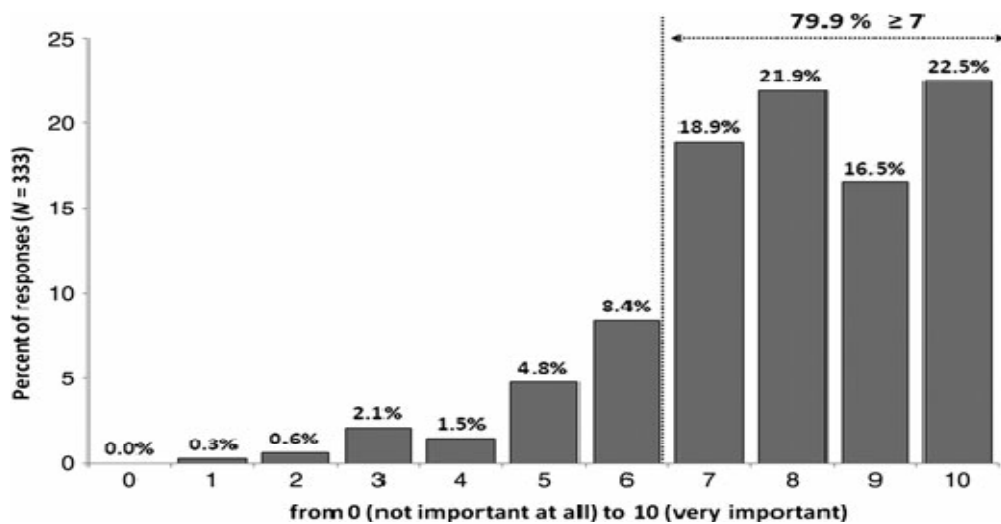
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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/09/so-was-facebook-responsible-for-the-arab-spring-after-all/244314/>

Many social media observers consider Facebook as the vital actor of the Tunisian Revolution. Unlike the Egyptian government, Tunisian authorities did not try to ban Facebook access but they rather used it as a surveillance tool to monitor every political and social activity on the platform's networks. This confirms that Facebook cyberactivism was threatening the Tunisian regime. As a matter of fact, the government hacked many Facebook protest pages and stole passwords of Tunisian Facebook users. This kind of revolution was considered as "an unanticipated boomerang effect" (Marzouki et.al 238).

The study conducted by Marzouki et.al that concerned the role of Facebook in the Tunisian revolution showed that Facebook had three main dimensions: Facebook political function, Facebook informational function, and Facebook media platform function. On another hand, The Tunisian revolution did not have a leader. The absence of leadership in the Tunisian revolution refers to the "*spontaneity, the homogeneity and the synchronicity of the Facebook cyberactivism network action*". An interpretation in terms of "collective consciousness" that is linked to internal knowledge of a large group of people supports the aforementioned explanation. Citizens' knowledge as well as media activism together created a novel template of consciousness by means of Facebook communication tools. This "collective cyberconsciousness" was described by the researchers of the study as "*timely, acute, rapid, domain-specific, and purpose-oriented*". Facebook was successfully used during the Tunisian revolution and it became a modern revolutionary arm of freedom and dignity, more than that a democracy promoter. The next figure reveals participants' answers concerning the importance of Facebook in the Tunisian revolution. The result showed that 79.9 % on the respondents claimed that Facebook considerably affected the Tunisian Revolution.





The distribution of responses to the first question as a function of the participants (N= 333) perceived level of Facebook importance to the Tunisian revolution.

Figure 3.5: Facebook Effect and the Tunisian Revolution<sup>22</sup>.

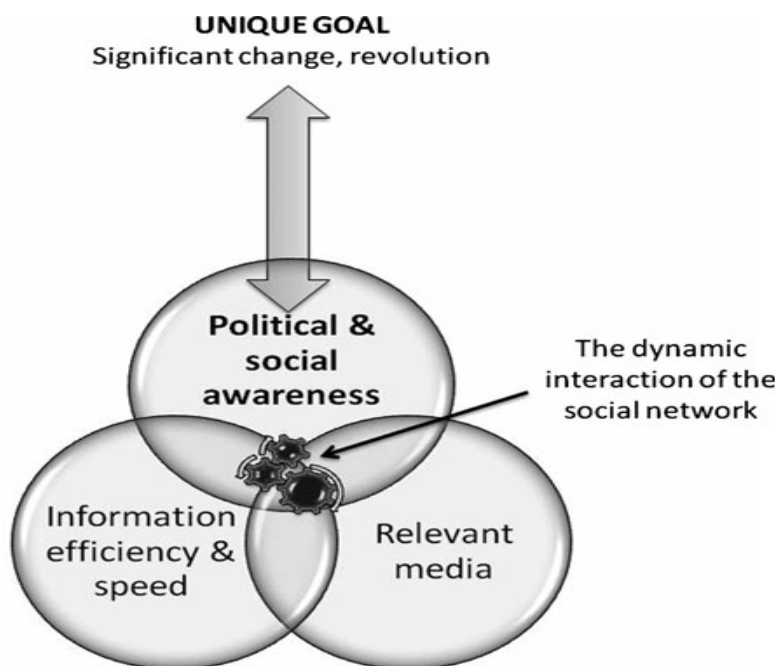


Figure 3.6.: A Descriptive Tentative Model Based on the Cluster Analysis of the Social Network Dynamics toward the Revolutionary Goal<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Marzouki, Yousri; Marzouki, Ines Skandarani; Bejaoui, Moez; Hammoudi, Haythem and Bellaj, Tarek. “The Contribution of Facebook to the 2011 Tunisian Revolution: A Cyberpsychological Insight”. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*. Volume 15, Number5. (2012) p239

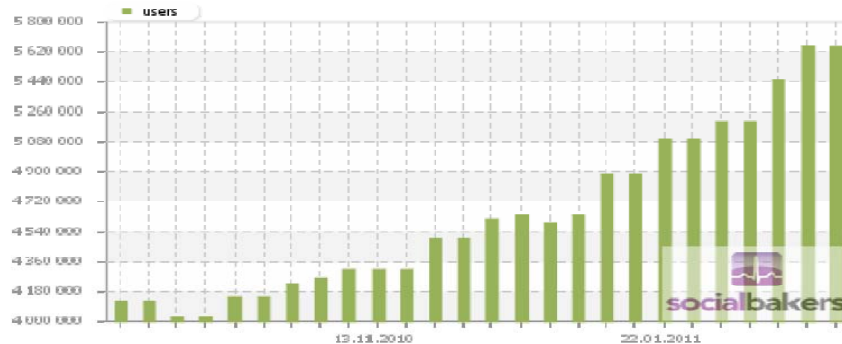
<sup>23</sup> Ibid. P243

Facebook played as well an important role in the Egyptian revolution. According to Mazloumi Far and Salimi in their article “Reviewing the role of Facebook in Egyptian Revolution in February 2011”, Facebook was an accelerating factor of the sociopolitical changes in countries like Egypt. Their research findings revealed that social media networking sites like Facebook played a crucial role in the Egyptian revolution. Facebook, which is considered as an efficient model of the internet development, benefited the revolution by “*calling for protests, managing participants’ movements and gathering, and distributing news and information*” (85).

- 1- Calling for protests: When the Tunisian revolution ended, Egyptians started to use Facebook to call for mass protests and that started on January 25. Two Facebook pages “WE ARE ALL KHALED SAEED” and “April 6 Youth Movement” were created to call for protest. When the first Facebook page was created, 400 thousand users joined it. On February 9, 2011 the Page reached 600 thousand members. The number of members increased to reach 804 thousand and that on February 14, 2011. Twenty days following the creation of the page, every day about 20200 users joined the page (Mazloumi Far and Salimi 82) As a result, a huge number of Egyptian protesters joined the Cairo’ Al-Tahrir Square.
- 2- Facebook played as well a remarkable role in planning for protests. On January 27, The Egyptian government became aware of the important and positive influence that Facebook was exercising on the revolution. Consequently, the government decided to cut off communication, especially the digital one, in Egypt.
- 3- Managing Participants’ movements and gathering: Thanks to Facebook, protesters were organized into small groups. These groups moved gradually to crowded areas to reach Al-Tahrir Square. Additionally, all protesters kept their houses’ wireless connections open to make internet coverage available all the time.
- 4- Distributing news and information: Protesters with mobile internet service distributed news, information, videos, and photos of the revolutions’ events and that from the first day. One of the Facebook pages that helped protesters spread information and content was Rassed News. The former had 250 thousand members. During the period of January 25 and February 11, 2011, the Rassed news page succeeded to spread 57 videos, 40 photos, and 367 web links.
- 5- Facebook users were the primary actors in spreading information in protest moments and “*Egyptians’ response to Facebook was unique and unprecedented. On*

*Facebook pages, the number of comments ranged from 2500 to 20000, and minimum of likes in most Facebook news was 10000” (Mazloumi Far and Salimi 84-85).*

Fig3. Number of Facebook users in Egypt from September 2010 to February 2011



**Figure 3.7.: Number of Facebook Users in Egypt from September 2010 to February 2011<sup>24</sup>.**

Consequently, it is not surprising that authoritarian countries like Korea, China and Cuba limit if not ban access to the social networking site Facebook. The reason behind this is that these countries do realize the power of Facebook to organize riots that may bring an end to their authoritarian regime. As a way of example, China created a surveillance and censorship project run by the government called “The Great Firewall of China” and Facebook is among the sites that are censored in the country. As far as Cuba is concerned, Access to Facebook is rather limited and not officially banned (Kirkland). Facebook is hardly accessed in these countries and many others simply because it successfully promotes democracy. This is confirmed by Morozov in his book *The Net Delusion* because he describes the “*social networking sites like Facebook as a challenger to undemocratic societies*”. He adds as well that Facebook is “*one of the most organic tools for democracy promotion the world has ever had*” (22).

If we go back to our discussion of the modern American public diplomacy and the new characteristics, it started to have, is it not reasonable to say that Facebook meets the new exigencies of American public diplomacy, making it the most important part of U.S foreign policy implementation? Facebook is one of the quickest tools of modern public diplomacy. The advantage of Facebook provides the possibility to reach foreign citizens in near-real time. This social media networking platform is a fertile land for increased engagement,

<sup>24</sup> Source: Mazloumi far, Behrouz; and Salimani, Maryam. “Reviewing the Role of Facebook in Egyptian Revolution in February 2011”. *Asian Journal of social Sciences and Humanities*. Volume 1. Number 1. February (2012).p81.

conversation, and interaction; consequently, the goals of American public diplomacy are furthered. American embassies do have accounts on Facebook, often an account for the ambassador and another one for the embassy. Indeed, the State Department and its embassies now have 290 Facebook pages with more than 15 million followers (“Public Diplomacy 2.0”)<sup>25</sup>. Facebook goes along with American public diplomacy. It helps public diplomacy influence foreign publics, promoting positive images of the U.S.A., and constructing support for its policies. As a way of example, thanks to Facebook, Ambassador Robert Ford had the possibility to keep in touch with Syrian citizens after the evacuation of its embassy staff from Syria. The Ambassador was able to follow events on the ground and influence Syrian citizens via Facebook. He succeeded to engage Syrian citizens and bloggers in interactions and conversations. These people were referred to later as “*Syrian electronic army*”<sup>26</sup> (“Public Diplomacy 2.0”).

Another example of a highly praised e-diplomacy accomplishment is the opening of a “Virtual embassy” for Iran. It is a website that aims at giving information and services to Iranians in spite of the absence of diplomatic relations between both countries. In fact, the presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton “*calls it a vehicle for Americans and Iranians to communicate without fear*”<sup>27</sup> (“US Opens ‘Virtual Embassy’ for Iran”). Iranians as well as Americans are encouraged to add comments and criticism using links to State Department Facebook accounts provided on the virtual embassy website.

Both cases indicate that American public diplomacy often uses Facebook for the sake of enabling the United States of America to implement its favored foreign policies. Not only does Facebook lessen animosity toward the U.S.A., but it also makes public diplomacy successfully respond to the modern international challenges, securing American interests abroad. Facebook and many other social media platforms led to the emergence of network thinking in world relations, altering American multilateral diplomacy from a closed system to an open one.

Facebook has played a remarkable role in the American surveillance projects. It had provided American security agencies with valuable data about potential terrorists and criminals. This is going to be addressed in the next section.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://talkingpoliticsjomc.wordpress.com/2013/01/31/public-diplomacy-2-0/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://talkingpoliticsjomc.wordpress.com/2013/01/31/public-diplomacy-2-0/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-opens-virtual-embassy-for-iran-135129423/173325.html>

### 3.3 American Surveillance System and Facebook

Evidence and Snowden's leaked documents about the NSA confirm that Facebook heavily helped American security agencies and their units to conduct local as well as foreign surveillance. This was done by facilitating access to users' data on Facebook. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to shed light on the role Facebook played in helping American surveillance agencies carry out successfully their surveillance operations inside and outside the United States. The first part will be dedicated to giving an overview of American surveillance programs. The second part will confirm the contention that Facebook was indeed involved in American surveillance programs and operations.

#### 3.3.1 An Overview of American Surveillance Programs

Mass surveillance in the United States of America is not new. It dates back to wartime monitoring and examination of worldwide communications. For example, during both World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century every single international mail that was transmitted via either postal services or companies like Western Union and International Telephone and Telegraph was viewed and examined by the U.S armed forces. The War Department and the Office of Censorship in the Second World War carefully watched every kind of communications between the U.S.A and other foreign countries. As a matter of fact, all letters that crossed U.S borders or international ones were inspected to collect important data. After World Wars, programs like the Black Chamber and SHAMROCK project sustained U.S surveillance system. On another hand, intelligence agencies like Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and National Security Agency (NSA) were formed to "institutionalize American surveillance". In the second half of the 1940's, a global spy network called ECHELON was created by the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and supervised by the NSA to record all forms of satellite and electronic communications, giving birth to what is called electronic or digital surveillance ("Mass surveillance in the United States").

In 1952 and during all the period of the cold war, both the United States of America and the United Kingdom developed their signal intelligence abilities, making use of undersea cables and landing points, satellites intercepting microwave relays and arrays of antennae that were often utilized in military bases and embassies( Bowden 11). However, American surveillance programs were not only dedicated to monitoring foreign nations, they also collected data about American citizens living on American soil.

In fact, in 1956, The United States launched a full-fledged covert attack called “CIONTELPRO” (Counter intelligence program) opposing the communist party in the United States. The program succeeded to achieve its aims and it started to be used to target other individuals and groups. Under the labels protecting national security, preventing violence and maintaining the existing social and political order, The FBI justified its actions to conduct illegal wiretaps and bug people. This operation included as well monitoring organizations that were related to radical groups and the civil rights movements. The program was kept confidential. However, in 1971 Congress ordered the FBI to stop it (Swire and Ahmad 6).

Nevertheless, in 1972, a burglary at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate Hotel in Washington D.C revealed a national scandal. Their investigation unveiled that illegal operations like government wiretapping, bugging and eavesdropping were taking place. It also disclosed dirty election campaign tricks, money laundering, burglary and official cover-up of serious crimes. All these actions had one primary aim which was to destroy Nixon’s political opponents and ensure his reelection. Richard Nixon was accused of being the primary player of this affair. As a result, the president resigned in August 1974 (Swire and Ahmad 7).

As a response to the Watergate scandal, the senate decided to investigate the extent to which the FBI and other intelligence agencies were involved in political repression. The Church Committee called Frank Church of Idaho discovered that the FBI utilized electronic surveillance techniques in order to establish “*overly broad intelligence targeting and collection objectives*” (Swire and Ahmad 7). As a result, the senate considered such actions a threat to personal privacy as well as to activities that are constitutionally protected (Swire and Ahmad 7).

Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 as a response to the Church Committee’s investigation and to ensure that the president could never be allowed to utilize “National Security” for the sake of justifying electronic surveillance of political opponents and citizens. The act aimed to make a balance between validating enemy agents’ wiretapping and protecting citizens’ privacy. Under this law, the government was asked to present a warrant to undertake national security surveillance. To conduct any surveillance action, authorities were required to present to a judge in a secret Foreign Intelligence Court a cause that the target “*was an agent of foreign power*” (Swire and Ahmad 8).

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed another trend in surveillance which was transmission tracking. It started in a form of counterespionage operations making use of direction-finding devices that aimed at searching for radios that were used by foreign agents communicating with enemy governments in wartime. Despite the fact that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century no warrant was required to affix a radio transmission device, this technology was considered so unreliable “*that assessing the risk of losing the equipment was more the determining factor in deciding to plant a device that the value of any information that might be acquired*” (Swire and Ahmed 8).

In 2000, the UKUSA alliance monitored different parts of the world. The United States of America, on one hand, used its vast array of satellites and listening posts for the sake of monitoring Latin America, Asia, Asiatic Russia, and Northern China. On the other hand, Great Britain succeeded to monitor Europe and Russia west of the Urals, and Africa. Australia as well monitored other regions of the globe like Indochina, Indonesia and southern China. New Zealand tracked the Western Pacific. Last and not least, Canada monitored central and south America (Cohen 89).

Extracted data by global outposts were sent to Echelon main hub at Maryland and then analyzed by the NSA. However, Echelon’s space satellite technologies became outdated because technology developed from transmission of information from microwaves and radio waves to light traveling through fiber-optic cables. Since methods of fiber-optic splitting proved their effectiveness to extract data, the technologies of Echelon were updated and developed to keep up with this “*changing climate of electronic transmission*” (Cohen 89). In 2001, American surveillance system and Echelon were described by a European parliamentary investigative report as follows

Within Europe, all email, telephone and fax communications are routinely intercepted by the United States National Security Agency, transferring all target information from the European mainland..... to [the headquarter of NSA]... a global surveillance system that stretches around the world to form a targeting system on all the key Intelsat satellites used to convey most of the world’s satellite phone calls, internet, email, faxes and telexes.....[u]nlike many of the electronic spy systems developed during the cold war, ECHELON is designed for primarily

non-military targets: governments, organization and businesses in virtually every country....five nations share the results with the US as the senior partner....Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia are very much acting as subordinate information services (Cohen 89).

Computerized digital surveillance which mainly aims at protecting America's national security has been reinforced after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 as well as after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The measures taken to gather as much information as possible of potential attacks has been part of U.S war on terror. In fact Carqueville and Murfet confirm this in their article "Big Power data" by saying

The 911 attacks had a transformative effect on the landscape of U.S intelligence agencies. It became a focus for them to do a better job of 'connecting dots' in order to prevent future attacks. Since terrorists live among ordinary citizens, and use the same communication and transportation networks, these dots can be hard to see against the background. This is why the NSA believes that, in order to prevent future attacks, it must collect all communications in order to find the relevant pieces of data and understand the links between them. (2)

In fact, the period that followed the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> witnessed remarkable challenging measures to protect privacy and data under the fight against terrorism. As a way of example, the USA PATRIOT act, which was enacted by the U.S congress on October 26, 2001, aimed at extending law enforcement agencies' powers for collecting domestic intelligence (which means inside the United States of America) "(Bowden 12). This act under section 215, on another hand, allowed American government to have access to personal records and conduct surveillance in order to search for suspected terrorists (Swire and Ahmad 12). Another act which is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Amendment Act of 2008 gave birth to mass-surveillance that targets the data of foreign citizens (outside the United States of America) (Bowden 12). The act allowed the government to amplify its use of the National Letters. These letters permitted government agents to collect data about individuals from financial institutions telephone companies and internet service providers. The seizure was kept secret (Swire and Ahmed 12). Additionally, many surveillance programs were created



under the Bush Administration. One of these programs was called “stellar Wind” *which was intended to place fibre-optic cable “splitters” in Internet switching centers, “and triaging the enormous volumes of traffic in real-time with a small high-performance scanning computer, which could send data filtered by this means back to the NSA”*(Bowden 12). The program mined communications databases, financial transactions and internet activity. However, in 2004, a near-mutiny among top leaders in the Justice Department threatened to leave office because the program targeted an important number of Americans who were not involved in any terrorist action. In 2006, USA Today<sup>28</sup> was the first to unveil the data mining nature of the program. On another hand, the Bush administration was accused of using the 9/11 attacks to expand the government surveillance powers and “*deprive Americans of their traditional liberties*” (Swire and Ahmad 13-14).

