

Central European University

# **The Culture of Self-disclosure and Privacy Issues in Facebook: Gender Implications**

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**By Shushan Harutyunyan**

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Supervisor: Professor Judit Sándor

Second Reader: Professor Erzsébet Barát

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## Abstract

This thesis discusses Facebook social design that encourages users conscious or unconscious disclosure of own private information. Having a predisposition that both institutions of personal and informational privacy are absolutely questionable in Facebook, I analyze users' motives of self-disclosure in a line with social benefits that Facebook offers to understand the privacy issue in Facebook. I propose that users possess illusionary control over their "appearance" on Facebook - they have some control over their self-presentation, but not total control, since their online social circles provide identity validation or refutation. I also propose that users in Facebook gain the desire and delusion to believe they the center of the "universe", because it empowers and isolates each user with own social circle to act upon. Consequently, privacy rights are compromised in Facebook, because users are expected to create and share content about themselves in order to be sociable to benefit from Facebook, but if sociability and content sharing are promoted, personal privacy is a subject to threats. The privacy violation cases including scams, "stalking", identity theft, harassment and cyberbullying are common among female users on Facebook, because they are the more sociable and sharing more. The consequences are irrevocable.

**Keywords:** Facebook self-disclosure; Gendered Facebook; Gendered privacy.

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## Introduction

We are living in times, when we are witnessing drastic changes in the ways humans think and behave in a very short period, whereas it took centuries to adopt and to change cultures of communication and information exchange in our societies before. We see fundamental shift in the role of the Internet in everyday life, and we observe the online ubiquity of social networking sites (SNSs)<sup>1</sup>, where people spend substantial portions of their lives contributing to the Web with enormous amount of personally identifiable information (PII)<sup>2</sup>. We see the enormous influence of Web 2.0<sup>3</sup> Internet, and we witness the global effect of Facebook<sup>4</sup>, which is the world's second most visited website<sup>5</sup> with its 1.11 billion users<sup>6</sup>.

Facebook has become a new phenomenon of current times shaping revolutions<sup>7</sup>, changing consumer markets<sup>8</sup>, devaluating journalism,<sup>9</sup> co-centering governance<sup>10</sup> as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Nicole B. Ellison, "Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2007, 13(1), article 11.

<sup>2</sup> Craig E. Wills, "On the Leakage of Personally Identifiable Information via Online Social Networks", *Worcester Polytechnic Institute Publications*, 2012, Proceedings of the 2nd ACM workshop on online social networks: 7-12.

<sup>3</sup> The term Web 2.0 was coined in 1999 to describe web sites that use technology beyond the static pages of earlier web sites. Detailed explanation can be found at "What Is Web 2.0", Available at

<http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>

<sup>4</sup> Facebook is an online social networking site founded at 2004. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/>

<sup>5</sup> Alexa Ranking, "The top 500 sites on the web" <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>, Last accessed at May 1, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Facebook Reports, First Quarter 2013 Results, March 2013 Updated at Available at

<http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=761090>, Last accessed at May 1, 2013

<sup>7</sup> According to Press Trust of India, the emerging importance of Facebook in greatly influencing modern society was displayed in the 2011 Egyptian revolution, when protesters used the site to organize and energize the grassroots the movement. The protests began on January 25, 2011, and during the following 2 weeks over 32,000 new groups and 14,000 new pages were created on Facebook in Egypt, *Press Trust of India* news agency, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Azizul Yaakop, Marhana Mohamed Anuar, Khatijah Omar, "Like It or Not: Issue of Credibility in Facebook Advertising", *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, Vol 9, No 3 (2013)

<sup>9</sup> Sonja Balci, "Social media changes the role of the journalist", *ScienceNordic.com*, 2012, Available at <http://sciencenordic.com/social-media-changes-role-journalist>

challenging the very notions of persona, friend, intimacy, relationships and the culture of communication in broader sense. For that reason Facebook has drawn the attention of scholars in wide variety of disciplines – from computer sciences to communication, from legal studies to social sciences - becoming a rich domain for researchers who aim to explore human behavior patterns in broad swath of demographic groups from different countries worldwide. It also has become a platform to investigate in its own right, because with its actual 684,478 pieces of content shared per minute<sup>11</sup> Facebook not only reflects existing social processes, but also produces new ones by changing the very essence of information exchange and the way millions of people relate to one another<sup>12</sup>.