George W. Bush created another program called the Terrorist Surveillance Program (TSP) which authorized the National Security Administration (NSA) to conduct warrantless electronic surveillance of international communications between individuals in the United States and other countries whose suspected government or only one party of it taking part of the communication was a member of a terrorist organization. The program was kept secret until the New York Times unveiled its existence in 2005. In Response to public pressure, Bush made an end to the TPS in 2007. Later in 2009 inspectors of the CIA<sup>29</sup>, NSA and Departments of Defense and Justice reported that the program “*had resulted in unprecedented collection of data*” (Swire and Ahmad 13).

Starting from the 21th century, American government agencies have made use of computers and powerful surveillance programs to carry out electronic surveillance. Agencies like the FBI<sup>30</sup> and NSA amass an important amount of personal data in order to predict people’s behavior. The supporters of such operations claim that innocent people have nothing to fear and their collected data are not going to be necessarily used. Nevertheless, privacy supporters oppose data mining because it altered the nature of surveillance. American government has examined all digital behavior, including that of innocent Americans, in order to find illicit activity (Swire and Ahmad 14).

What is then electronic surveillance? The new surveillance has been defined by many scholars. The first definition by Markx (2002) suggests that electronic surveillance is the fact

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<sup>28</sup> It is a name of a newspaper.

<sup>29</sup> Central Intelligence Agency

<sup>30</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation.

of using technical instruments to collect personal data which can be extracted from individuals or contexts. Another definition given by Clarke (1988) state that digital surveillance is the systematic monitoring of people's conversations and actions using information technology. A different definition provided by Lyon (1994) stresses the ways computer databases are utilized to gather and process personal data of different categories of populations. More importantly, Castells (2001) sees digital surveillance as a "technology of control" (qtd in Fuchs, Boersema, Albrechtslund, and Sandoval.1, 2).

What is clear is that all the definitions mentioned above do agree that digital surveillance is all about storing and mining personal information about individuals' actions and communications. The internet intensifies surveillance on one hand and "*enables a globally networked form of surveillance*", on the other hand (Fuchs, et al .3). Indeed, the internet provides surveillance with two important aspects: "*global interaction and networking*" (Fuchs, et al 3).

The other question that is worth answering in this dissertation is: how is computer surveillance conducted? Computer surveillance goes through four stages: data collection, data manipulation by a machine, human disclosure and public disclosure. During the first step which is also called evidence collection requires simply access to information. This can happen in many various ways. It can happen via the use of devices like a "bug<sup>31</sup>" or a wiretapping<sup>32</sup> program. On another hand, the government can as well obtain such data from other private organisms like a third party-party provider. Such data can be stored in any form. It is true that electronic forms are the most common nowadays; they can be on paper or on magnetic tape or some other mechanisms. In all its forms, the government possesses its own copy of the evidence. At the second stage of computer surveillance, which is data manipulation by machine, the government makes use of its own copy of information and starts to manipulate it to achieve its objectives. The government may aggregate the information into a database. After that, the government may mine the data for trends that might indicate any probability of a criminal or terrorist activity. At this stage there is no human access to data or the findings of any analysis. The third stage of computer surveillance is characterized by disclosure to a person involved in the surveillance program. This person with access to the database obtains the results of the data collection and manipulation. This

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<sup>31</sup> It is a device used to send sound to another area by means of different forms of transmission recording device that can be retrieved in later times.

<sup>32</sup> Refers to the fact of deliberately and secretly listening to individuals' electronic communication by means of a recording device connected to the transmission line.

stage is the most controversial one. It indeed endangers people's privacy because it involves human access to confidential personal information. Such access by government employees may lead to abuse, and triggering privacy concerns. As far as the fourth stage is concerned, which is public disclosure, the collected and analyzed data by government can be unveiled and used outside the surveillance agency. As a way of example, the government might use the results of wiretapping in a criminal case and might disclose private phone calls in open court for the jury to see. In many other cases disclosures might be in an indirect way. The mined data enable government officials identify a terrorist cell; consequently, members of the cell will be arrested. However, *"the fact of the arrest does not actually disclose the data collected or metadata obtained; the arrests might be used to help piece together the government's surveillance"* (Kerr 42). On another hand, data is not unveiled, but actions based on the data can be disclosed publicly (Kerr 42).

### 3.3.2 Facebook as a Modern Surveillance Instrument

Such Data used to be retrieved from personal emails and many other sites; this was done successfully thanks to the different U.S surveillance programs mentioned earlier. Now information about terrorists and their movements is reached through social media networks. Private network Companies like Facebook enable a better collection of users' personal data; digital surveillance becomes therefore known as dataveillance.

On another hand, social networking sites have facilitated the terrorist's activities online. Terrorists try to hire new members and maintain the existing ones by engaging in marketing strategies. One of the common tactics used is to spread messages on such platforms is to indicate they are the victims of the enemy they are fighting. As a way of example, AL-Qaeda describes the West as an oppressor; the one that took all their resources. Similarly, neo-Nazi forces argue that Muslims took their resources. To propagate and justify their violent means, terrorists portray themselves as victims (Mahmood 78).

Additionally, social networking sites enable terrorists recruit new members and to be loyal to others by using other ways like spreading images and videos on such platforms about their cause. For example, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have taken advantage of many incidents in which people have been tortured. One of these incidents was the killing of women and children in Afghanistan by the USA as well as its allies. Such pictures are widely propagated through social networking sites like Facebook and might efficiently allow Al-Qaeda and Taliban hire new members (Mahmood 79).

Terrorists may use social networking sites like LinkedIn to find requiring specialists in a particular area like biological weapons experts to be hired in a sophisticated attack. Using LinkedIn, terrorists can have an overview of the professional, experience of their target recruit. They may as well check his Facebook profile to have an idea about his likes and interests. Terrorists may monitor events on Facebook as they can join the target's planned events and give birth to a real life bond trying to gradually influence him. If the target recruit is not influenced, terrorists may search for his family members and colleagues on Facebook. These contacts can be used by terrorists to change his mind to help them (Mahmood 81).

On another hand, links to the pages of all the U.S foreign missions' Facebook pages are provided by the US Department of State on their Facebook page. In fact, it has been stated by the scholar Mahmood that there are 11,825 fans of the US Embassy in Afghanistan, 58,134 fans of the US Consulate General in Peshawar, Pakistan and 480 fans of the US Embassy in Mali. Terrorists, therefore, may visit the aforementioned pages and begin targeting "*the well wishers of the USA, which is very possible for some militants in their strongholds in these three pages*" (82).



**Figure 3.8.: Use of Online Social Networks for Terrorism<sup>33</sup>.**

<sup>33</sup> Source: Mahmood, Shah. "Online social Networks: Threats and Defenses". *Security and Privacy Preserving in Social Networks*. ED Chbeir, Richard and Al Bouna, Bechara. New York: Springer-Verlag Wien. 2013. 73-94. Print.p78

This figure demonstrates the different methods in which terrorists can be utilizing online social networks. The first one is recruitment and loyalty maintenance. This way refers to using social media networks to recruit new members and show loyalty to new ones. This can be done through spreading messages and videos on social networking sites. The second one is planning and information sharing. It refers to the fact that terrorists may use social media networks to select their targets, share their plans, monitor and data mine their targets, and spread propaganda after an attack. As far as intelligence gathering is concerned, terrorists may use online social networks to gather intelligence about their opponents such as their psychology, their plans and their location. The fourth way is psychological warfare. It denotes adopting social media networks to propagate fear in their enemy publics. Concerning the fourth way which is training, terrorists may use social media networks to upload videos that can train attackers in a great variety of skills. Fundraising refers to the use of social media networks by terrorists to raise money for their cause. The last method which is counterintelligence means that terrorist organizations may use social media networks as a counterintelligence tool to blow an agent's cover (Mahmood 78-85).

Nevertheless, terrorists may not always join the same Facebook fan page or be friends on Facebook for the sake of sharing their plans. They may create encoded messages on very busy fan pages and visit them from time to time. As a result, decoding steganographic messages on 300 million photos uploaded everyday on Facebook is one of the most significant missions of the national security agencies (Mahmood 82).

Moreover, the Flow of information among users become easier on social networking sites. This leads to the polarization of the population. And polarization results in radicalization. The radicalization begins by a radical message made by at least one user. For instance, a member of the British Armed forces named Scot McHugh posted on his Facebook profile *"Go to Afghan in a month and half! Can't wait to shoot towel heads"*. His message was liked by 30 of his friends. Following this message, the British Army decided not to send him to Afghanistan. Another 19-year-old British citizen named Azhur Ahmed posted on his Facebook profile

People gassin about the deaths of soldiers! What about the innocent families who have been brutally killed. The women have been raped. The children who have

been sliced up...! Your enemy's were the Taliban not innocent harmful families. All soldiers should DIE and got to HELL! Gotta problem go cry at your soldiers grave and wish him hell because that's where he is going...!<sup>34</sup>

Because of the publication of this message on Facebook, Azhar Ahmed was charged with treason. Those who were against Ahmed's views created a Facebook page called "Azhar Ahmed S\*\*mbag!!!" where they asked to kill him. However, after a period of time the page changed its request and they asked to put him away. Facebook was then a battle ground between the ones who supported Ahmed and the ones who opposed him, "*resulting in a fertile polarization ground with a potential of acting as a cradle for radicalization*" (Mahmood 80).

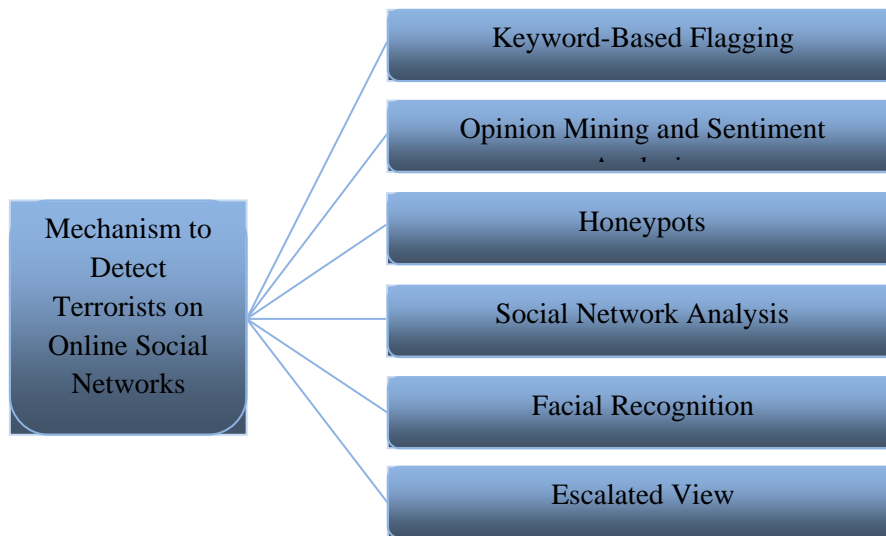
Facebook's features and applications developed in a way that data about suspected terrorists can be easily accessed and collected. Their profiles are not of genuine import because in most cases they create fake accounts on Facebook. What is really important is the content that these terrorists share with their counterparts. To detect terrorists' activities, U.S law enforcement agents create fake Facebook accounts<sup>35</sup>. Or simply, U.S government directly accesses social media networking sites' data. What confirms one's line of reasoning is the Guardian's online newspaper article "Microsoft, Facebook, and yahoo release U.S surveillance requests" by stating, "*Tens of thousands of accounts associated with costumers of Microsoft, google, Facebook and yahoo have their data turned over to U.S government authorities every six months as the result of secret court orders, the tech giants disclosed for the first time.*" The Guardian magazines adds in the same article, "*Facebook disclosed that during the first half of 2013, it turned over content data from between 5000 accounts – a rise of about 1000 from the previous six month period – and customer metadata associated with up to 999 accounts.*"(Ackerman)<sup>36</sup>. Carqueville and Murfet add on the same topic, "*The data from popular services provided by Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple and Yahoo is being constantly siphoned off by the NSA. This sort of access is achieved in more than way, and at worldwide scale.*"(2) In fact the following figure shows the different mechanism used by American security agencies in order to detect terrorists activities on social media networks.

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<sup>34</sup> The message contained grammar and spelling mistakes and it was kept as it was written.

<sup>35</sup> <http://counsellingresource.com/features/2010/03/16/growing-fbi-surveillance-of-social-networking-sites/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/03/microsoft-facebook-google-yahoo-fisa-surveillance-requests>



**Figure 3.9.: Mechanisms to Detect Terrorists in Online Social Networks<sup>37</sup>.**

The first mechanism as shown in the figure is keyword board flagging<sup>38</sup>. This is used by the U.S department of homeland security to monitor online social networks. There are specific key words flagged while monitoring terrorists' activities online like terror, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Taliban, Nuclear, Jihad and many other words. As far as opinion mining and sentiment analysis are concerned, they refer to monitoring the opinions and sentiments of online social networks. The third mechanism which is honey pots can be defined as traps used to deceive potential attackers by providing them with false information. During social network analysis individuals are considered as well as the connectivity that exists between a group of users. On Facebook for example information like friendship between users, the number messages exchanged between them, the events they attended together, the number of photos they are tagged in and the applications they use is vital to such an analysis. Facial recognition refers to the fact that users may upload photos of terrorists and share them on Facebook; therefore, they may be considered as terror sympathizers. Such people are monitored as a result. The last mechanism is view escalation. Under the Patriot Act the U.S.A law enforcement agencies are allowed to request information about users from their service provider like Facebook. Such information enables the agencies to perform an efficient data analysis. FBI and homeland security may create fake profiles to be friends with users on

<sup>37</sup> Source: Mahmood, Shah. "Online social Networks: Threats and Defenses". *Security and Privacy Preserving in Social Networks*. ED Chbeir, Richard and Al Bouna, Bechara. New York: Springer-Verlag Wien. 2013. 73-94. Print. P86.

<sup>38</sup> This tactic is used by the U.S to monitor terrorists' conversations containing keywords, like jihad for instance; as a trial to know their planned terrorist attacks.

Facebook for the sake of observing and monitoring their activities and actions online (Mahmood 86-90).

As mentioned earlier, there are laws that regulate American surveillance system. In fact, the patriot act allows American intelligence agencies conduct local surveillance. The 2008 FISA law as well covers local surveillance. However, if the NSA wants to target an American's phone calls or emails, it needs to obtain an individual warrant from the NSA. However, under the FISA law no warrant is required to surveil foreign citizens. In fact, under section 702 of this act, the NSA must submit once a year its guidelines that unveil that year's targets. These guidelines mainly concern foreign intelligence gathering. Later, the NSA is provided with blanket authorization to proceed. If the FISA court approves those permits, the NSA is allowed to target any foreign nation it wants to surveil. It can as well require telecoms and internet companies like Facebook, Yahoo Gmail and Google to give access to non-American communications (Greenwald<sup>39</sup> 74).

As a matter of fact, there is a good deal of evidence that Facebook participated in the National Security Agency Surveillance program that is called PRISM though Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg denies any interventions of its networking site in such programs. Indeed, On 06 June 2013, Edward Snowden, the former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency and former contractor for the National Security Agency, leaked important documents about the global surveillance program "PRISM" to the Washington Post and the Guardian. The documents confirmed the participation of several technology companies in the surveillance program, including Facebook that became part of it in 2009. Snowden unveiled the necessity to disclose such documents stating "*I could watch drones in real time as they surveilled the people they might Kill. You could watch entire villages and see what everyone was doing. I watched NSA tracking people's internet activities as they typed. I became aware of how invasive US surveillance capabilities had become. I realized the true beneath of this system*". He continued his speech saying "*The more time I spent at the NSA in Japan, the more I Knew that I couldn't keep it all to myself. I felt it would be wrong to, in effect, help conceal all of this from the public*" (Greenwald 43). Snowden's leaked documents that confirmed the involvement of companies like Facebook and Gmail into secret arrangements with the NSA to give access to users' communication was "globally shocking" (Greenwald 77).

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<sup>39</sup> Greenwald Glenn was born on March 06<sup>th</sup>, 1967. He is a political journalist, a lawyer, a blogger and an American writer. Starting from 2013, he began publishing Edward Snowden's revelations concerning NSA's mass surveillance programs like PRISM and XKEYSCORE that monitored American citizens as well as foreign nations.



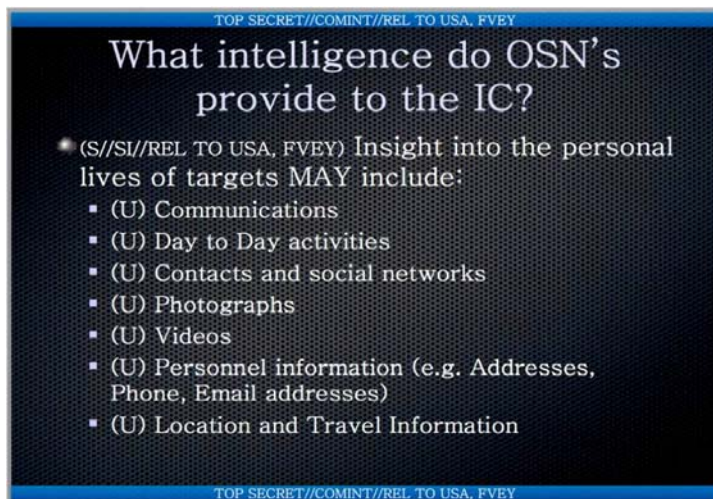
Snowden's documents were well organized but they were difficult to process. They contained tens of thousands NSA records that were produced by every unit and subdivision of the agency as they comprised files that concern aligned foreign intelligence agencies. All the documents were recent: 2011, 2012 and many documents were from 2013. Snowden noticed the difficulty to understand the documents so he created glossaries of acronyms and program names as well as internal agency dictionaries for terms of art. Despite Snowden's efforts to make the archived documents accessible, it took the aforementioned newspapers months to digest the archive before they decided to disclose them. The files confirmed that the USA conducted "*a complex web of surveillance aimed at Americans*" as well as non-Americans (Greenwald 91). The documents unveiled as well the different technical methods used by the NSA to intercept communications: "*the NSA's tapping of internet servers, satellites, underwater fiber-optic cables, local and foreign telephone systems, and personal computers*". The documents unveiled as well "*individuals from alleged terrorists and criminal suspects to the democratically elected leaders of the nation's allies and even ordinary American citizens*". Most importantly, the files disclosed the strategies and goals of the NSA (Greenwald 92). Snowden's archive can be summarized in the following simple conclusion:

The US government had built a system that has as its goal the complete elimination of electronic privacy worldwide. Far from hyperbole, that is literal, explicitly stated aim of the surveillance state: to collect, store, monitor and analyze all electronic communication by all people around the globe. The agency is devoted to one overreaching mission: to prevent the slightest piece of electronic communication from evading its systemic grasp (Greenwald 94).

The NSA collects two kinds of data: content and metadata. Content data denote listening to people's phone calls and reading their emails as well as their online chats. As they include internet activity reviewing like browsing histories and search activities. Metadata, on another hand, refers to collecting information about the abovementioned communications. The NSA calls them "information about content" (Greenwald 132). As a way of example, metadata about an email message involves amassing data like who emailed whom, when the email was sent, and the location of the sender (Greenwald 132).

The US government claimed that the surveillance disclosed in the Snowden's leaked documents included metadata collection and, not content, attempting to stress that such spying is not "intrusive" and cannot be considered "surveillance" because it did not collect any content data of the communications. However, it is argued by Greenwald that metadata collection is more intrusive than content interception. He claims that if the government has the possibility to list every single email an individual sent, his correspondents as well as the location from where the email was sent, it can create a comprehensive picture of his life, his associations, and his activities. As it can gain access to the most private and intimate information of his life (Greenwald 133).

The program that enables the NSA to monitor activities on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter is X-KEYSCORE'. The agency believes that such private companies give access to a "wealth of information and insight into the personal lives of targets" (Greenwald 158). The tactics used for searching social media activity are simple like that of email searching. For example, an analyst can enter a user name on Facebook. X-KEYSCORE is able to retrieve the user's information, messages, and chats, including private posts (Greenwald 158).



**Figure 3.10.: NSA Leaked Slide about the Role of Online Social Networks<sup>40</sup>.**

On another hand, X-KEYSCORE boosts its ability to access social media networks like Facebook by its use of another program called BLARNEY which enables the NSA "to monitor a broad range of Facebook data via surveillance and search activities" (Greenwald

<sup>40</sup> Source: Greenwald, Glenn. *No Place to Hide*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC. 2014. Print. P158.

160). Moreover, the Governmental Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) in the UK noticed Facebook's weaknesses in its security system and that users' shielded personal information can be, therefore, obtained. GCHQ discovered as well vulnerabilities in the platform's storing pictures system; the fact that facilitated access to Facebook album images (Greenwald 161-162).



Figure 3.11.: NSA's Leaked Slide concerning Facebook<sup>41</sup>.

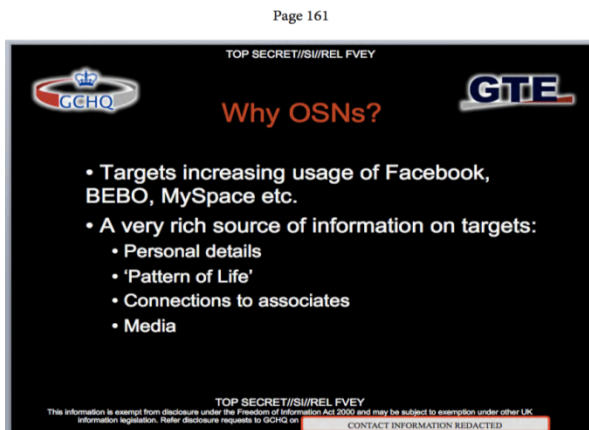


Figure 3.12.: NSA's Leaked Slide concerning the Usage of Facebook<sup>42</sup>.

Here are two other slides of the leaked PowerPoint document that confirm Facebook's participation in the dataveillance program, PRISM.

<sup>41</sup> Source: Greenwald, Glenn. *No Place to Hide*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC. 2014. Print.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. P161.

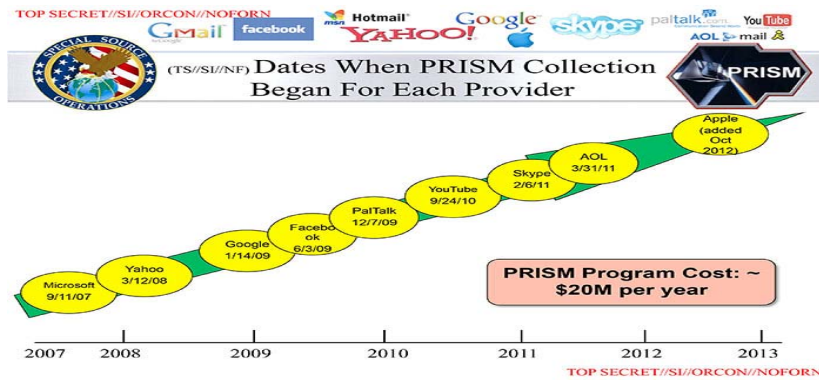


Figure 3.13.: Dates When PRISM Collection Began for Each Provider<sup>43</sup>.

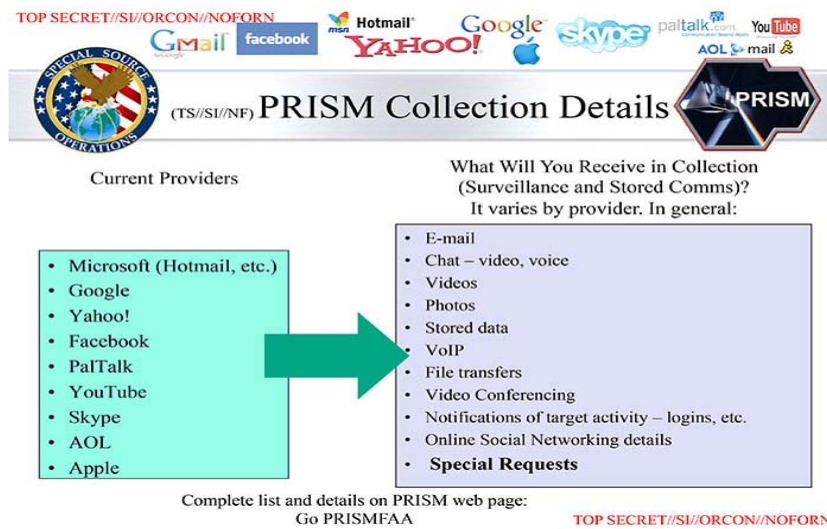


Figure 3.14.: PRISM Collection Details<sup>44</sup>.

Furthermore, Facebook Provides organism like The Defense Advanced Research Projects agency (DAPRA) projects like Total Intelligence Awareness with social networking data en masse. Since Facebook is related to such projects, it is reasonable to state that Facebook is their tool for data collection on the masses for the sake of constructing algorithms to make a difference between terrorist cases and usual ones. In fact, Cohen in his book *Mass Surveillance and State Control* states that “it is evident that government agencies are using social networking sites-in particular , Facebook Twitter, and MySpace-to collect evidence for various investigations”(54).

<sup>43</sup> Slide listing companies and date that PRISM collection began. Source: <https://www.google.dz/search?q=Prism>

<sup>44</sup> Details of information collected via PRISM. Source: <https://www.google.dz/search?q=Prism>

Another Unit belonging to the FBI called the Data Intercept Technology (DITU) is as well involved in intelligence gathering operations. This unit's mission is to intercept telephone calls, and emails of terrorists and spies beyond the borders of the United States of America. Additionally, the NSA may cooperate with this unit in order to retrieve information from Google, Facebook, Yahoo and other technology companies. In fact, the technological infrastructure of the agency's program PRISM is maintained thanks to DITU. The other job of this company is to make sure that the technology giants are constructing their networks and software application in compliance with US surveillance laws; as a result, they can be monitored by the government without difficulty (Harris 124).

### Conclusion

One has devoted the bulk of this chapter to further addressing Facebook's role and impact in American politics. One may conclude that Facebook among many other social networking sites has succeeded to foster political engagement among American youth. In fact, all the literature mentioned in this chapter confirms that Facebook is able to bridge the gap between users by means of Facebook's interactive technologies, and political discussions among users are then promoted. On another hand, Facebook's group feature is a vital element that allows users to participate civically in their community. This online participation can also impact offline participation and even promote it. To sum up, Facebook and its features highly promote political and civic engagement, especially that of the young citizens.

The other conclusion that one has reached is that Facebook is remarkably sustaining American political process. This can be noticed when Facebook has enabled campaigns communicate their theme and information on how to participate in the world of politics as well as has rendered political candidates more accessible and authentic. Facebook, on another hand, through its group feature allows its users to discuss political issues in a professional manner. In fact, Facebook's tools and applications affected and still affect the way electorate organizes itself, overthrow traditional ways of political communication, and creates many other innovative ways of political deliberation. Additionally, Facebook is a tool for American campaign's mobilization, fundraising, and influencing voter's choices.

Social media platforms, which are considered as one of the most important results of the high tech revolution, have begun to play a significant role in the American conduct of foreign affairs. It can be inferred from the previous analysis that Facebook is a modern instrument to make public diplomacy respond to the new challenges of American foreign policy. In addition, Facebook is a miniature version of American democracy. The way Facebook has been designed and its applications make users from different parts of the globe unintentionally embrace American ideals of free speech, and joining interest groups for political change.

In the last section of this chapter a conclusion has been inferred that that Facebook is a giant political surveillance system that provides the United States of America with information about suspected terrorists. Facebook is indeed a modern surveillance instrument that the U.S.A is using constantly. Facebook's features and applications are developing continuously to enable a successful and global American digital surveillance. Whether we

accept or not, we are being watched by the U.S.A under the supervision of Facebook. American surveillance is firmly anchored into our lives by means of Facebook and many other electronic networking channels. On another hand, Facebook promotes the business of various companies by giving them data about Facebook users' interests and adjusting the companies' advertisements to the users' interest, giving birth to what is lately known as economic surveillance. This point is going to be deeply discussed in the next chapter.

### Introduction

Since Facebook is an American site, it reflects some of the most significant American cultural and socioeconomic values. We, therefore, try in the first section of this chapter to reveal that the design and the functionalities of Facebook are highly impacted by the various American socioeconomic values. To achieve our goals, we will essentially determine the most salient traditional American values. Later, the focus will be on the role of the internet to internationalize these values. The last part of this section will be devoted to the impact of American socioeconomic values over the design of the social networking site Facebook. By doing so, the researcher aims at claiming that the basic American socioeconomic values are promoted worldwide via the social network Facebook.

The second point will deal with capitalism in the new age of social media. It will explain the relationship between profit made by social media networking sites like Facebook and capitalism. It will as well define economic surveillance and examine its relationship with capitalism. Furthermore, targeted advertising is going to be tackled, including its definition and how it operates. The second part of this section will concern Facebook's reinforcement of American economic surveillance. The researcher endeavors through the following point to analyze Facebook's privacy settings and prove that they are indeed supporting economic surveillance. The last part will be devoted to the new business of big data. It will reveal that all the collected data of world's social networking users are the brand new raw materials that many businesses and sectors are making use of in order to make profit.



## 4.1 American Socioeconomic Values and Facebook

To comprehend the social, political and economic peculiarities of any nation, one has to shed light on the most crucial socioeconomic values of that nation which were passed from one generation to another. It is, therefore, mandatory to examine the American culture and reach reasonable conclusions about the impact of American socioeconomic values on the design and functionalities of the social networking site Facebook.

### 4.1.1 Basic American Values

One of the most important elements that characterize American society is its ethnic diversity which raises many questions about American culture. Except for native Americans, who were already dwelling on North America when the first wave of Europeans immigrants arrived, all Americans came from foreign countries. In fact, during the 1500s, Spain succeeded to settle in Florida, California, and the southwest, and France also successfully established settlements in the center of the North American continent. However, from the 1600s to 1776, the majority of immigrants came from northern Europe, from England in particular. The conviction is that it was these immigrants who designed the values and traditions which unsurprisingly became “*the dominant, traditional culture of the United State*” (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 3, 4).

Furthermore, Americans come from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Additionally ethnicity nationality and race play an important role in making the United States culturally diverse. All foreign- born Americans have succeeded to take part of a “*common cultural life with commonly shared values thanks to a process called assimilation*” (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 166). However, many researchers and scholars do not share the same views concerning the degree to which this assimilation has taken place in the United States. Indeed, some scholars have portrayed the U.S.A as a “melting pot” in which ethnic as well as racial groups are brought together to form one culture. Other scholars take a different stand and have described the United States as a “salad bowl” in which diverse groups have taken the decision to stay different from one another; the fact that leads to the creation of a culturally diverse country (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 166).

No one can disagree with the statement that it was the early white, protestant western Europeans settlers who established the “dominant culture and its value system”. However, during the 1800s and early 1900s, many other groups from eastern and southern Europe

immigrated to the United States, supplying the country with new cultural norms and traditions that were distinct to the dominant one. By the 1920s, Americans reached the decision to stop mass immigration. The number of immigrants, therefore, decreased. Those who belonged to the dominant culture considered the new immigrants and their culture a threat to America's mainstream culture. Nonetheless, those immigrants didn't constitute any danger to the dominant culture because they "*did assimilate to life in the United States*". On one hand, they endowed the nation with cultural diversity; on the other hand, they didn't affect greatly its "*system of government, its free enterprise system, or its traditional values*" (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 173).

Moreover, a respectable group of Americans opine that immigration is of great benefit to their country. As a way of example, Ben Wattenberg, who is an American culture specialist, argues that the new immigration brings substantial advantages to the nation. By accepting these waves of immigrants from all over the world, the United States is "*becoming the first universal nation in history*" (qtd in Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 173). Wattenberg adds that the United States is the only country where distinct groups of people with different origins and religions "*live in freedom under one government*" (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 173). This diversity, according to him, provides the nation with strength and attraction vis-à-vis the rest of the world in all times. (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 173).

One may, therefore, describe the United States neither as a "melting pot" nor a "salad bowl", but rather a "mosaic"- a tableau that consists of small pieces of various colors (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 173). Indeed, if we look at the population of the United States, we clearly notice that it is made up of people of different colors and ethnic groups, yet they form one picture that is AMERICAN. The U.S.A is "*composed of many; or out of many*"( Datesman, Crandall and Kearny173). Additionally, as to the question whether the United States holds a unitary culture or not, Professor Henry Schissler debates American culture by saying "*But we do share core values (macro-level non-material culture)*". These values are generally assumed to be "*the American way*" and are taught to school children as morality and signs of good character. We are all socialized to believe in them through media presentations, political speeches, and in the workplace" (1).

Americans did not have any choice but to accept their differences. They rather consider that this diversity is giving strength to their nation. Cultural pluralism became part of the American character. Although the Western Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture

characterizes the American mainstream culture, cultural pluralism should also be taken into consideration. The important question that comes to one's mind is: does a nation with this cultural diversity form a common national identity? John Zoghby, who is an American pollster, answers one's question by stating that the American national identity is produced thanks to a number of values they share in common. He additionally says that Americans are also defined by their rights and that these rights constitute their history. (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 28) Indeed, historically speaking the United States has always been represented the Promised Land, "the land of opportunity", enticing a huge number of immigrants from different parts of the world. The social, economic as well as political opportunities and the experiences that most immigrants lived in shaped the American set of socioeconomic values. One has noticed that the American values have been stated by different scholars and they did not include the same list. However, they agree on six socioeconomic values which are the traditional American values: Individual freedom, self reliance, equality of opportunity, competition, material wealth, and hard work.

- **Individual freedom and self-reliance**

The decisions taken by the early settlers of North America have deeply affected the creation of the American character. Indeed, by putting limits to the government and churches, on one hand, forbidding aristocracy, on the other hand, Americans succeeded to make a sphere of freedom that give primarily importance to the individual. The United States became the synonym of "individual freedom". Some scholars consider it as the most salient American value. Some other scholars, however, rather prefer to name this value "individualism". Regarding Americans themselves, they prefer the term "freedom", which is the most popular word in the United States. Freedom means for them the right of any individual to have an absolute control over his life and destiny without the intervention of any official authority. (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 29)

Obviously, Americans had to pay a price for this freedom. The price was self-reliance. The term means that Americans have to rely on themselves even if they risk their freedom. Moreover, this means also that the individual has to be financially and emotionally independent from his parents at an early age (from eighteen to twenty one). Americans have always been raised with the value that "they should take care of themselves, solve their own problems, and stand on their own feet" (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 29). The value of self reliance continues to be considered up to the present as a traditional American value because

for most Americans protecting freedom requires self reliance ( Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 30). The author of the article “Understanding Americans: some Key values” deals with individualism differently because for him this value does not help Americans be part of a unitary culture. He states that *“It is this concept of themselves as individual decision-maker that blinds at least some Americans to the fact that they share a culture with each other. They have the idea that they have independently made up their own minds about the values and assumptions they hold”*. One, however, may not agree because individualism which requires self reliance is welcomed by all cultures, and an American who is from any religious or ethnic group is trained from an early age to be independent in order to achieve his predetermined goals. So this value is unifying Americans rather than dividing them.

One of the most important consequences of individualism is privacy, which is also considered as an important value in American culture. The term privacy may have negative connotations in some other cultures; referring to loneliness and isolation; Americans, however, consign a great importance to privacy and they consider it as a necessary human condition that protects their individuality (Kohls). The American constitution protects Americans’ privacy in the fourth amendment, previously known as the bill of rights. It is clearly stated in this amendment that *“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized”* (American constitution, Amendment 4 - Search and Seizure. Ratified 12/15/1791).So it seems reasonable to infer from the formerly stated elements that *“the right to privacy is a notion runs deep in American culture. Both respected and defended, privacy is considered fundamental to a free society. Americans carry this right like a shield”* (“American culture and values”).

- **Equality of opportunity and competition**

Comprehending what Americans mean by equality and opportunity is mandatory. For them equality does not mean that every individual is or have to be equal. They rather mean that every individual has to be provided with the chance to succeed. Americans value race for the sake of success. Equality is the synonym of having the opportunity to take part in a race and of course win. Stated differently, Equality of opportunity is considered by Americans as an “ethical rule” (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 31). It implies that the race for success is

the right of any American individual, no matter his financial, racial or religious background is. “Fair play”, on another hand, is a significant characteristic that is part of the belief in the equality of opportunity. This belief is shared by the president Abraham Lincoln in the 1860s. He indeed said

We.... wish to allow the humblest man an equal to get rich with everybody else. When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 31)

This ideal is also mentioned in their Declaration of Independence that “*all men are created equal*” (“Understanding Americans:some key values”).

Nevertheless, equality of opportunity requires competition. Americans believe if one wants to succeed, he has to participate in a race in order to succeed. Additionally, all people in the United States have equal rights to compete and, thus, to succeed. Americans like it when they adjust their intelligence and energy with those of their counterparts to reach success. Usually, individuals who enjoy competing are more successful than any other individuals and they are called winners. However, the ones who hate competing or fail when they attempt are called losers (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 31).Americans, on the other hand believe that “*competition brings out the best in any individual. They assert that it challenges or forces each person to produce the very best that is humanly possible*” (kohls).

Americans value success if it is the fruit of hard work and action. As a way of example, a politician in America is never elected because he comes from a wealthy family or has close ties with important people. The majority of politicians in America give their supporters the impression that they are just like Abraham Lincoln, “a self-made man” who suffered from poverty and succeeded to be president thanks to hard work and valuable efforts. Similarly, the former American president Clinton was raised in a poor family. He relied on himself to gain money in order to pay his school expenses. After his graduation from Yale University with a law degree, and his various achievements and competition with other politicians, he succeeded to gain the support of Americans and became the President of the U.S.A (Weaver 06). Robert L. Kohls described marvelously competition in the U.S.A by stating

Americans pride themselves in having been born poor and, through the ladder of their own sacrifice and hard work, having climbed the difficult ladder of success to whatever level they have achieved—all by themselves. The American social system has, of course, made it possible for Americans to move, relatively easily, up the social ladder (Kohls).

And thanks to competition, Americans succeeded to establish an economic system that is based on free enterprise. In fact, Americans strongly believe that any competitive economy that extracts the best from its people will definitely prosper and progress in a very short time (Kohls).