However, despite its communicative-sociable benefits, Facebook also brings negative experiences in human relationships and most frequently evokes massive annoyance over privacy issues with invasive advertising, cases of identity theft and cyberbullying<sup>13</sup> as well as implications of laps in security system of this SNS. The seriousness of privacy concerns in Facebook has its reflection also in academia, where the numbers of articles dedicated to Facebook privacy published during 2011-2012 exceed the number of articles about the same topic published during 2005-2010 all together. Attempts to analyze the Facebook privacy policy<sup>14</sup> include articles about the right to provide computerized analyses of users' personal

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<sup>10</sup> Weiwu Zhang, Thomas J. Johnson, Trent Seltzer, Shannon L. Bichard, "The Revolution Will be Networked. The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Political Attitudes and Behavior", *Social Science Computer Review*, June 12, 2009

<sup>11</sup> Allega Tepper, "How Much Data Is Created Every Minute"? *Mashable.com*, June 22, 2012, Available at <http://mashable.com/2012/06/22/data-created-every-minute/>

<sup>12</sup> Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, Cliff Lampe, "The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites", *Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2006, Available at <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>

<sup>13</sup> Sameer Hinduja, Justin W. Patchin, "Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Suicide", *Suicide Research*, Volume 14, Issue 3, 2010

<sup>14</sup> Facebook Privacy Policy, Available at <https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy>, Last accessed May 1, 2013

information to third parties. Many articles were discussing cases of lapses in Facebook security system, such as the Lane v. Facebook lawsuit<sup>15</sup> with its consequences in users' lives. Some articles were dedicated to the problem of information/power institution and new forms of total surveillance<sup>16</sup> which has already emerged as the result of Facebook users' personal information congestions at the hands of a commercial organization. So far, however, there has been little discussion about individual users' motives and experiences of "collaborating" with Facebook when consciously or unconsciously disclosing own private information. Studies have revealed that the majority of Facebook users are aware of privacy risks (84 per cent), however, more than half of them (48 per cent) fail to make any privacy adjustments at all<sup>17</sup>. Information disclosure on Facebook involves not only individuals own acknowledged or not acknowledged interest to share personal information, but also the private information of other individuals as well - with relationship identifications, "taggings" and other common Facebook activities - which is another problematic aspect of privacy in Facebook not discussed and understood yet.

While hundreds of studies and analyses devoted to Facebook discuss motives of using Facebook in the role social interactions, only few of them<sup>18</sup> touch the issue of gender in general,

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<sup>15</sup> Lane v. Facebook was a class-action lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California regarding internet privacy and social media. In December 2007, Facebook launched Beacon, which resulted in user's private information being posted on Facebook without consent. Facebook ended up terminating the Beacon program, and created a \$9.5 million fund for privacy and security. There was no money awarded to Facebook users that were affected negatively by the Beacon program. See Lane et al v. Facebook, Inc. et al, Available at <http://docs.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/california/candce/5:2008cv03845/206085/1/> Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>16</sup> Andreas Albrechtslund, "Online social networking as participatory surveillance", *First Monday*, March 2008. Available at <http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2142/1949>

<sup>17</sup> O'Brien, Deirdre, Torres, Ann M., "Social Networking and Online Privacy: Facebook Users' Perceptions", *Irish Journal of Management*, January 1, 2012

<sup>18</sup> Mariea Grubbs Hoy, George Milne, "Gender Differences in Privacy-Related Measures for Young Adult Facebook Users, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol 10 No 2(Spring 2010), pp. 28-45. Available at <http://jiad.org/article130.html> ; Nicole L. Muscanell, Rosanna E. Guadagno, "Make new friends or keep the old: Gender and personality differences in social networking use", *Computers in Human Behavior* 28 (2012) 107–112 ; Ellen Garbarino, Michal Strahilevitz, "Gender differences in the perceived risk of buying online and the effects of

whereas Facebook is absolutely gender specific place, first and foremost because women surpass men in Facebook with sociability of sharing twice as many photos, uploads and tags.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, numbers of female users in Facebook exceed the numbers of male users with almost per cent, Male/Female ratio<sup>20</sup>, thus gender in Facebook matters both in social interactions and in privacy, because female users undertake privacy risks twice as much as males.

This research examines the culture of self-disclosure and issues of privacy in Facebook having a predisposition that both institutions of personal and informational privacy are absolutely questionable in this SNS. With this research I discuss individual motives and experiences of consciously or unconsciously disclosing own private information and the information of users in relation, in order to understand the phenomenon of self-disclosure in Facebook and the issues of privacy in Web 2.0 format Facebook. My research questions include: Why do people voluntarily disclose their private information and what are they receiving in exchange? What should be inferred when speaking about privacy at the age of Facebook and to what extend this right is affiliated with Facebook users? Does the Facebook self-disclosure have gender and is it possible to claim for privacy in Facebook at all? Throughout the chapters I will illustrate how the public/private divide in Facebook vary based on gender and how gender affects individuals self-disclosure and privacy measurements in Facebook and beyond. I will also show how Facebook as a representative of SNS culture challenges the very notion of privacy, which was and is