- **Material wealth and hard work**

Materialism, one of the American socioeconomic values, refers to material ownership. Though most Americans consider this term as offensive, they still believe that owning a great deal of material items and possessions is of high import (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 32). The reason behind this is that material wealth has historically been an acceptable standard to determine the social standard of any American individual. Since Americans did not accept the European system of government that was based on aristocracy, they were under an obligation to find another alternative for social status determination. As it is mentioned by Datesman, Crandel and Kearny in their essay “Traditional American Values and beliefs”, “*The quality and quantity of an individual’s material possessions became an accepted measure of success and social status*” (32).

Americans, however, had to embrace another socioeconomic value which is hard work in order to reach material success and wealth. In fact, the northern part of the American continent contained a great deal of natural resources when the early settlers stepped in. They had no choice but to work hard in order to transform these natural resources into “material possessions” (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 33). Material wealth, therefore, allowed them to have a comfortable way of living. Traditionally and historically Americans have considered hard work as a necessity to reach rewarding outcomes like material wealth (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 33). As Professor Gregory Jay states in his article “Do Americans share a common culture?”, material success is the lonely standard that determines the social stratification of individuals in America because he clearly claims “*individuals who accumulate great amounts of capital are thus very powerful and much respected in a*

*capitalist society, which looks down on poorer people because they have failed to succeed. Economic success or failure is judged to be the responsibility of individuals, and thus a matter of merit or achievement” (2). He adds in another passage that “though the United States is a democracy, inequalities of wealth create inequalities of power so that wealthy individuals dominate most sectors of the society, the economy, and the media. Most Americans accept this inequality of power because they believe that wealth signifies a superiority of skills, talent, or knowledge” (2). Indeed, “hard work, coupled with greater earnings, is rewarded with a rise in social class” (American culture and values). Another scholar argues in clear language that material achievement does not only reveal the social status of an individual, but it is also a celebration of the formerly mentioned value individualism. As a matter of fact, the scholar states “Wealth allows the freedom to do almost anything, although usually within the limits of law. The Pursuit of material wealth through individual achievement is instilled in Americans from the youngest age” (Sponsel, 04)<sup>1</sup>*

Before proceeding, it may be useful to state that the previously mentioned American socioeconomic values do not unveil the whole truth about the American character. Many other American values are of genuine import that guide and sensitize the investigator to reach reasonable conclusions about the unexplored relationship between American socioeconomic values and the social networking site Facebook. The next values that are going to be discussed are: time and its control, friendships and practicality.

Americans give a great significance to time. They tend to accomplish their tasks according to a predetermined planning. Their schedule includes every detail that may affect their punctuality. The reason behind Americans’ valorization of time is that they wholeheartedly believe that a person who keeps on working and does not waste time is the one who accomplishes various things in his life. For most Americans time management leads to productivity, which is considerably praised in the American society. In fact, many American proverbs value time, focusing on the fact that if it is used wisely to reach particular objectives, many other results of hard work may arise but in later times (Kohls 02). In the same line of thought, Luis Hestres the author of the article “The Influence of American Culture on Software Design Microsoft Outlook as a Case Study” claims that Americans are

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<sup>1</sup> In the same article, the scholar talks about privacy and considers it an important constituent of individualism by claiming that “privacy as a component of the American cultural value of individualism is nurtured in the home as children grow up” (Sponsel, 03).

monochromic people. Monochromic time refers to “*emphasizing schedule, segmentation, and promptness*” (6). The way Americans talk about time reveals to what extent it is valuable in their lives. They usually mention expressions like “saving”, “spending”, or “wasting” time. Luis Hestres continues stating that Americans give such importance to time because their short history compels them to value only the present and future, neglecting the past and history (Hestres 07).

As far Practicality is concerned, Americans view themselves as efficient, realistic pragmatic and practical. Practicality is present everywhere in the United States of America. Additionally, Americans tend to be pragmatically oriented and no room is given to philosophy and theory. Practicality enables also Americans to be objective in their assessments, avoiding the intervention of sentiments in the decision making process (Kohls 06). The value of practicality “*is partly due to the culture’s western heritage, which is rooted on rationalism. Things must always ‘make sense’, and they trust facts and figures above else*” (Hestres 07).

Last and not least, friendship for Americans can refer either to acquaintances or to friends with whom they have been in contact for a long time. An American’s friend can be a school classmate, a coworker or a person met during a sport activity. As a matter of fact, Americans prefer friends that are involved in their daily lives like “*a friend from the study group, a friend from the softball team, or a friend from the volunteer project*” (“American culture and values”). Americans, on the other hand, have the tendency to be informal, and formality is considered “Un-American”. Surprisingly, Americans are unable to maintain a deep friendship as they can easily break up any relationship with no stress. Indeed, Americans are superficial in their relationships and this is due to “*the high geographical, social, and economic mobility within American society*” (Hestres 05). Additionally, Americans are direct and straightforward in interactions. In the meanwhile, they dislike confrontation (Hestres 05).

#### **4.1.2 The Universalization of American Socioeconomic Values by the Internet**

All the previously discussed American socioeconomic values are impacting not only Americans but also the lives of those beyond America’s borders. Defining what is American and what is un-American has actually been accomplished within American borders. Indeed, “*America was defined as part of a national self-assertion*”. (Campbell and Kean 289) Nevertheless, according to the same source *American cultural Studies*, it is through the



analysis of “Americanization<sup>2</sup>” that many other aspects of the American character are unveiled and, thus, studied. Accordingly, the identity of America in the world is shaped not only by Americans themselves but also by interactions that other individuals have experienced with America (Campbell and Kean 289). Indeed, the United States has exercised its power over people outside its borders through military and economic control, including cultural grip (Campbell and Kean 291). With regard to American socioeconomic influence on the world’s diverse cultures, which is a part of this section’s concern, it is argued by many scholars as Dwight Macdonald that American culture is taking the lead worldwide and all its values have been transmitted to other peoples of different cultures, resulting in the creation of what he calls mass culture. According to the same cultural expert, “*mass culture was ‘imposed from above’ on audiences who were ‘passive consumers’ of material that ‘mixes and scrambles everything together, producing what might be called homogenized culture’*” (qtd in Campbell and Kean 292). He continues to add that the originality of one’s culture was doomed to disappearance and “*in place came ‘standardization’ and the ‘spreading ooze of Mass Culture’ which was associated with all things American*” (Campbell and Kean 292). This mass culture, then, becomes known as American mass culture that is enforcing its values on other societies and cultures worldwide (Campbell and Kean 295). Tunstall takes the same stand and states “*Cultural imperialism theory has claimed that authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world is being overwhelmed by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial media products , mainly from the U.S*” (qtd in Yong Jin 149). Guback as well says “*the powerful U.S communication industry, including film and television as well as news, exerts influence, sometimes quite considerable, over the cultural life of other nations*” (qtd in Yong Jin 149).

Additionally, the development of the internet has certainly accentuated the process of Americanization. The internet has been controlled by the U.S.A from the first day it was launched and the domination of course includes servers, infrastructures, content and users (Campbell and Kean 304). On the other hand, the internet is based on the American ideals of “*open access to information, liberalization and privatization*” (Campbell and Kean 304). The internet is, therefore, one of the many efficient ways of American socioeconomic values’ transmission. It is not a means of celebrating cultural diversity, but it is rather another implicit way to subject people to Americanization. What confirms one’s assumptions is that America’s domination of the internet can be noticed in the use of English language as its language.

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<sup>2</sup> Americanization means the spread impact of American culture over other countries’ cultures.

Moreover, the unceasing commercialization of the internet can have negative consequences on the “free flow of information” (Campbell and Kean 305). Anna Knysh, on the other hand, talks about American culture and clearly states that “*American style and American way of life are not now only American, but become internationally spread. Investments into pop culture provide it with profit, internet, technologies and mass media transfer American pop culture into other countries, and what used to be American mass culture becomes international.*”

The author of an article entitled “the Internet in Developing Countries” argues that since the internet is controlled by the same institutions and interests, it is, therefore, reasonable to say that it reinforces American socioeconomic values expansion to every part of the world (Albirini 52, 53). He continues to add that this may lead to “*the global homogenization of culture*”, eliminating all the other cultures and their traditions. Western cultural patterns, thus, may take the lead in every corner of the globe. He argues that technology and the internet in particular plays a major role in the spread of the American western-based socioeconomic values by stating “*as the new technology culture diffuses, local cultural norms become outdated and are replaced with more ‘promising’ projections of social behavior and customs (e.g, individualism, consumerism, competitiveness)*” (Albirini 55). Mel Van Elteren talks about Americanization but emphasizes its relationship with globalization<sup>3</sup> by means of the internet and its regulation. According to him, the United States of America has prospered in all the domains that are of high prominence in the new decade of globalization. This success is plainly noticeable in “*rules governing the Internet and other international communication networks*”. He carries on asserting that “*much of the information revolution originated in the United States and a large part of the content of global information networks is manufactured there, giving globalization a U.S face*” (Elteren 154).

In the same line of thought, the book *Culture and Media* vividly claims that the internet has eliminated any obstacles that may hinder any cultural exchange between world nations. Any content and any news can be accessed from any corner of the globe. Accordingly, American culture is exported to the rest of the world thanks to the advanced features of the internet. It is, therefore, possible to state that the internet is a powerful force that drives American-based globalization. The notion of a globalized culture has been introduced “*one in which content can be distributed as easily as it can be received- now the potential to be*

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<sup>3</sup> According to a book entitled culture and media globalization in the realm of culture and the internet “can take the form of access to foreign newspapers (without the difficulty of procuring a printed copy) or, conversely, the ability of people living in previously closed countries to communicate experiences to the outside world relatively cheaply” (534).

*realized through the Internet. While some political and social barriers still remain, from a technological standpoint there is nothing to stop the two-way flow of information and culture across the globe” (Culture and Media 535).*

One of the most important advances in the contemporary era of technology is the emergence of the web 2.0, more precisely social media. The impact of the internet and its Americanized content over other countries’ cultures has indeed increased and a global communication without any barriers became possible. Safak Erkayhan describes social media as global because many structures worldwide are “connected”, resulting in the “*transformation of cultures by means of continuous global interactions*” (26). Communication via social media gave birth to what is known as “global sharing”. The term sharing does not refer only to particular sites that generate data to banks globally, but it refers also to the process through which any individual and organism tries to share information that concerns global politics, or attempts to make the world of business open to any professional worldwide. Other individuals use social media to promote “*common values of humanity such as ecology, peace, human rights*” (Erkayhan 27). Consequently, social media has been very efficient in putting into existence “*common sharing such as global consciousness, global discussions and enlightenment*”. On another hand, social media has proved its effectiveness in shaping public opinion. Users of such a kind of social media sites form a virtual world that “*behaves like a nation that has common targets, they almost represent a single nation in the world*” (Erkayhan 27). National Citizenship, according to Erkayhan, is disappearing and it is replaced by what he calls “global citizenship”. People are now citizens of one global village sharing information that serves common interests to reach global ends. What confirm one’s argument are the words of Erkayhan when he said “*Social network sites such as [Wikipedia and Facebook] have emerged as media tools that provide sharings for global citizenship related ideas, thoughts and concepts. Web 2.0 has ensured that people came unite around certain targets and ideologies through social media*” (Erkayhan 29).

Many studies have been conducted to examine social media networking sites in general and Facebook in particular. These studies have been mainly focusing on the number of friends one can have on Facebook, the extent to which its features allow users to share information, and the privacy issues that may arise from its non protected use. Additionally, much of the literature primarily addresses the young generation, more precisely college students because, as it is mentioned in the previous chapter, Facebook was created to serve in the first place this

category of the society. However, no studies if not very rare ones have tackled Facebook as a culture conductor. Only two studies deal with Facebook and its relationship with American core cultural values. The author of the first work describes Facebook that “*it becomes, in essence, a culture with its own values- its own ways of knowing. Facebook is an interestingly fluid cultural location, with its users moving in and out of it and the location in which they physically subside*” (Carlson 01). Additionally, the same author considers Facebook as a culture and “*shifting the focus to Facebook as a culture, while seeking to understand American values, provides richer understanding of Facebook at the present moment while also addressing the longevity of cultural values*” (Carlson 02).

The second study conducted by Dal Yong Jin advances that the United States of America is exercising its hegemonic power through American-based platforms like Facebook. Indeed, the U.S.A, which used to control non-western countries militarily, economically and culturally, is now controlling the world thanks to platforms, taking advantage of different platforms mainly to accumulate capital.(145) So he refers to this kind dominance as platform imperialism. He first defined platform as a term that comprises “*the online services on content intermediaries both in their self-characterizations and in the broader public discourse of users, the press and commentaries*” (153-154).

It is true that the word platform can always be associated with computational meaning with its infrastructure that serves the use of several applications and operating systems. However, it can be as well understood in three other interrelated ways. First, platform cannot be only considered as hardware architecture, but it is as well a “software framework” that helps other programs to operate. Second, platforms provide their users with the possibility to interact, communicate and even sell. Because Platforms’ operations are primarily defined by market forces and the process of commodity exchange, they can be seen and analyzed from the corporate point of view. Finally, it is very important to comprehend platforms’ nature because a platform’s nature like Facebook is anchored in its design. As it is stated by Yong Jin “*technology is not value neutral but reflects the cultural bias, values and communicative preferences of their designers. Likewise, platforms often reinforce the values and preferences of designers, either explicitly or implicitly, while sometimes clashing with the values and preferences of their designers*”. The three aforementioned interconnected meanings permits the researcher to reach the conclusion that platforms do not possess only a functional computational shape, but they rather convey and spread cultural values embedded in them

(154). It is safe then to state that American imperialism is extended by social networking platforms. Stated differently, platforms like Facebook have renewed American imperialism the same as politics, economy military and culture fed the ancient form of American imperialism (Yong Jin 167).

So the questions that come to one's mind are: What socioeconomic values does Facebook convey? And to what extent do these values intersect with the American values? Or stated differently, isn't conceivable to state that Facebook is a new carrier of American socioeconomic values? Does Facebook succeed in transmitting American socioeconomic values worldwide?

#### **4.1.3 American Socioeconomic Values' Impact on Facebook Features**

Before embarking upon an analysis of how the site of Facebook and its features reflect American cultural values, it would be necessary to shed light on the Chief executive officer (CEO) of this widely used networking site. The co founder and CEO of Facebook, Mark Elliot Zuckerberg, is considered by the researcher as the embodiment of American culture. It is essential to state that he comes from a solid, middle class background: his father owned a dental practice next to the family's house and his mother was a psychiatrist. Zuckerberg was interested in computing at a very early age. His parents hired a private computer tutor David Newman to help Mark excel in computing. In 2002 Mark Zuckerberg graduated from Philip Exeter Academy. Later, he decided to prepare for another diploma at Harvard University. However, during his sophomore year he decided along with his friends to create "thefacebook" ("Mark Zuckerberg biography"). Based on Mark Zuckerberg's biography, one may state that his life represents core American socioeconomic values like Individualism, the prominence of American culture, practicality, interest in technology, a forward looking attitude, hard work and an intense competitive spirit. He wholeheartedly believes that hard work and progress are the keys for success. In fact, Marie Carlson takes the same stand and states:

Since an American, born in and residing in the United States, created Facebook, it makes sense that this value would be extremely coherent between American culture and Facebook culture. Therefore, features like tagging friends to show connectivity, highlighting important family relationships on profiles, posting

events, checking in to places, and the sharing of posts/ deals/ pictures perpetuate this notion (76).

Additionally, Facebook as a company has a corporate culture that represents the American socioeconomic values already mentioned in this section. Indeed, it has been described as an individualistic place, where its employees rely on their talent to succeed or fail. They work in a highly competitive environment that enables the company to progress without limits. It is also considered an “egalitarian” company. The most important element that confirms the egalitarian spirit of Facebook as a company is that its financial success is shared with its employees. The egalitarian spirit is clearly shown on the site itself because its designers assert that “*Facebook is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer*”(Facebook 2015). Because Facebook allowed many of the developers to participate in updating the site by means of their sophisticated applications, it has succeeded to create a competitive corporate spirit accompanied with the eagerness for material wealth.

As a site, Facebook insists on the equality of all its users by adding this statement as a part of Facebook principles which again confirms its egalitarian spirit:

Every Person - whether individual, advertiser, developer, organization, or other entity - should have representation and access to distribution and information within the Facebook Service, regardless of the Person's primary activity. There should be a single set of principles, rights, and responsibilities that should apply to all People using the Facebook Service ( Facebook principles 2015).

It is now time to examine the features and user interface of Facebook and how they embody American socioeconomic values already outlined previously in this section. To that end, the researcher needs to shed light again on the American socioeconomic values, point to the most important features of Facebook, and then analyze the relationship between them.

**Individuality:** This socioeconomic value is embodied and reinforced throughout the site. Each Facebook user has a private profile which can be accessed only by the user himself. The user can also utilize the instantaneous chatting feature to send private messages to his

friends. All the private messages that are sent or received from this account or profile, all journal notes as well as the calendar activities created under it are private and can be accessible only by that user. The contacts accepted within a particular profile are relevant only to that particular user and thus they are private. The user can edit his profile by deleting or adding new friends. This feature then represents the American cultural value “privacy”, which is, as mentioned earlier, intrinsic to individuality.

The other feature that emphasizes individuality is the customization of one’s profile. The user can join the groups he prefers, add photos and videos, play games and add applications to his profile. The user can control who can see what he shares when he posts from the top of newsfeed or his profile. He can turn on or off his chatting feature. Additionally, the user can organize his contacts into categories: family, close friends, acquaintances, or simply create his own list. As he can unfriend<sup>4</sup> any contact at any time. The existence of all these features, including others, in one’s profile is analogous to a very individual and private activity in real life.

**Relationships and communication** While Facebook’s main mission is to make the world more open and connected, its other important function is to enable people express themselves through “update status”, posting comments on any publication, sharing different types of information (photos, links, news, pages.etc), and joining common interest groups. Expressing one’s thoughts online via Facebook reflects a cherished American cultural value: freedom of speech. The access, ease and speed that Facebook offers boost users’ capability to express their opinions freely. Every user on Facebook is a publisher and his ideas can reach various parts of the globe in minutes if not seconds. The other feature that is of high importance is the inclusion of calling in the mobile version of Facebook application. The user cannot only text his friends but he can also interact with them using the free phone calls that Facebook is now offering to his users.

American relationship and communication model can be also noticed in other functionalities of Facebook. As a way of example, the use of the word “friend” to identify the list of family, friends, acquaintances and even business associates created by the user reflects the high level of informality as well as the superficiality of personal relationships that exist in American culture.

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<sup>4</sup> Unfriend someone means to delete him from one’s Facebook friends list.

**Competition and cooperation** Facebook addresses competition in many ways. First, competition is exemplified in the “Events” feature, which enables users to schedule meetings and invite other users to participate in them. The creation of events encourages cooperation by allowing users to see what events are available to either participate online or in real life scheduled meetings.

The most outstanding page on Facebook is the “careers of Facebook”. People with high qualifications can still apply to work for Facebook. The site suggests a considerable number of positions and encourages the applicants to compete for the stated positions by inserting tempting statements like: *“Facebook is always looking for intelligent undergraduate, graduate and PhD students from around the world to join our growing team”* or *“We need dynamic people who get excited by big questions and unsolved problems. If you’re ready to make an impact, we want to hear from you”* (Facebook). Another appealing passage that promotes competition to work for Facebook is as follows

It should come as no surprise that we apply the same mission of ‘making the world more open and connected’ to our company as a whole. As ‘one team’, People@ focuses on three major areas: hire the best people, foster continuous personal growth and enrich the overall Facebook experience. Our culture is our most important asset, and as the keepers of that culture, we’re seeking folks who share our values of moving fast, openness and impact (Facebook 2015).

All the aforementioned statements reflect the competitive nature of American culture that is transmitted via Facebook worldwide.

**Business** Facebook makes money from advertising. Facebook also promotes other brands to promote their businesses through posting ads on the site. This can be done through three main steps. First, the company has to build a Facebook page that allows it to communicate with its customers. Second, the company has to connect with people by asking them to like the page and creating several targeted ads based on location, interests and demographics. Again the American spirit of competition is very apparent within this step. The more the brand receives likes, the more it becomes popular online and gets more sales and financial success. The last step is that the company has to engage with its audience. This can be achievable by posting quality updates, and promoting posts to engage its customers with



their friends (Facebook 2015). As it is stated by Mark Zuckerberg's letter describing Facebook's purpose, values, and social mission:

We hope to improve how people connect to businesses and the economy. We think a more open and connected world will help create a stronger economy with more authentic businesses that build better products and services. One result of making it easier to find better products is that businesses will be rewarded for building better products — ones that are personalized and designed around people. We have found that products that are “social by design” tend to be more engaging than their traditional counterparts, and we look forward to seeing more of the world's products move in this direction. In addition to building better products, a more open world will also encourage businesses to engage with their customers directly and authentically. More than four million businesses have Pages on Facebook that they use to have a dialogue with their customers. We expect this trend to grow as well (“Prosperos World”).

Facebook encourages its developers to provide the site with more appealing applications with a social face. Hundreds of applications are now part of the networking site and many others are welcome only if they meet the site's predetermined exigencies. Through accepting high quality applications, Facebook never ceases to progress. There would be food for thought in the words of Zuckerberg when he said *“Our developer platform has already enabled hundreds of thousands of businesses to build higher-quality and more social products. We have seen disruptive new approaches in industries like games, music and news, and we expect to see similar disruption in more industries by new approaches that are social by design”* (“Prosperos World”).

**Time Management** The features provided by the events tool are the representation of monochromic time. The events tool gives importance to time segmentation and absolute dependence on schedules through the use of scheduled reminders on the profile's interface of

any user. Through this tool, meetings can be organized through time segmentation which is closely related to American culture. The user can take advantage of this tool to schedule meetings and tasks and thus meet deadlines to accomplish work-related goals in a timely manner, reinforcing the importance of work in American culture.

**Work Ethic** Facebook users share their successes and achievements in a form of postings on their personal profiles. Being aware of the importance of hard work and success and sharing it with other Facebook users do meet the American socioeconomic value “successful hard work and ambition”. On the other hand, sharing this kind of content creates a kind of competition among Facebook users, and the winner is determined by the number of likes and comments he succeeds to get. This user is then considered the most successful person within his network if he receives the greatest number of likes. Additionally, such contests can be launched in common interest groups created on Facebook. Whatever orientation (political, religious, economic, educational, social.etc) these groups do share something in common: the possibility of launching contests within networks. This spirit of competition to reach success is deeply rooted in American culture and it is proliferated to the rest regions of the world via Facebook. As It is confirmed by Marie Carlson “*Facebook users believe in ambition to succeed at work hard and sacrifice to achieve success. Facebook users value higher education, most likely to help the previous*” (72).

**Practicality** This value which is closely related to the western ones like logic and reason is highly embodied throughout the networking site Facebook. Since the primary mission of Facebook is to make the world interconnected, it is a very practical way to communicate freely with any person on the globe, eliminating any geographical borders that may hinder such interactions. Any user can direct any private message to the destination he believes it is the most appropriate one in order to gain time and money (since it is a free website). The American cultural impulse to “get to the point” is reflected through the way the site is organized. Every single application and icon of the site is clearly designed and presented. Practicality is then the reason behind the old generation’s preference to use Facebook. Moreover, journalistic content can be published on Facebook. The content of such information cannot be always reliable, but reading the news on Facebook can be practical especially if the person’s schedule is tight.

American socioeconomic values indeed impacted the design and functionalities of Facebook. This leads one to state that Facebook is a vehicle of American socioeconomic values beyond U.S borders. Furthermore, as one has noticed, Facebook's interface and features have never been static and the CEO of the company, Mark Zuckerberg, longs always for the development of Facebook by adding new applications and features that improve the platform and facilitate economic surveillance. Facebook is then exporting values but importing data (as raw materials) for economic purposes. How Facebook is used is for the sake of economic surveillance is going to be addressed in the next section.

## 4.2. Economic Surveillance and Advertising on Facebook

It is noticed that capitalism has always used communications that are well developed in order to “track collate, and co-ordinate” the production as well as consumption processes it initiates. In the past, these activities were achieved thanks to technologies like the telegraph, the telephone and the punched card machine. In the present times, Capitalism relies on “*the convergence of computing, telecommunication and cultural production*” (Murdock 138). But before talking about the role of the internet, one form of advanced communications used as a tool for economic surveillance in the capitalist system, let us first shed light on the definition of economic surveillance and then the different steps capitalism follows in order to generate surplus value and thus profit. The other point concerns Facebook and economic surveillance.

### 4.2.1 Capitalism in the Age of Social Media

Marisol Sandoval in his article “A critical Empirical Study of Consumer Surveillance on Web 2.0” distinguishes between two types of surveillance definitions. He considers the first type as neutral definitions because they do not entail domination, coercion or oppression. Ignoring the contexts, motivations and consequences of surveillance, these definitions rather give importance to the collection, storage, processing and transmission of information about individuals, groups, masses or institutions. Additionally, neutral definitions do not focus on the purposes and interests of surveillance as they do not refer to the desirability or not of its purposes. They rather consider the ambiguity of surveillance. Unlike neutral definitions of surveillance, negative ones consider surveillance as a form of domination and focus on the coercive and hierarchical character of surveillance (148).

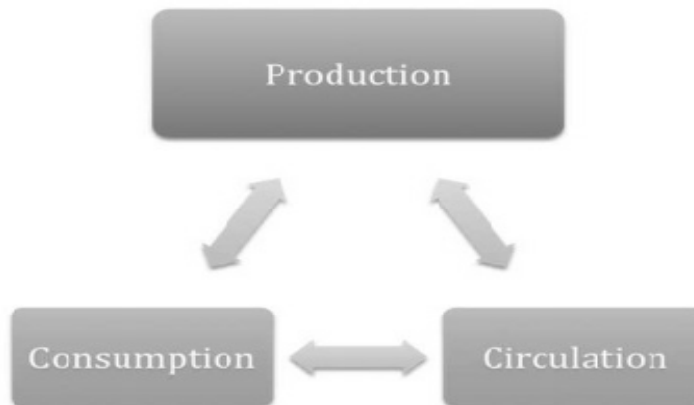
Whether surveillance entail positive or negative consequences, a new form of surveillance with the help of the internet emerged called economic surveillance to satisfy the

needs of cooperates. As a matter of fact, the scholar Greg Elmer describes the internet as the perfect space of economic surveillance. He continues to add “*The internet is first mapped, through indexical search engines, and then diagnosed via ‘spiders and ‘cookies’, to actively monitor, survey, solicit and subsequently profile user’s online behavior*”. Similarly, Manuel Castells in *The Internet Galaxy* views the internet as a place with plenty of opportunities; on another hand, he describes it as a “technology of control” because due to the interests of economic and political actors such as corporations and state institutions that such a technology has emerged. He confirms what has been said in the previous chapter concerning political surveillance that such institutions use technology of the kind to monitor individual users. Additionally, corporations like Google and Facebook make use of particular surveillance tools and applications to monitor users’ online behavior that is stored in one central database (qtd in Allmer 129). Castells efficiently describes internet surveillance by stating

Surveillance technologies.....Often rely on identification technologies to be able to locate the individual user....These technologies operate their controls under two basic conditions. First, the controllers know the codes of the network, the controlled do not. Software is confidential, and proprietary, and cannot be modified except by its owner. Once on the network, the average user is the prisoner of an architecture he or she does not know. Secondly, controls are exercised on the basis of a space defined on the network, for instance, the network around an internet service provider, or the intra-network in a company, a university or a government (qtd in Allmer 129).

As far as capitalism’s generating profit, Karl Max in the introduction to a contribution to the critique of political Economy explains the difference between production, circulation and consumption as the main features of capitalistic economy. The first step is production. In the capitalist system, entrepreneurs buy commodities for the sake of producing new ones as well as surplus value. The second step which is circulation takes place between production and consumption. During this stage, consumers buy products in order to satisfy their daily lives’ needs and entrepreneurs sell their products to make profit. During the last process

which is consumption the product serves the needs of an individual. Consumption, which is the concluding step “*reacts on the point of departure thus once again initiating the whole process*” (qtd in Allmer 136). It is true that production, circulation and consumption operate as separate processes, but they are related in an “interconnected relationship”. (Allmer 136).The following figure explains this relationship.



**Figure 4.1.: Capitalism three Main Features<sup>5</sup>**

In the next passages we are going to cite examples that illustrate online economic surveillance during the three processes production, circulation and consumption.

1-Internet surveillance in production process: Interesting examples of internet surveillance during the production process are provided by The Electronic Monitoring and surveillance survey. In 2008, the American Management Association and the ePolicy conducted an annual quantitative survey that concerned electronic monitoring and surveillance and the survey included about three hundred U.S companies. The results showed that more than fourth of employers fired employees because of their misuse of e-mail and approximately one third fired workers because of their misuse of the internet. Additionally, it has been found that 40% of the companies included in the survey their workers’ e-mail activity and 66% of the corporations surveiled internet connections. On another hand, the majority of the studied companies utilized software to block the websites that were not related to work like pornographic, game, social networking, entertainment, shopping and sport sites. The institute

<sup>5</sup> Source: Allmer, Thomas. “Critical Internet Surveillance Studies and Economic Surveillance”. *Internet and Surveillance. The challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media*. ED. Fuchs, Christian. Boersma, Kees. Albrechtslund, Anders and Sandoval, Merisol. New York: Taylor & Francis. 2012. P136

in its survey claimed that companies monitor “*content, Keystrokes, and time spent at the keyboard... Store and Review computer files monitor the blogosphere to see what is being written about the company and monitor social networking sites*” (qtd in Allmer 137). The aforementioned example illustrates how companies use internet surveillance to control the behavior of their employees. The economic behavior of workers is controlled by corporations to produce particular commodities for making profit and assuring surplus value production. This is confirmed by Allmer, “*In the modern production process, primarily electronic surveillance is used to document and control workers’ behavior and communication to guarantee the production of surplus value*” (137).

2- Internet surveillance in the process of circulation: The work of the corporate investigation Company Carratu International<sup>6</sup> illustrates internet surveillance in the sphere of circulation at the level of applicant surveillance. This company serves –world’s national and multinational corporations insurance companies, law firms, and financial institutions. Its job is to provide background screening services about new job applicants and such information is given to companies and government agencies. If Carratu is involved in a company’s application procedure, job applicants have to answer a detailed questionnaire on the internet, which is part of their application, and then it is sent secretly to Carratu international. This company claims that pre-employment screening is significant and the reason behind this is that about 80 percent of job applicants provide inaccurate information about themselves (Allmer 138).

To make sure that the information provided by candidates is not false, Carratu International embraces a systematic off-and online check of information like personal data as well as civil litigation, credit history, bankruptcy, employment history, educational achievements, professional qualifications and professional or occupational licensing. Allmer considers that Carrater International procedures threaten applicants’ privacy, because candidates think that their information is shared only with the company they applied for, when in reality all their information is sent as well to Carratu International. This example shows how companies like Carratu International use internet surveillance to monitor the behavior of people. This also confirms that economic surveillance “*also occurs in combinations of different spheres and that forms of surveillance in the sphere of production, circulation and consumption are interconnected*” (Allmer 138).

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<sup>6</sup> This company is headquartered in London.

3- Internet surveillance in the process of consumption: To illustrate internet surveillance in the process of consumption, the example of Google is worth mentioning. Google is one of the websites that has a considerable number of visits on the internet. Google utilizes different ways to collect data about its users like click tracking<sup>7</sup>, log files<sup>8</sup>, JavaScript and web bugs<sup>9</sup> and cookies<sup>10</sup>. Google uses as well another project called DoubleClick<sup>11</sup>. It does great job as far as advertisements serving as it creates efficient methods to collect, analyze and assess users' data on the net. Additionally, it places advertisements on websites and checks their efficiency. DoubleClick offers as well Internet ad serving services and sells them to advertisers and publishers. The main product of DoubleClick is called DART (Dynamic Advertising, Reporting and Targeting). DART's is defined as an ad-serving program that makes use of complex algorithm. Its main mission is to serve publishers and advertisers in the sense that it ensures that "*they get the right message, to the right person, at the right time, on the right device*" (Allmer 139). Moreover, DoubleClick with the help of automated computer processes collects users' personal data, behavior, preferences and interests from many websites and sells these commodities to advertising companies to make profit and accumulate surplus value (Allmer 139). It is therefore reasonable to state that although the internet and social media in particular is based on a "participatory architecture", it operates according to "*a commercial and capitalist logic*". In fact, all the content that is produced on such platforms is transformed into sellable products, satisfying capitalism's main purpose: making profit (Olsson 204).

Surveillance has considerably become more common in our modern times. And scholars like David Lyon, Clive Norris and Gary Armstrong claim that "*we live in a surveillance society*". Internet surveillance in particular is a crucial phenomenon like any feature of contemporary society like information, neoliberalism, globalization or capitalism. As a way of example, online activities like creating profiles and posting ideas on Facebook, sharing personal messages on Twitter, or uploading videos on YouTube allow commercial web platforms collect, analyze and sell personal data (Allmer 124).

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<sup>7</sup> Click tracking is to log clicks of users.

<sup>8</sup> Log files is the process of storing server requests.

<sup>9</sup> JavaScript and Web bugs are used to check the visits of users.

<sup>10</sup> Cookies are used to record the actions of users.

<sup>11</sup> DoubleClick was founded in 1996. Google succeeded to acquire DoubleClick in 2008 for \$US 3.1 Billion. It is headquartered in New York City. It serves world digital publishers, marketers and agencies like About, Ford, Friendster, Optimedia MTV and many others (Allmer 139).

Additionally, information that is collected about users does not include only information that are given by users themselves, but it also comprises data about their surfing behavior, IP address and their technical equipment. This kind of information is automatically collected when users are utilizing the web 2.0 platform. Advertisers focus as well on users' data, also called content data, and they give importance to users' behavior, known also as context data. Web 2.0 can therefore have another potential source of profit by tracking data about consumer behavior and selling this information to advertisers (Sandoval 151). This information is categorized and assessed by marketing companies in order to create targeted advertisement (Sandoval 152).

On another hand, there are two types of personal data: personal information and personally identifiable information (PII). Personally identifiable information includes the identity of a unique user. It is considered as *“a unique piece of data or indicator that can be used to identify, locate, or contact a specific individual”* (qtd in Sandoval 152). Personally identifiable information comprises full name, contact information<sup>12</sup>, bank and credit information and social security number. However, information like age, gender race and purchasing habits do not take part of PII but are as well sold to advertising companies. Information of the kind satisfies the desires of Web 2.0 companies to accumulate capital (Sandoval 152). Consequently, data is not considered *“as static or stale, whose usefulness was finished once the purpose for which it was collected was achieved, rather, data became a raw material of business, a vital economic input, used to create a new form of economic value”* (schonberger and cukier 05).

In the same line of thought, Sandoval undertook a content study that included 52 web 2.0 platforms. Its results illustrate that 90% of these platforms do give access to third parties to collect information about users. The collected information includes mainly context data, information that does not refer to individuals personally. It comprises site usage, sociodemographic information and information that concerns the relationship between users. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that 63% of web 2.0 platforms sell as well data that concern individuals personally (160).

Generating profit via selling space for advertisements is the business model of most commercial web 2.0 platforms. Additionally, such platforms offer services for free for the sake of attracting as many users as possible. As a result, it can be inferred from the previous

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<sup>12</sup> Like email address, mail address and phone numbers.



statement that media companies, especially the web 2.0, make profit “*by selling media consumers as a commodity to advertisers*” (Sandoval 150). Advertisers, on another hand, prefer personalized advertisements over mass advertisements and the reason behind this is that personalized advertisements are more efficient to make marketing campaigns successful. Since personalized advertising relies heavily on information about consumers, Web.2.0 platforms’ owners, for the sake of increasing their profit, monitor users and sell users’ personal information to advertisers (Sandoval 150).

Internet users are then rather productive and social media prosumers<sup>13</sup>. Stated differently, by becoming productive prosumers, users succeed to produce surplus value and are therefore “exploited by capital” simply because surplus is generated by productive labor. As a result, the surplus value exploited in companies like Google, YouTube and Facebook is not achieved by the employees of these companies like the ones who are in charge of “programming, updating, and maintaining the soft-and hardware, or performing marketing activities”, but it is rather accomplished by the users of the aforementioned corporate who engage in the production of different types of user-generated content. However, the users are not paid for the content they produce. What is called accumulation strategy involves giving users free access to social media services, enabling them to create content, and then accumulating a considerable number of data which are purchased by third-party advertisers (Fuchs 54). Murdock Graham in his article “Producing Consumption Commodities Ideologies, Practices” tackles also the role of social media users’ role in the modern capitalist system and states that they are not only simple spectators and shoppers, but they are also “co-creators” of commodities they purchase. They are “productive consumers” because they take part of the process of developing and marketing products. Nevertheless, their efforts are unpaid (139).

#### **4.2.2. Economic Surveillance via Facebook**

Different types of internet applications are introduced to meet economic ends which are obtained through users’ surveillance. Additionally, the more people access the internet from their cell phones, the more they spend time online, and the situations in which users are online are more likely to increase. Such applications that are used by users during moments like waiting for the bus, travelling on the airplane or train or going to a restaurant, concert, or movie, attending a meeting and many other situations imply that users are more willing to be

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<sup>13</sup> People who consume and produce media.

online with applications provided by companies like Facebook. On another hand, these applications enable companies like Facebook to present more targeted advertisements for their users which results in more profit for the companies. It is therefore reasonable to state that companies like Facebook do have a strong economic motivation to create a wide range of new internet and mobile internet applications (Fuchs 33). Allmer takes the same stand in his article “critical Internet Surveillance Studies and Economic Surveillance” and states

Online media are interested in collecting data about their audience in order to sell these data to advertisers. In a next step, the advertisers use these data in order to increase the efficiency of marketing. Furthermore, customer relationship management constructs audiences and produces a surveillance-driven culture, where consumers understand surveillance as a cost-benefit calculation and are willing to contribute to data collection by media and advertisers (130).

Economic surveillance is also referred to as consumer surveillance whose aim is to predict, coupled with advertising, and control consumers’ behavior. Therefore, surveillance in this context aims at creating techniques to stimulate consumption which implies influencing the behavior of consumers and encouraging consumers buy particular services and products (Sandoval 148). The same view is shared by Turov who states “*the goal of advertising is straightforward: to persuade people to purchase or otherwise support the product, service or need*” (qtd in Sandoval 148). As long as advertisers receive knowledge about consumers and their behavior, they can design campaigns to persuade consumers’ buying habits. The other objective of consumer surveillance is to gather as much information as possible about the behavior of unknown consumers. This leads to the creation of personalized marketing which corresponds to the habits, attitudes, lifestyles hobbies and interests of given consumers or consumer groups. Personalized advertising aims at designing appealing ads to particular consumers to make them buy particular products (Sandoval 148).