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receiving a site recommendation", *Journal of Business Research* 57 (2004) 768– 775 Ellen Garbarino, Michal Strahilevitz, "Gender differences in the perceived risk of buying online and the effects of receiving a site recommendation", *Journal of Business Research* 57 (2004) 768– 775; Linda A. Jackson, Kelly S. Ervin, Philip D. Gardner, Neal Schmitt, "Gender and the Internet: Women Communicating and Men Searching", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 44, Nos. 5/6, 2001; Mariea Grubbs Hoy, George Milne, "Gender Differences in Privacy-Related Measures for Young Adult Facebook Users", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2010, Available at <http://jiad.org/article130.html>

<sup>19</sup>"How Much Do You Know About Facebook Photos"?, Infographics designed by the information publicized by Mikolaj Jan Piskorski, Harvard Business School, Available at <http://theotakukid.com/wp-content/gallery/facebook-photos-infographic/facebook-photo-infographic.png>

<sup>20</sup> "Men vs. Women on Facebook", Infographics designed by the information publicized by "Social Bakers" Statistical service. Available 2011 <http://fanpageflow.com/men-vs-women-on-facebook/>



always in the centre of personhood and plays a significant role in the “proposed” positioning of individuals in the society.

As a theoretical research my work is mainly based on synthesis of secondary literature as well as sources such as statistics, laws and policy documents. I will use legal scholarship of personal and information privacy in order to draw the definitions and understandings of privacy; gender and space literature will be used to analyze in depth the public/private divide; and empirical studies of Facebook dynamics are used as basis of the research in order to analyze individuals’ assumptions of privacy and motives of self-disclosure in its gender implications.

## Methodology and Comments on Sources

As a theoretical research my thesis is mainly built on primary and secondary sources. My primary sources include Facebook official data and policy statements, as well as privacy laws, and policy documents. My secondary sources include empirical studies on Facebook.

In collecting secondary sources “key word” and “targeted” searching methods were implemented as well as “snowball” method was used for follow up findings in the literature. My literature search procedures started on May 1, 2013, including two steps: generating a large number of potentially relevant articles and selecting articles based on chosen criteria for thesis. In searching at Google Scholar and CEU library databases among academic books, journals and articles the following keywords were used: “Facebook”; “Facebook privacy”, “Facebook gender privacy”; “Facebook self -disclosure”; “Facebook male/female user”; “Facebook relational privacy”; “social networking sites and privacy”. More than 1600 search results were indicated and 220 were chosen for a review within my selection criteria to be described below.

As for “targeted” searching all the articles published at “Computers in Human Behavior journal” in 2012 were checked and evaluated for indicating interesting articles that didn’t come up during the key word searching, however were relevant to my interest area and included more trending perspectives of understanding the Internet privacy.

My selection of secondary sources was made by taking into consideration 3 main measures: (1) including articles that have empirical bases, because otherwise commentaries, opinion columns and press articles would dominate; (2) including articles that examine Facebook and in some cases Facebook with comparison to SNSs, but with bold emphases on specifically Facebook experiences, which helped not to overgeneralize experiences and patterns of SNSs as a single general category; (3) including articles that are devoted to analysis of Facebook

information sharing and disclosure or articles explaining motivations for sharing identity presentation in Facebook based on gender, which helped to exclude general descriptive analysis of Facebook usage among certain professional groups and categories of users (for ex: student-teacher, parents-child, couples) which occupy quite a large amount of articles devoted to Facebook studies. Consequently 67 articles were chosen as a secondary source for my thesis.

For privacy and legal literature searching and selection was limited to “snowball” method within the books and articles that have been published in the recent years and include the analyses of the concept of “privacy” in e-space, such as “Fred H Cate, “Privacy in the Informational Age,” 1997”; Reg Whitaker, “The End of the Privacy: How total surveillance is becoming a reality”, 1999; Daniel J. Solove, “The Digital Person”, 2004; Jon L. Mills, “Privacy: The lost Right”, 2008; Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, “Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age”, 2010, among others. In addition, “classical” books in public/private discourse, such as Richard F. Hixson’s “Privacy in a Public Society”, 1987, were also used with other books touching upon the issues of gender and space such as Michelle Perrot, “A History of Private Life, “Introduction” and “The Secret of the Individual”, 1990.

## **Ethics and Research limitations**

One of the biggest challenges that my research faces is the problem of being situated in far too large arena. In other words, if Facebook have more than one billion users, theorizing Facebook would not make sense. However, I'm not aiming to theorize the whole Facebook, but rather taking an attempt to analyze earlier defined and lately largely discussed once specific concept of privacy in Facebook, which is the "self-disclosure", and I'm trying to even more narrow it to gender aspect, which I hope solves the problem of overgeneralization.