Personalized marketing or what is known also as Targeted marketing uses prediction and imagines the different possibilities of managing marketing conditions that lead to the induction of desired behavior through figuring out which conditions cause particular behaviors after this process ads are created. As it is put by Andrejevic, “*Digital interactive environments lend themselves to such experimentation insofar as they make it possible to vary*

*marketing strategies and then capture results of this variation in controlled ways*". He goes on to say that targeted marketing relies on predictive analysis which works *"to discover which strategies are most likely to result in the desired response and then to vary the commercially supported interactive environment accordingly"* (75).

According to Sandoval, in order to make personalized sales strategies successful, marketing campaigns have to make consumers live in the illusion that when they buy certain products they can achieve authenticity and individuality. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that *"contemporary sales strategies rest on the surveillance and categorization of consumers as well as on an ideology that ties individuality to specific consumption patterns"* (Sandoval 149). On another hand, controlling the minds of consumers is required in order to control consumer's behavior and make them buy certain commodities and services. In the meanwhile, to accumulate capital, commodities and services should be sold and surplus is therefore obtained. Capital aims, as a result, at persuading the behavior of consumers for the sake of selling more and more products and services. The interest of capital is served when consumer surveillance stimulates consumption (Sandoval 149).

Problems may arise from targeted advertising like: human needs manipulation, the fact that users are not asked whether they accept the use of advertising on the internet, at the same time they are required to accept advertising if they wish to use platforms like Facebook, the increase of market concentration caused by advertising, the non transparency about which kind of user' data are sold to advertisers, and the last issue is that users are not paid for the data they provide and upload when using social media platforms like Facebook. It is then reasonable to state that companies like Facebook *"are large advertising based capital accumulation machines that achieve their economic aims by economic surveillance"* (Fuchs 36).

The conclusion that is reached then is that not only is Facebook one of the U.S security agencies' surveillance tools, it also engages in what is now called economic surveillance. It is permanently engaging in the surveillance of users' information and sells it to advertisement companies which create targeted advertising for Facebook users. Fuchs confirms Facebook's economic surveillance by stating, *"Surveillance on Facebook is not only an interpersonal process, where users view data about individuals that might benefit or harm the latter, it is primarily economic surveillance IE, the collection, storage, assessment, and commodification of personal data, user behavior, and user-generated data, for economic purposes."*(36)

One may ask how? Facebook stores every single datum about its users. First, Facebook gathers information about the users' interests through the already uploaded personal data. Then, Facebook, as mentioned earlier, enables its users to join interest groups and encourages them to share and upload personal content data with their friends. While opening a Facebook account, you are asked to give your first name as well as your family name, your email address, and date of birth. If you are a student, you are asked to deliver details related to your school or university. If you work already, you are asked not only to give information about your school and diplomas, but you are also required to give data about your job and job history; as if you are constituting an online curriculum vitae accessed by everyone or your friends only, depending on your privacy settings. And of course your interest and preferences concerning music, movies and your political attitudes are part of your profile. Facebook stores all this information like: type of computer, used browser, data about the usage of Facebook applications, data about behavior on other websites...etc (Fuchs .58).

In the next step, Facebook classifies all these data into consumer groups. Facebook, in the third step, compares the interests of the users with the available advertisements, and the ads that match given interests are presented to the Facebook users. So your personal data go through three main steps: identification, classification and assessment (Fuchs 2013, p.58). For example, Facebook may use your interest in cooking to show you advertisement for cooking products and equipment. Indeed, Christian Fuchs arguably state that "*Facebook commodifies and trades user data and user behavior data. It does not make the world a better place, it makes the world a more commercialized place, a big shopping mall without exit. It makes the world only a better place for companies interested in advertising, not for users.*"<sup>14</sup> Netchitailova takes the same stand by stating,

Almost everything on Facebook is a means to harvest data about its users and therefore, Facebook is much more complicated than a wonderful tool to stay in touch with people. It is also a powerful advertising machine, a sophisticated business model, and the exchange on Facebook is two sided. We get a tool to communicate with our friends, while in exchange we provide information about

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<sup>14</sup> [fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/uploads/polec\\_FB.pdf](https://fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/uploads/polec_FB.pdf)

ourselves, which can be used by the government , advertising agencies, market research companies and Facebook itself (686).

According to Andrejevic, the virtual world renders cyberspace's privatization more flexible than that of the physical realm. Information and data about users' professional and personal lives become part of social media platforms and networks and such platforms try to develop not only their technological applications and services, but they also are adjusting their economic models. As a way of example, Facebook not only encourages users to make use of its services more often, but it is constantly changing its privacy policy in order improve its commercial model (83). Additionally, every action online whether it is a purchase or an online post is important. Both consumption and production are now considered productive because they result in the creation of information commodities. And users' content and behavior online become "*an input into the marketing and production processes*" (Andrejevic 84). One may therefore agree with Fuchs when he says "*The exploitation of user labour on commercial Internet platforms like Facebook is indicative for a phase of capitalism.*" He continues to add "*social media and the mobile Internet make the audience commodity ubiquitous and the factory no longer limited to your living room and your work place-the factory and work place surveillance are also in all the in-between spaces. Almost the entire planet and all its spaces today form capitalist factories*" (59). Facebook can be in the near Future the next FICO<sup>15</sup>. The myriad amount of data accumulated from social media companies like Facebook will shape the foundation of novel businesses whose ambitions surpass the simple sharing of photos, status updates, and "likes" (Schonberger and Cukier 92).

Additionally, privacy policy of Facebook is described by scholars like Christian Fuchs as "self-regulatory privacy regime" which considers capital interests the main priority. It is written in a long and complex language to hide Facebook's surveillance practices like targeted advertising using users' data for the sake of accumulating capital. Facebook's access to users' data is rather described by its co-founder Zuckerberg as "sharing". In fact, he advances that "*Facebook is about the concept that the world will be better if you share more*" (Fuchs 35). Furthermore, after reading Facebook's privacy policy, it is noticed that Facebook gives the impression that consent from users is sought before any data is sold to advertisers. At the same time facts like asking users if they really want to have their personal data as well as behavior data sold for advertisers, and the non involvement of users in formulating

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<sup>15</sup> FICO is a credit –scoring agency.

Facebook's privacy policy are covered up in Facebook's privacy policy. Users are rather obliged to accept Facebook privacy policy in order to use the platform. It is also noticed that Facebook does not disclose that an "opt-out option from cookie-based advertising" is deeply ingrained in its privacy policy and a minimum of advertising privacy settings is provided. Facebook collects data about its users not only from the Facebook platform itself, it rather gathers data about users' behavior from other sites. To sum up, "*Facebook tries to manipulate the perception of privacy by Facebook users and the public by complexifying the understanding of targeted advertising in its privacy policy, minimizing advertising control settings, implementing a complex usability for the new available advertising opt-out options, and reducing privacy to an individual and interpersonal issue*" (Fucks 35). The same view is shared by Sandoval when he states that "*Privacy statements frequently do not guarantee the protection of personal information but rather serve as legal safeguards for the company by detailing how personal information collected will be used*" (150).

Facebook gives third party advertising companies the permission to place cookies on users' computers in order to collect data about them for advertising purposes. The use of cookies by third-parties is not described in Facebook's terms of use, but it is rather mentioned in the platform's description of cookies. Facebook in clear language states

When you view, click or otherwise interact with an ad or app on or off Facebook, our partners also use cookies, pixels or similar technologies (like local storage or information from your device), to help provide you with relevant services and ads. For example, a platform partner may use cookies, software developer kits (SDKs) or similar technologies to customize your experience while you're using their app. Or, an advertising partner may use a cookie to decide whether they want us to show you one of their ads or to measure the performance of the ads you see. Our partners also may use these technologies to help share information with our Services, like how you use their website or app. We or others (like your friends in their posts or the Pages or apps you visit or use) may integrate third party features like maps or videos to provide you with better services. The providers of those integrations may collect information when you view or use them, including

information about you and your device or browser. They may do this using Cookies or similar technologies. To learn more about the information they collect or receive, review their privacy policies (Facebook 2015).

Facebook users are surveilled and their information is sold to third parties. But there is no clear statement that this kind of information is “sold”, but words like “shared” are used instead. The following passage of Facebook terms of policy indicates that advertising companies do access many other web 2.0 platforms and they therefore collect information about users by means of different sources. The following passage stresses also that Facebook gives advertising networks context data rather than information that concern the user personally.

when you download or use such third-party services, they can access your Public Profile, which includes your username or user ID, your age range and country/language, your list of friends, as well as any information that you share with them. Information collected by these apps, websites or integrated services is subject to their own terms and policies. We work with third party companies who help us provide and improve our Services or who use advertising or related products, which makes it possible to operate our companies and provide free services to people around the world. We do not share information that personally identifies you (personally identifiable information is information like name or email address that can by itself be used to contact you or identifies who you are) with advertising, measurement or analytics partners unless you give us permission. We may provide these partners with information about the reach and effectiveness of their advertising without providing information that personally identifies you, or if we have aggregated the information so that it does not personally identify you (Facebook 2015).

So the more users are making use of Facebook applications, the more their information is shared with advertising companies. What is problematic is that the user agrees to all Facebook's uses of his or her data without determining for what purposes this information will be used. On another hand, the user is not interested in reading Facebook's privacy terms because they are long. So the user agrees automatically to the platforms policy to have full access to the site. As it is stated in Facebook's data policy "*We store data for as long as it is necessary to provide products and services to you and others, including those described above. Information associated with your account will be kept until your account is deleted, unless we no longer need the data to provide products and services*" (Facebook 2015).

Moreover, under personalized advertising users are exploited. In fact, users of social media sites are productive because they create content that generate profit. If such data did not exist, social media sites would not be appealing to users and would not survive. Stated differently, it is only when Facebook has enough users that advertisers will be willing to buy space for ads. Additionally, the more users leave their information on the site, the more this information is sold to advertising companies. It is therefore reasonable to state that without the users' produced and uploaded content, social media platforms like Facebook are unable to make profit as it is more difficult for the other advertising companies to promote their products. As it is sated by Sandoval, "*the owners of web 2.0 platforms exploit the labor in order to satisfy their profit interests*" (162).

Personalized or what is known as targeted advertising may be harmful for users and American society as a whole, but it is beneficial for the owners of social media sites and advertisers because they accumulate profit. It enables social media sites to charge higher advertising rates on one hand; on the other hand it renders marketing campaigns more effective. The advantages for owners and advertisers as well as the disadvantages for users are not stated in the terms of use and privacy statements of Facebook. These long texts rather convince Facebook users that targeted advertising is beneficial for them. The language used aims at approaching users in a personal way, at the same time it covers the unbalanced relationship that exist between social media owners, who create the terms of use that allow to make profit at the expense of users' information and work, and users, who are expected to accept them. In this context Facebook states,



We use the information we have to improve our advertising and measurement systems so we can show you relevant ads on and off our Services and measure the effectiveness and reach of ads and services. We use the information we have to help verify accounts and activity, and to promote safety and security on and off of our Services, such as by investigating suspicious activity or violations of our terms or policies. We work hard to protect your account using teams of engineers, automated systems, and advanced technology such as encryption and machine learning. We also offer easy-to-use security tools that add an extra layer of security to your account (Facebook 2015).

Additionally, Facebook refers to personalized advertising as “interest-based ads” and describes them as beneficial for users because it states in its privacy statements that users will see only relevant and useful ads and any irrelevant ones will be excluded. In fact, Facebook says

One of the ways we show you ads is based on your use of websites and apps that use Facebook's technologies. For example, if you visit travel websites, you might then see ads on Facebook for hotel deals. We call this online interest-based advertising. If you turn off online interest-based ads you'll still see the same number of ads, but they may be less relevant to you. You may also see ads based on things you do on Facebook (Facebook 2015).

At the same time Facebook convinces users that their shared information and content will allow the platform as well as advertisers to provide better services. In fact Facebook says

We transfer information to vendors, service providers, and other partners who globally support our business, such as providing technical infrastructure services, analyzing how our Services are used, measuring the effectiveness of ads and services, providing customer service, facilitating payments, or conducting

academic research and surveys. These partners must adhere to strict confidentiality obligations in a way that is consistent with this Data Policy and the agreements we enter into with them (Facebook 2015).

Moreover, the phrase “selling data” never appears in Facebook’s terms of use. The site rather uses phrases like “websites may receive” or “websites can get” in order to hide the business purposes of Facebook. As it is stated

When you use third-party apps, websites or other services that use, or are integrated with, our Services, they may receive information about what you post or share. For example, when you play a game with your Facebook friends or use the Facebook Comment or Share button on a website, the game developer or website may get information about your activities in the game or receive a comment or link that you share from their website on Facebook. In addition, when you download or use such third-party services, they can access your Public Profile, which includes your username or user ID, your age range and country/language, your list of friends, as well as any information that you share with them. Information collected by these apps, websites or integrated services is subject to their own terms and policies (Facebook 2015).

As a conclusion, the previous analysis has confirmed that Facebook is mainly interested in consumer surveillance in order to reinforce its economic and business model. Additionally, the way privacy statements of Facebook are designed hides the reality that advertising networks and Facebook itself widely utilize users’ data in order to support their profit interests. As a result, the business model of Facebook is based on targeted advertising and profit is made by selling ad’s spaces and user’s data to advertisers. On one hand, personalized advertising is beneficial for social media owners and advertisers; on the other hand, it is harmful for users and their society because the terms of privacy mask the unequal relationship that exists between the users and the platforms’ owners and do not effectively protect users’ personal information and data. One may therefore consider the fact of selling users’ data to advertisers without users’ knowledge and permission a violation to their privacy.

Additionally, platforms like Facebook are exercising a new form of imperialism: platform imperialism. The scholar Yong Jin shares the same point of view by stating

While these sites can offer participants entertainment and a way to socialize, the social relations present on a site like Facebook obscure economic relations that reflect larger patterns of capitalist development in the digital age. SNS users provide their daily activities as free labor to network owners, and thereafter, to advertisers, and their activities are primarily being watched and counted and eventually appropriated by large corporations and advertising agencies (161).

All data gathered from social media networks like Facebook are referred to in the world of business as big data<sup>16</sup>. The latter is altering the nature of business and markets. In our modern times, value, after relying on physical infrastructure like land and factories, changes to intangibles like intellectual property and brands. Value with its intangible nature is expanded to data which is now regarded as a significant corporate asset, a crucial economic input, and the basis of new business models. It is *“the oil of the information economy”* (Schonberger and Cukier 16). A great example would be when Facebook’s shares opened, a huge gap occurred between its formal assets and its unrecorded intangible value. However, specialists like the vice president of research of Gartner Doug Laney argued that the actual standards of determining corporate worth by way of considering its “book value”<sup>17</sup> is no longer properly representing the true value of corporate companies like Facebook. As a result, financial reporting rules have been modernized to include intangible assets. They include brand, talent and strategy as well as *“anything that is not physical and part of the formal financial-accounting system. It is almost certain the value of data will show up on corporate balance sheets and emerge as a new asset class”* (Schonberger and Cukier 120).

Big Data then is also included in the business models of different domains and companies to comprehend market reaction and brand perception. Indeed, companies can have access to consumer reaction to product announcements, prices alterations, policy

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<sup>16</sup> Big data can be referred to the set of processes, technologies and business models that are founded on data and consider the value that the data comprise.

<sup>17</sup> It comprises its cash and physical assests.

modifications as well other moves. On one hand, they can measure the effect of promotions, the different advertising campaigns, and other programs. On the other hand, sentiments associated with their brands can be compared to those of competitors. Furthermore, big data provide business with the ability to identify key buying factors. Merchandisers and product planners analyze website click streams, product reviews, product registration and public reaction to products for the sake of understanding what buyers seek and why they buy what they buy. Moreover, marketers make use of big data to segment populations to customize actions. In fact, marketers can tune marketing actions to achieve the best results within each segment only if they understand the attributes of different segments of the market and how members of each segment react to products. Additionally, business leaders through their use of big data can engage into experiments to unveil the value changes, design the best course and determine the effect of changes in products, marketing and operations. They can as well predict outcomes. Stated differently, businesses better predict the results of changes like price increases, advertising and promotions through their insight into the result of previous changes coupled with better understanding of market reactions. Last but not least, business leaders with the help of big data can create new business models and many other fields such as health care, real estate, finance, retail and many other are utilizing big data aggregated by information services (The Disruptive Power of Big Data 06). As Dannah Byd puts it, *“the market sees big data as pure opportunity: marketers use it to target advertising, insurance providers use it to optimize their offerings, and wall street bankers use it to read the market”* (04). Bryan Trogdon, an entrepreneur and user-experience professional, takes the same stand and says *“Big data is the oil. Companies, governments, and organizations that are able to mine this resource will have enormous advantage over those that don’t. with speed, agility, and innovation determining the winners and losers, bug data allows us to move from a mindset of measure twice, cut one of place small bets fast”* (Anderson and Rainie 04). The following figure demonstrates and summarizes the different American sectors that use big data from platforms like Facebook to improve the performance of their business models.



Figure 4.2.: Sectors Using big Data<sup>18</sup>

The previous figure and as well as the previous analysis show that new insight opportunities that were not present in business in the past are available now. Additionally, big data is becoming the foundation of business for the 21st century. That is why one can state that big data is not only an evolution of business but it is also a disruption to business operations and models. If business leaders, on another hand, master big data analytics, they will prosper and “move ahead of less nimble competitors” (The Disruptive Power of Big Data 06).

<sup>18</sup> Source: “Innovation Edge. Big Data” June 2013. Web 24 October 2016. <http://213.27.196.102/en/innovation-edge/big-data>

### Conclusion

One has reached throughout the analysis that the functionalities and features of Facebook embody many of the basic American socioeconomic values. It is true that the study focuses only on one social networking site; one may, however, posit that similar investigations of the influence of different American social networking sites would bring the same results and conclusions. The question that is worth asking is how important are the studies that focus on social media networking sites like Facebook and their relationship with particular cultural and socioeconomic values?

To respond to this question, one has to consider Americanization and the impact of American culture on a global scale. Given the widespread of American culture worldwide, citizens of other nations start to evaluate the extent to which their cultural heritage is capable to survive. One may therefore claim that social media sites like Facebook are powerful carriers of core American cultural and socioeconomic values that vividly affect the cultures of other nations' young generation. Additionally, we have reached the conclusion that the influence of Facebook on other nations' culture would increase in the future as soon as Facebook still draws (derives) its features and functionalities from American socioeconomic values.

Not only the United States is exporting its socioeconomic values, but it is also importing data from social networking sites like Facebook to be used as raw materials for economic purposes. In fact, economic surveillance, which is collecting Facebook users' personal data and selling them to advertising companies, is helping the American economy boom and flourish. On another hand, all businesses are putting into practice web 2.0 concepts and others possess social media marketing teams to figure out how social media can be used to communicate with customers and transform social content into business value. What allow the consumer to generate content that may contain valuable business insight are product reviews, user communities, forums, blogs and the comments that accompany them. Most businesses have Facebook pages to reach users, seek for followers for their brand and capture clients' reaction to announcement. Additionally, big data from sites like Facebook "*is starting to look like a new source or factor of production*" (Schonberger and Cukier 101). Facebook is indeed the recent global marketplace; This is confirmed by Netchitailova who stated "*Facebook is first of all a capitalist organization, whose main drive is profit.*" And according to CompSec,

[b]ig data has matured into a multibillion-dollar industry that is turning the data storage and analytics industry upside down. The technology emerged from the large web companies, who collect hundreds of terabytes daily and store that information to be monetized in some way or another. The overall philosophy is to store whatever data available and its use will be figured out later. Facebook, for example, collects 500 terabytes of data per day, which comes to 183 petabytes per year.

Facebook is not a product; we are the product. Facebook, on the other hand, is a modern American instrument to dominate the world politically, socially, and economically.

### General Conclusion

Exploring the impact of the social networking site Facebook on American society, politics and economy has been the central purpose of this dissertation. At the outset, we have defined both social media and Facebook because without a deep understanding of these two crucial elements, we could not embark on our research and reach reliable conclusions. In fact, social media has been defined by many scholars and they all agree that social media comprises all the sites that allow people to stay connected and share content in real-time. The other conclusion that we have reached is that social media is the outcome of the great revolution in technology which continues to advance at a high speed. Social media does not include only social networking sites, but it also includes other types of sites like blogging, bookmarking, video broadcasting each of which concentrates on a given social engagement but aims at the same end: connectedness.

The dissertation focused on social media use and we have figured out that social media is used by many American businesses to design targeted advertising and, thus, generate profit. Additionally, business leaders can interact with their customers via the wide range of services that social media is offering. On another hand, American companies can use social media to recruit workers, ignoring all the previously used traditional recruitment sites. Social media is used as well in the educational domain. In fact, a great majority of American universities are having their page on networking sites like Facebook to communicate with students, parents and teachers. It is true that social media was and it is still tremendously criticized by some scholars, but one may state that the benefits that social networking sites like Facebook are offering outweigh their drawbacks.

We have defined Facebook, dealt with its history and its use in different domains. We have presented Facebook as a free social networking site whose principal aims are “connectedness and openness”. As far as its use is concerned, we have presented that it is used for journalistic, social, economic and artistic purposes. Socially, Facebook is a new space for social interaction. It enables as well American teens to be civically engaged, providing them with a variety of tools to organize unrestricted number of events. In the same line of thought, Facebook highly encourages free speech and can be used by journalists to design up-to-date news content. Traditional news outlets can never be replaced by social networking sites like Facebook, but such sites add a social dimension to the hard content of the news. Economically, Facebook is an interesting digital marketing tool which enables company



leaders to preserve the reputation of their brands, interact with their clients and provide them with brand new launched products' information. Artistically, we have seen that Facebook can be used by artists to exhibit their works; the fact that renders access to such artistic exhibitions free for everyone.

The last section of chapter one used statistics of high importance because they unveil Americans' use of Facebook. The first conclusion drawn from those statistics is that Americans use very often Facebook more than any other site. The other conclusion is that Americans of all ages use Facebook and this is due to the simplicity of its interface. Additionally, we have dealt with why Americans use Facebook and we found that they use it to interact with friends and family members, create connections, post comments on celebrities' publications and search dating relationships. So socializing is the main reason behind Americans' use of Facebook. The last conclusion that we reached is that Americans are occasionally persuaded by targeted advertising on social networking. However, this is going to change in the coming years and advertising on such sites will know a revolutionary positive change.

The next three chapters dealt with the impact of Facebook on American society, politics and economy but in much more details. Indeed, the second chapter tackled American teenagers' use of Facebook. Data from the Pew Research Center and other research studies were used to draw objective conclusions. The first conclusion that we came up with is that American teens share important personal information on their Facebook profiles. However, they are aware of the dangers of sharing such important information on Facebook and they master Facebook's privacy settings and their confidentiality is, thus protected. On another hand, the first thing that matters for American teens is their identity online and its management on sites like Facebook. As a matter of fact, the majority of teenagers taking part of the studies surveys advance that their identity management on Facebook is their main concern. Facebook is their favored online space to negotiate identity, untied by the offline world's commands. They do not create fake identities on Facebook, but they rather build virtual ones that reflect their offline selves. As a final conclusion, Facebook is a safe sphere for identity negotiation, popularity search and communication tool to maintain relationships.

In this chapter, we have examined the different psychological consequences of Facebook use that were presented in different recent studies. The themes that were highlighted in these studies were Facebook and cyber bullying, Facebook and narcissism, as

well as Facebook and racism. It has been declared that individuals with lower self-esteem have the tendency to have a strong sense of belonging to the Facebook community compared to those with higher self-esteem. Facebook, according to the authors of the used surveys, enhances self-esteem. Concerning cyber bullying and Facebook, it has been stated in this dissertation that cyber bullying is not a new phenomenon in American society, but Facebook has rather facilitated it by adding new venues. Stated differently, Facebook did not change bullying, but it rather made bullying more visible to other people. So it is unfair to condemn technology and believe that bullying will disappear when social media use decreases. As far as Facebook and narcissism are concerned, many studies confirm that narcissists construct their hoped-for identities on Facebook that they are unable to have in the real world. The last point which is Facebook and racism has postulated that social networking sites like Facebook did not terminate inequality and social practices like prejudice and intolerance are still lived in the online realm. The reason behind that is that users communicate with others with whom they share the same social aspects. As a result, their offline prejudices and attitudes are as well visible in the online world.

The third chapter was devoted to the impact of Facebook on American Politics, locally and internationally. The first conclusion related to this chapter is that Facebook has enhanced political American youth's political engagement. Indeed, the studies used in this chapter confirm that platforms like Facebook foster political discussion among users. One of Facebook's services that promote political engagement is the group feature. The other crucial conclusion that one has reached is that Facebook is noteworthy influencing American political process. This has been observed when campaigns used Facebook to transmit their theme and information on how to be politically active. Additionally, Facebook made Political figures and candidates more accessible than they used to be before. To sum it up, Facebook is used as a new tool by electorates to mobilize campaigns, fundraise and influence the choices of voters. The other point that was dealt with in this dissertation is the role of Facebook in American foreign policy conduct. Results show that Facebook is a modern tool to render public diplomacy comply with the demands of American foreign policy. More than that, Facebook is a miniature version of American democracy. The design of Facebook and its services encourage world users to enfold American ideals like free speech and joining interest groups for political change. The last section of this chapter tackled Facebook as a new surveillance tool that provides the United States of America with significant information

about potential terrorists. Facebook's services and applications never cease to progress to make Facebook a global American digital surveillance instrument.

The fourth and last chapter dealt with Facebook and its relationship with American economy. In the first section we analyzed Facebook's functionalities and studied the extent to which it embodies American socioeconomic values. We dealt first with Americanization and we stated that it was fulfilled by different means like Television and internet. However, the advent of social networking sites like Facebook is helping internationalize American values. Indeed, Facebook carries core American socioeconomic values that are remarkably influencing other nations' cultures. The other significant conclusion made in this part is that the impact of Facebook on other nations' cultures will increment in the upcoming future as long as Facebook's features and functionalities are derived from American socioeconomic values. The last conclusion drawn from this chapter is that the United States is exporting its socioeconomic values via Facebook but importing data from it to be used as raw materials for economic ends. In fact, economic surveillance by means of Facebook is helping many American businesses prosper. The shortage in the black oil is compelling the United States to find other alternatives to make money. Our hypothesis that Facebook is the recent global marketplace is indeed confirmed in the last chapter. This view is shared by Schonberger and Cukier when they stated that big data will be the potential of economic value and innovation. So all the data collected throughout this dissertation reach a common conclusion that Facebook is a modern American instrument to dominate the world politically, socially and economically.

We encountered many obstacles while undertaking research on the topic. The first one was the unavailability of data and recent documentations while starting designing the outline of this dissertation. It was only after our training in the University of Lille 3 that we could collect valuable recent books and articles. The other obstacle is that the researcher wanted to conduct a survey to examine the social consequences of Facebook on American society on the ground. And to do so, a trip to the United States was compulsory to undertake properly this piece of research. However, this was not possible because the researcher needed a Visa which is difficult for Algerians to obtain as well as a huge amount of money to fundraise such a trip. As a result, the researcher relied only on existing data about the research topic.

Big data can be used to comprehend present and future perils to behave accordingly. Stated differently, Predicting the results of our actions will enable us to remedy problems and improve outcomes. We agree with Schonberger and Cukier when they state that we will know in advance the students who are facing problems in the learning process before the final exam. We will detect cancers in their early stages and stop their emergence. As we will predict and intervene to change the outcomes of an unwanted teenager pregnancy or a life crime and (195). Big data is trying to reshape our lifestyles, how we work and think. The social changes that we are living with the presence of social media networking sites like Facebook are greater than any other changes we already lived when other earlier epochal innovations emerged. We now start to question many certainties. A fresh discussion of the nature of decision-making, destiny and justice are required by big data. In the past the worldview was understood by causes; however, it is rather challenged by the preponderances of correlations. The meaning of knowledge's possession has been changed from understanding the past to the ability to predict the future. So all the previously mentioned statements suggest that research is needed in other domains and contexts like the Algerian one: the impact of Facebook on Algerian teenagers or the future use of Facebook by Algerian politicians, as an advanced form of democracy.

As it was mentioned previously, Facebook played a great role in the electoral campaign of Obama because it was used for campaign mobilization purposes, fundraising and influencing voters' choices. So Facebook is playing a remarkable role in the American political arena. Other case studies of the kind can be conducted to comprehend Facebook's political role in the United States. As a way of example, the latest presidential campaigns of both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton would be of great interest and open new avenues of research.

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Appendix 01:Bill of Right

ARTICLES IN ADDITION TO, AND AMENDMENT OF,  
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA, PROPOSED BY CONGRESS, AND RATI-  
FIED BY THE SEVERAL STATES, PURSUANT TO THE  
FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION<sup>1</sup>

AMENDMENT [I.]<sup>2</sup>

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people

<sup>1</sup>In *Dillon v. Gloss*, 256 U.S. 368 (1921), the Supreme Court stated that it would take judicial notice of the date on which a State ratified a proposed constitutional amendment. Accordingly the Court consulted the State journals to determine the dates on which each house of the legislature of certain States ratified the Eighteenth Amendment. It, therefore, follows that the date on which the governor approved the ratification, or the date on which the secretary of state of a given State certified the ratification, or the date on which the Secretary of State of the United States received a copy of said certificate, or the date on which he proclaimed that the amendment had been ratified are not controlling. Hence, the ratification date given in the following notes is the date on which the legislature of a given State approved the particular amendment (signature by the speaker or presiding officers of both houses being considered a part of the ratification of the "legislature"). When that date is not available, the date given is that on which it was approved by the governor or certified by the secretary of state of the particular State. In each case such fact has been noted. Except as otherwise indicated information as to ratification is based on data supplied by the Department of State.

<sup>2</sup>Brackets enclosing an amendment number indicate that the number was not specifically assigned in the resolution proposing the amendment. It will be seen, accordingly, that only the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Amendments were thus technically ratified by number. The first ten amendments along with two others that were not ratified were proposed by Congress on September 25, 1789, when they passed the Senate, having previously passed the House on September 24 (1 *Annals of Congress* 88, 913). They appear officially in 1 Stat. 97. Ratification was completed on December 15, 1791, when the eleventh State (Virginia) approved these amendments, there being then 14 States in the Union.

The several state legislatures ratified the first ten amendments to the Constitution on the following dates: New Jersey, November 20, 1789; Maryland, December 19, 1789; North Carolina, December 22, 1789; South Carolina, January 19, 1790; New Hampshire, January 25, 1790; Delaware, January 28, 1790; New York, February 27, 1790; Pennsylvania, March 10, 1790; Rhode Island, June 7, 1790; Vermont, November 3, 1791; Virginia, December 15, 1791. The two amendments that then failed of ratification prescribed the ratio of representation to population in the House, and specified that no law varying the compensation of members of Congress should be effective until after an intervening election of Representatives. The first was ratified by ten States (one short of the requisite number) and the second, by six States; subsequently, this second proposal was taken up by the States in the period 1980-1992 and was proclaimed as ratified as of May 7, 1992. Connecticut, Georgia, and Massachusetts ratified the first ten amendments in 1939.

peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT [II.]

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT [III.]

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT [IV.]

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT [V.]

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

AMENDMENT [VI.]

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

AMENDMENT [VII.]

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT [VIII.]

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT [IX.]

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT [X.]

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.



Appendix 2: Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), Section 702.

**“SEC. 702. PROCEDURES FOR TARGETING CERTAIN PERSONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES OTHER THAN UNITED STATES PERSONS.**

“(a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon the issuance of an order in accordance with subsection (i)(3) or a determination under subsection (c)(2), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may authorize jointly, for a period of up to 1 year from the effective date of the authorization, the targeting of persons reasonably believed to be located outside the United States to acquire foreign intelligence information.

“(b) **LIMITATIONS.**—An acquisition authorized under subsection (a)—

“(1) may not intentionally target any person known at the time of acquisition to be located in the United States;

“(2) may not intentionally target a person reasonably believed to be located outside the United States if the purpose of such acquisition is to target a particular, known person reasonably believed to be in the United States;

“(3) may not intentionally target a United States person reasonably believed to be located outside the United States;

“(4) may not intentionally acquire any communication as to which the sender and all intended recipients are known at the time of the acquisition to be located in the United States; and

“(5) shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

“(c) **CONDUCT OF ACQUISITION.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An acquisition authorized under subsection (a) shall be conducted only in accordance with—

“(A) the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e); and

“(B) upon submission of a certification in accordance with subsection (g), such certification.

“(2) **DETERMINATION.**—A determination under this paragraph and for purposes of subsection (a) is a determination by the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence that exigent circumstances exist because, without immediate implementation of an authorization under subsection (a), intelligence important to the national security of the United States may be lost or not timely acquired and time does not permit the issuance of an order pursuant to subsection (i)(3) prior to the implementation of such authorization.

“(3) **TIMING OF DETERMINATION.**—The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may make the determination under paragraph (2)—

“(A) before the submission of a certification in accordance with subsection (g); or

“(B) by amending a certification pursuant to subsection (i)(1)(C) at any time during which judicial review under subsection (i) of such certification is pending.

“(4) **CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in title I shall be construed to require an application for a court order under such title

for an acquisition that is targeted in accordance with this section at a person reasonably believed to be located outside the United States.

“(d) TARGETING PROCEDURES.—

“(1) REQUIREMENT TO ADOPT.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall adopt targeting procedures that are reasonably designed to—

“(A) ensure that any acquisition authorized under subsection (a) is limited to targeting persons reasonably believed to be located outside the United States; and

“(B) prevent the intentional acquisition of any communication as to which the sender and all intended recipients are known at the time of the acquisition to be located in the United States.

“(2) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—The procedures adopted in accordance with paragraph (1) shall be subject to judicial review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(e) MINIMIZATION PROCEDURES.—

“(1) REQUIREMENT TO ADOPT.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall adopt minimization procedures that meet the definition of minimization procedures under section 101(h) or 301(4), as appropriate, for acquisitions authorized under subsection (a).

“(2) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—The minimization procedures adopted in accordance with paragraph (1) shall be subject to judicial review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(f) GUIDELINES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH LIMITATIONS.—

“(1) REQUIREMENT TO ADOPT.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall adopt guidelines to ensure—

“(A) compliance with the limitations in subsection (b); and

“(B) that an application for a court order is filed as required by this Act.

“(2) SUBMISSION OF GUIDELINES.—The Attorney General shall provide the guidelines adopted in accordance with paragraph (1) to—

“(A) the congressional intelligence committees;

“(B) the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

“(C) the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

“(g) CERTIFICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) REQUIREMENT.—Subject to subparagraph (B), prior to the implementation of an authorization under subsection (a), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence shall provide to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court a written certification and any supporting affidavit, under oath and under seal, in accordance with this subsection.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—If the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence make a determination under subsection (c)(2) and time does not permit the submission of a certification under this subsection prior to the implementation of an authorization under subsection (a), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the Court a certification for

such authorization as soon as practicable but in no event later than 7 days after such determination is made.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A certification made under this subsection shall—

“(A) attest that—

“(i) there are procedures in place that have been approved, have been submitted for approval, or will be submitted with the certification for approval by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that are reasonably designed to—

“(I) ensure that an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) is limited to targeting persons reasonably believed to be located outside the United States; and

“(II) prevent the intentional acquisition of any communication as to which the sender and all intended recipients are known at the time of the acquisition to be located in the United States;

“(ii) the minimization procedures to be used with respect to such acquisition—

“(I) meet the definition of minimization procedures under section 101(h) or 301(4), as appropriate; and

“(II) have been approved, have been submitted for approval, or will be submitted with the certification for approval by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court;

“(iii) guidelines have been adopted in accordance with subsection (f) to ensure compliance with the limitations in subsection (b) and to ensure that an application for a court order is filed as required by this Act;

“(iv) the procedures and guidelines referred to in clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) are consistent with the requirements of the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

“(v) a significant purpose of the acquisition is to obtain foreign intelligence information;

“(vi) the acquisition involves obtaining foreign intelligence information from or with the assistance of an electronic communication service provider; and

“(vii) the acquisition complies with the limitations in subsection (b);

“(B) include the procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e);

“(C) be supported, as appropriate, by the affidavit of any appropriate official in the area of national security who is—

“(i) appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; or

“(ii) the head of an element of the intelligence community;

“(D) include—

“(i) an effective date for the authorization that is at least 30 days after the submission of the written certification to the court; or

“(ii) if the acquisition has begun or the effective date is less than 30 days after the submission of the written certification to the court, the date the acquisition began or the effective date for the acquisition; and

“(E) if the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence make a determination under subsection (c)(2), include a statement that such determination has been made.

“(3) CHANGE IN EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may advance or delay the effective date referred to in paragraph (2)(D) by submitting an amended certification in accordance with subsection (i)(1)(C) to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(4) LIMITATION.—A certification made under this subsection is not required to identify the specific facilities, places, premises, or property at which an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) will be directed or conducted.

“(5) MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION.—The Attorney General or a designee of the Attorney General shall maintain a copy of a certification made under this subsection.

“(6) REVIEW.—A certification submitted in accordance with this subsection shall be subject to judicial review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(h) DIRECTIVES AND JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DIRECTIVES.—

“(1) AUTHORITY.—With respect to an acquisition authorized under subsection (a), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may direct, in writing, an electronic communication service provider to—

“(A) immediately provide the Government with all information, facilities, or assistance necessary to accomplish the acquisition in a manner that will protect the secrecy of the acquisition and produce a minimum of interference with the services that such electronic communication service provider is providing to the target of the acquisition; and

“(B) maintain under security procedures approved by the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence any records concerning the acquisition or the aid furnished that such electronic communication service provider wishes to maintain.

“(2) COMPENSATION.—The Government shall compensate, at the prevailing rate, an electronic communication service provider for providing information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1).

“(3) RELEASE FROM LIABILITY.—No cause of action shall lie in any court against any electronic communication service provider for providing any information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1).

“(4) CHALLENGING OF DIRECTIVES.—

“(A) AUTHORITY TO CHALLENGE.—An electronic communication service provider receiving a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1) may file a petition to modify or set

“(ii) if the acquisition has begun or the effective date is less than 30 days after the submission of the written certification to the court, the date the acquisition began or the effective date for the acquisition; and

“(E) if the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence make a determination under subsection (c)(2), include a statement that such determination has been made.

“(3) CHANGE IN EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may advance or delay the effective date referred to in paragraph (2)(D) by submitting an amended certification in accordance with subsection (i)(1)(C) to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(4) LIMITATION.—A certification made under this subsection is not required to identify the specific facilities, places, premises, or property at which an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) will be directed or conducted.

“(5) MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION.—The Attorney General or a designee of the Attorney General shall maintain a copy of a certification made under this subsection.

“(6) REVIEW.—A certification submitted in accordance with this subsection shall be subject to judicial review pursuant to subsection (i).

“(h) DIRECTIVES AND JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DIRECTIVES.—

“(1) AUTHORITY.—With respect to an acquisition authorized under subsection (a), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may direct, in writing, an electronic communication service provider to—

“(A) immediately provide the Government with all information, facilities, or assistance necessary to accomplish the acquisition in a manner that will protect the secrecy of the acquisition and produce a minimum of interference with the services that such electronic communication service provider is providing to the target of the acquisition; and

“(B) maintain under security procedures approved by the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence any records concerning the acquisition or the aid furnished that such electronic communication service provider wishes to maintain.

“(2) COMPENSATION.—The Government shall compensate, at the prevailing rate, an electronic communication service provider for providing information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1).

“(3) RELEASE FROM LIABILITY.—No cause of action shall lie in any court against any electronic communication service provider for providing any information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1).

“(4) CHALLENGING OF DIRECTIVES.—

“(A) AUTHORITY TO CHALLENGE.—An electronic communication service provider receiving a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1) may file a petition to modify or set

such authorization as soon as practicable but in no event later than 7 days after such determination is made.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A certification made under this subsection shall—

“(A) attest that—

“(i) there are procedures in place that have been approved, have been submitted for approval, or will be submitted with the certification for approval by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that are reasonably designed to—

“(I) ensure that an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) is limited to targeting persons reasonably believed to be located outside the United States; and

“(II) prevent the intentional acquisition of any communication as to which the sender and all intended recipients are known at the time of the acquisition to be located in the United States;

“(ii) the minimization procedures to be used with respect to such acquisition—

“(I) meet the definition of minimization procedures under section 101(h) or 301(4), as appropriate; and

“(II) have been approved, have been submitted for approval, or will be submitted with the certification for approval by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court;

“(iii) guidelines have been adopted in accordance with subsection (f) to ensure compliance with the limitations in subsection (b) and to ensure that an application for a court order is filed as required by this Act;

“(iv) the procedures and guidelines referred to in clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) are consistent with the requirements of the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

“(v) a significant purpose of the acquisition is to obtain foreign intelligence information;

“(vi) the acquisition involves obtaining foreign intelligence information from or with the assistance of an electronic communication service provider; and

“(vii) the acquisition complies with the limitations in subsection (b);

“(B) include the procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e);

“(C) be supported, as appropriate, by the affidavit of any appropriate official in the area of national security who is—

“(i) appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; or

“(ii) the head of an element of the intelligence community;

“(D) include—

“(i) an effective date for the authorization that is at least 30 days after the submission of the written certification to the court; or

aside such directive with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which shall have jurisdiction to review such petition.

“(B) ASSIGNMENT.—The presiding judge of the Court shall assign a petition filed under subparagraph (A) to 1 of the judges serving in the pool established under section 103(c)(1) not later than 24 hours after the filing of such petition.

“(C) STANDARDS FOR REVIEW.—A judge considering a petition filed under subparagraph (A) may grant such petition only if the judge finds that the directive does not meet the requirements of this section, or is otherwise unlawful.

“(D) PROCEDURES FOR INITIAL REVIEW.—A judge shall conduct an initial review of a petition filed under subparagraph (A) not later than 5 days after being assigned such petition. If the judge determines that such petition does not consist of claims, defenses, or other legal contentions that are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for extending, modifying, or reversing existing law or for establishing new law, the judge shall immediately deny such petition and affirm the directive or any part of the directive that is the subject of such petition and order the recipient to comply with the directive or any part of it. Upon making a determination under this subparagraph or promptly thereafter, the judge shall provide a written statement for the record of the reasons for such determination.

“(E) PROCEDURES FOR PLENARY REVIEW.—If a judge determines that a petition filed under subparagraph (A) requires plenary review, the judge shall affirm, modify, or set aside the directive that is the subject of such petition not later than 30 days after being assigned such petition. If the judge does not set aside the directive, the judge shall immediately affirm or affirm with modifications the directive, and order the recipient to comply with the directive in its entirety or as modified. The judge shall provide a written statement for the record of the reasons for a determination under this subparagraph.

“(F) CONTINUED EFFECT.—Any directive not explicitly modified or set aside under this paragraph shall remain in full effect.

“(G) CONTEMPT OF COURT.—Failure to obey an order issued under this paragraph may be punished by the Court as contempt of court.

“(5) ENFORCEMENT OF DIRECTIVES.—

“(A) ORDER TO COMPEL.—If an electronic communication service provider fails to comply with a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1), the Attorney General may file a petition for an order to compel the electronic communication service provider to comply with the directive with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which shall have jurisdiction to review such petition.

“(B) ASSIGNMENT.—The presiding judge of the Court shall assign a petition filed under subparagraph (A) to 1 of the judges serving in the pool established under section

103(e)(1) not later than 24 hours after the filing of such petition.

“(C) PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW.—A judge considering a petition filed under subparagraph (A) shall, not later than 30 days after being assigned such petition, issue an order requiring the electronic communication service provider to comply with the directive or any part of it, as issued or as modified, if the judge finds that the directive meets the requirements of this section and is otherwise lawful. The judge shall provide a written statement for the record of the reasons for a determination under this paragraph.

“(D) CONTEMPT OF COURT.—Failure to obey an order issued under this paragraph may be punished by the Court as contempt of court.

“(E) PROCESS.—Any process under this paragraph may be served in any judicial district in which the electronic communication service provider may be found.

“(6) APPEAL.—

“(A) APPEAL TO THE COURT OF REVIEW.—The Government or an electronic communication service provider receiving a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1) may file a petition with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review for review of a decision issued pursuant to paragraph (4) or (5). The Court of Review shall have jurisdiction to consider such petition and shall provide a written statement for the record of the reasons for a decision under this subparagraph.

“(B) CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT.—The Government or an electronic communication service provider receiving a directive issued pursuant to paragraph (1) may file a petition for a writ of certiorari for review of a decision of the Court of Review issued under subparagraph (A). The record for such review shall be transmitted under seal to the Supreme Court of the United States, which shall have jurisdiction to review such decision.

“(i) JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CERTIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) REVIEW BY THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE COURT.—The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court shall have jurisdiction to review a certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) and the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e), and amendments to such certification or such procedures.

“(B) TIME PERIOD FOR REVIEW.—The Court shall review a certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) and the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) and shall complete such review and issue an order under paragraph (3) not later than 30 days after the date on which such certification and such procedures are submitted.

“(C) AMENDMENTS.—The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may amend a certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) or the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) as necessary at any time, including



if the Court is conducting or has completed review of such certification or such procedures, and shall submit the amended certification or amended procedures to the Court not later than 7 days after amending such certification or such procedures. The Court shall review any amendment under this subparagraph under the procedures set forth in this subsection. The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence may authorize the use of an amended certification or amended procedures pending the Court's review of such amended certification or amended procedures.

“(2) REVIEW.—The Court shall review the following:

“(A) CERTIFICATION.—A certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) to determine whether the certification contains all the required elements.

“(B) TARGETING PROCEDURES.—The targeting procedures adopted in accordance with subsection (d) to assess whether the procedures are reasonably designed to—

“(i) ensure that an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) is limited to targeting persons reasonably believed to be located outside the United States; and

“(ii) prevent the intentional acquisition of any communication as to which the sender and all intended recipients are known at the time of the acquisition to be located in the United States.

“(C) MINIMIZATION PROCEDURES.—The minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsection (e) to assess whether such procedures meet the definition of minimization procedures under section 101(h) or section 301(4), as appropriate.

“(3) ORDERS.—

“(A) APPROVAL.—If the Court finds that a certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) contains all the required elements and that the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) are consistent with the requirements of those subsections and with the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the Court shall enter an order approving the certification and the use, or continued use in the case of an acquisition authorized pursuant to a determination under subsection (c)(2), of the procedures for the acquisition.

“(B) CORRECTION OF DEFICIENCIES.—If the Court finds that a certification submitted in accordance with subsection (g) does not contain all the required elements, or that the procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) are not consistent with the requirements of those subsections or the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the Court shall issue an order directing the Government to, at the Government's election and to the extent required by the Court's order—

“(i) correct any deficiency identified by the Court's order not later than 30 days after the date on which the Court issues the order; or

“(ii) cease, or not begin, the implementation of the authorization for which such certification was submitted.

“(C) REQUIREMENT FOR WRITTEN STATEMENT.—In support of an order under this subsection, the Court shall provide, simultaneously with the order, for the record a written statement of the reasons for the order.

“(4) APPEAL.—

“(A) APPEAL TO THE COURT OF REVIEW.—The Government may file a petition with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review for review of an order under this subsection. The Court of Review shall have jurisdiction to consider such petition. For any decision under this subparagraph affirming, reversing, or modifying an order of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, the Court of Review shall provide for the record a written statement of the reasons for the decision.

“(B) CONTINUATION OF ACQUISITION PENDING REHEARING OR APPEAL.—Any acquisition affected by an order under paragraph (3)(B) may continue—

“(i) during the pendency of any rehearing of the order by the Court en banc; and

“(ii) if the Government files a petition for review of an order under this section, until the Court of Review enters an order under subparagraph (C).

“(C) IMPLEMENTATION PENDING APPEAL.—Not later than 60 days after the filing of a petition for review of an order under paragraph (3)(B) directing the correction of a deficiency, the Court of Review shall determine, and enter a corresponding order regarding, whether all or any part of the correction order, as issued or modified, shall be implemented during the pendency of the review.

“(D) CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT.—The Government may file a petition for a writ of certiorari for review of a decision of the Court of Review issued under subparagraph (A). The record for such review shall be transmitted under seal to the Supreme Court of the United States, which shall have jurisdiction to review such decision.

“(5) SCHEDULE.—

“(A) REAUTHORIZATION OF AUTHORIZATIONS IN EFFECT.—If the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence seek to reauthorize or replace an authorization issued under subsection (a), the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence shall, to the extent practicable, submit to the Court the certification prepared in accordance with subsection (g) and the procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) at least 30 days prior to the expiration of such authorization.

“(B) REAUTHORIZATION OF ORDERS, AUTHORIZATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES.—If the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence seek to reauthorize or replace an authorization issued under subsection (a) by filing a certification pursuant to subparagraph (A), that authorization, and any directives issued thereunder and any order related thereto, shall remain in effect, notwithstanding the expiration provided for in subsection (a), until the Court issues

an order with respect to such certification under paragraph (3) at which time the provisions of that paragraph and paragraph (4) shall apply with respect to such certification.

“(j) JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) EXPEDITED JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS.—Judicial proceedings under this section shall be conducted as expeditiously as possible.

“(2) TIME LIMITS.—A time limit for a judicial decision in this section shall apply unless the Court, the Court of Review, or any judge of either the Court or the Court of Review, by order for reasons stated, extends that time as necessary for good cause in a manner consistent with national security.

“(k) MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY OF RECORDS AND PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) STANDARDS.—The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court shall maintain a record of a proceeding under this section, including petitions, appeals, orders, and statements of reasons for a decision, under security measures adopted by the Chief Justice of the United States, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence.

“(2) FILING AND REVIEW.—All petitions under this section shall be filed under seal. In any proceedings under this section, the Court shall, upon request of the Government, review ex parte and in camera any Government submission, or portions of a submission, which may include classified information.

“(3) RETENTION OF RECORDS.—The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence shall retain a directive or an order issued under this section for a period of not less than 10 years from the date on which such directive or such order is issued.

“(l) ASSESSMENTS AND REVIEWS.—

“(1) SEMIANNUAL ASSESSMENT.—Not less frequently than once every 6 months, the Attorney General and Director of National Intelligence shall assess compliance with the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) and the guidelines adopted in accordance with subsection (f) and shall submit each assessment to—

“(A) the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court; and

“(B) consistent with the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Standing Rules of the Senate, and Senate Resolution 400 of the 94th Congress or any successor Senate resolution—

“(i) the congressional intelligence committees; and

“(ii) the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

“(2) AGENCY ASSESSMENT.—The Inspector General of the Department of Justice and the Inspector General of each element of the intelligence community authorized to acquire foreign intelligence information under subsection (a), with respect to the department or element of such Inspector General—

“(A) are authorized to review compliance with the targeting and minimization procedures adopted in accordance with subsections (d) and (e) and the guidelines adopted in accordance with subsection (f);

“(B) with respect to acquisitions authorized under subsection (a), shall review the number of disseminated intelligence reports containing a reference to a United States-

person identity and the number of United States-person identities subsequently disseminated by the element concerned in response to requests for identities that were not referred to by name or title in the original reporting;

“(C) with respect to acquisitions authorized under subsection (a), shall review the number of targets that were later determined to be located in the United States and, to the extent possible, whether communications of such targets were reviewed; and

“(D) shall provide each such review to—

“(i) the Attorney General;

“(ii) the Director of National Intelligence; and

“(iii) consistent with the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Standing Rules of the Senate, and Senate Resolution 400 of the 94th Congress or any successor Senate resolution—

“(I) the congressional intelligence committees;

and

“(II) the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

“(3) ANNUAL REVIEW.—

“(A) REQUIREMENT TO CONDUCT.—The head of each element of the intelligence community conducting an acquisition authorized under subsection (a) shall conduct an annual review to determine whether there is reason to believe that foreign intelligence information has been or will be obtained from the acquisition. The annual review shall provide, with respect to acquisitions authorized under subsection (a)—

“(i) an accounting of the number of disseminated intelligence reports containing a reference to a United States-person identity;

“(ii) an accounting of the number of United States-person identities subsequently disseminated by that element in response to requests for identities that were not referred to by name or title in the original reporting;

“(iii) the number of targets that were later determined to be located in the United States and, to the extent possible, whether communications of such targets were reviewed; and

“(iv) a description of any procedures developed by the head of such element of the intelligence community and approved by the Director of National Intelligence to assess, in a manner consistent with national security, operational requirements and the privacy interests of United States persons, the extent to which the acquisitions authorized under subsection (a) acquire the communications of United States persons, and the results of any such assessment.

“(B) USE OF REVIEW.—The head of each element of the intelligence community that conducts an annual review under subparagraph (A) shall use each such review to evaluate the adequacy of the minimization procedures utilized by such element and, as appropriate, the application of the minimization procedures to a particular acquisition authorized under subsection (a).

“(C) PROVISION OF REVIEW.—The head of each element of the intelligence community that conducts an annual review under subparagraph (A) shall provide such review to—

“(i) the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court;

“(ii) the Attorney General;

“(iii) the Director of National Intelligence; and

“(iv) consistent with the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Standing Rules of the Senate, and Senate Resolution 400 of the 94th Congress or any successor Senate resolution—

“(I) the congressional intelligence committees; and

“(II) the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

**Appendix 3: Patriot Act, Section 215.**

**SEC. 215. ACCESS TO RECORDS AND OTHER ITEMS UNDER THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT.**

Title V of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50 U.S.C. 1861 et seq.) is amended by striking sections 501 through 503 and inserting the following:

**“SEC. 501. ACCESS TO CERTAIN BUSINESS RECORDS FOR FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS.**

“(a)(1) The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or a designee of the Director (whose rank shall be no lower than Assistant Special Agent in Charge) may make an application for an order requiring the production of any tangible things (including books, records, papers, documents, and other items) for an investigation to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities, provided that such investigation of a United States person is not conducted solely upon the basis of activities protected by the first amendment to the Constitution.

“(2) An investigation conducted under this section shall—

“(A) be conducted under guidelines approved by the Attorney General under Executive Order 12333 (or a successor order); and

“(B) not be conducted of a United States person solely upon the basis of activities protected by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

“(b) Each application under this section—

“(1) shall be made to—

“(A) a judge of the court established by section 103(a); or

“(B) a United States Magistrate Judge under chapter 43 of title 28, United States Code, who is publicly designated by the Chief Justice of the United States to have the power to hear applications and grant orders for the production of tangible things under this section on behalf of a judge of that court; and

“(2) shall specify that the records concerned are sought for an authorized investigation conducted in accordance with subsection (a)(2) to obtain foreign intelligence information not concerning a United States person or to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities.

“(c)(1) Upon an application made pursuant to this section, the judge shall enter an ex parte order as requested, or as modified, approving the release of records if the judge finds that the application meets the requirements of this section.

“(2) An order under this subsection shall not disclose that it is issued for purposes of an investigation described in subsection (a).

“(d) No person shall disclose to any other person (other than those persons necessary to produce the tangible things under this section) that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has sought or obtained tangible things under this section.

“(e) A person who, in good faith, produces tangible things under an order pursuant to this section shall not be liable to any other person for such production. Such production shall not be deemed to constitute a waiver of any privilege in any other proceeding or context.

**“SEC. 502. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.**

“(a) On a semiannual basis, the Attorney General shall fully inform the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate concerning all requests for the production of tangible things under section 402.

“(b) On a semiannual basis, the Attorney General shall provide to the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report setting forth with respect to the preceding 6-month period—

“(1) the total number of applications made for orders approving requests for the production of tangible things under section 402; and

“(2) the total number of such orders either granted, modified, or denied.”.

## Appendix 4: A Letter Sent to Zuckerberg by Four American Senators

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook  
1601 S. California Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

April 27, 2010

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

We are writing to express our concern regarding recent changes to the Facebook privacy policy and the use of personal data on third party websites. While Facebook provides a valuable service to users by keeping them connected with friends and family and reconnecting them with long-lost friends and colleagues, the expansion of Facebook – both in the number of users and applications – raises new concerns for users who want to maintain control over their information.

The following three changes have raised concerns:

1. Publicly available data. Facebook’s expansion of publicly available data to include a user’s current city, hometown, education, work, likes, interests, and friends has raised concerns for users who would like to have an opt-in option to share this profile information. Through the expanded use of “connections,” Facebook now obligates users to make publicly available certain parts of their profile that were previously private. If the user does not want to connect to a page with other users from their current town or university, the user will have that information deleted altogether from their profile. We appreciate that Facebook allows users to type this information into the “Bio” section of their profiles, and privatize it, but we believe that users should have more control over these very personal and very common data points. These personal details should remain private *unless* a user decides that he/she would like to make a connection and share this information with a community.
2. Third party data storage. Previously, Facebook allowed third-party advertisers to store profile data for 24 hours. We are concerned that recent changes allow that data to be stored indefinitely. We believe that Facebook should reverse this policy, or at a minimum require users to opt in to allowing third parties to store data for more than 24 hours.
3. Instant personalization. We appreciate that Facebook is attempting to integrate the functionality of several popular websites, and that Facebook has carefully selected its initial partners for its new “instant personalization” feature. We are concerned, however, that this feature will now allow certain third party partners to have access not only to a user’s publicly available profile information, but also to the user’s friend list and the publicly available information about those friends. As a result of the other changes noted above, this class of information now includes significant and personal data points that should be kept private unless the user chooses to share them. Although we are pleased that Facebook allows users to opt-out of sharing private data, many users are unaware of this option and, moreover, find it complicated and confusing to navigate. Facebook should offer users the ability to opt-in to sharing such



information, instead of opting out, and should make the process for doing so more clear and coherent.

We hope that Facebook will stand by its goal of creating open and transparent communities by working to ensure that its policies protect the sensitive personal biographical data of its users and provide them with full control over their personal information. We look forward to the FTC examining this issue, but in the meantime we believe Facebook can take swift and productive steps to alleviate the concerns of its users. Providing opt-in mechanisms for information sharing instead of expecting users to go through long and complicated opt-out processes is a critical step towards maintaining clarity and transparency.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY)

U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO)

U.S. Senator Mark Begich (D-AK)

U.S. Senator Al Franken (D-MN)

Appendix 5: Facebook Homepage Sample