The other limitation I can distinguish so far was the adequate usage of the secondary sources, because articles with empirical data about Facebook are not gathered in one method, but rather in number of methods which brings varying results based on their aims of the research. More precisely, the results coming from studies using online applications for gathering data on Facebook defer from the results coming from data crawling, and absolutely different results appear from studies with users are involvement in offline contexts such as interviews and focus groups. Additionally self-reports about Facebook usage and observations about the same users also varies based on cultural framing and shifting norms. To address these questions articles from all the mentioned methodological approaches were selected for my thesis not to leave out any perspective that might not be considered in selected studies because of data gathering methods.

Lastly, there are number of ethical challenges that I can determine. Firstly, there are ethical issues of my positionality as a researcher, my "background" or any type of personal Facebook experience, which might affect my approaches toward the thesis in general. Additionally there are questions whether in some instance I'm allowed to use personal observation, experience or information gathered as Facebook user. Secondly, there is a question

of whether examining Facebook means researching human subjects, which is the problem of any social scientist when doing research on online networks such as Facebook. Thirdly, there is a problem of validity of the research and its further ethical use, because Facebook research is an attempt of understanding social behavior across rapidly changing time and culture, which is unprecedented experience for all the researches. To address all the mentioned issues I constructing my thesis solely based on findings from the primary and secondary sources, I build my arguments in the context of the findings of current times.

## Chapter 1. The Facebook effect

### 1.1. Introduction to the Chapter

Facebook is a phenomenon of current times. Its global “effect” can be seen at a story from Egypt, where in February 2011 a couple named their newborn girl Facebook Jamal Ibrahim<sup>21</sup> as an expression of gratitude to honor the role Facebook played in Egyptian revolution.<sup>22</sup> If Facebook were a country it would be the third biggest country in the world<sup>23</sup> by its population, because as of March 2013 Facebook has 1.11 billion monthly and 655 million daily active users<sup>24</sup>. However, Facebook is a commercial organization, and all these users with their activities and all the stories beyond Facebook have brought \$5.1 billion revenue to Facebook Inc. as of 2012<sup>25</sup>.

In fact, people “live” in Facebook following its founder’s concept that “the world will be better if you share more”<sup>26</sup>. In reflecting to Zuckerberg’s interview scholars responded “a better world for whom is the real question”, inferring that “sharing” on Facebook in economic terms means that Facebook “shares” information with others, which are advertising clients and not

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Hartley-Parkinson, "Meet my daughter “Facebook”: How one new Egyptian father is commemorating the part the social network played in revolution", Daily Mail, February 2011, Available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1358876/Baby-named-Facebook-honour-social-network-Egypt-revolution.html> Last accessed May 2013

<sup>22</sup> Timeline: Egypt's revolution: A chronicle of the revolution that ended the three-decade-long presidency of Hosni Mubarak, Al Jazeera English, February 2011, Available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112515334871490.html> Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>23</sup> World Atlas "countries including their populations", Estimated as of 2012. Available at <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/populations/ctypopls.htm> Last accessed May 2013

<sup>24</sup> Facebook Newsroom, Key Facts, Statistics, Last updated March 2013 <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>, Last visited May 1, 2013

<sup>25</sup> "Facebook, Inc. Financial Statements". Securities and Exchange Commission. Retrieved February 1, Available at 2013. <http://pdf.secdatabase.com/700/0001193125-12-316895.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Ryan Singels interview with Mark Zuckerberg, "Mark Zuckerberg: I Donated to Open Source, Facebook Competitor", Wired Magazine, April 2010, Available at <http://www.wired.com/business/2010/05/zuckerberg-interview/> Last accessed May 1 2013

only<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, it's a question whether Facebook makes the world a better place, but Facebook makes the world a place where surveillance is not only an interpersonal process (users view data about other users, which might benefit or harm the latter), but a place where the enormous amount of personally identifiable data with behavior dynamics can be gathered and offered to companies as a product within text advertisements as well as given to other interested parties by legal request<sup>28</sup>. All this information is stated in Facebook privacy policy<sup>29</sup>, so users should been aware of these much privacy risks, yet, Facebook has 11.11 billion users and this number speaks for itself.

It is also important to note than June 1, 2010, was designated as a day of protest<sup>30</sup> against the social networking site after new privacy policies were introduced. The reason for the day of protest was Facebook, changing privacy laws after The Wall Street Journal cited instances where Facebook users' personal information was being shared with advertisers without the users' consent and afterwards raised questions about Facebook's security<sup>31</sup>. Facebook users did not protest and simply continued using it<sup>32</sup> up to now. So the question remains - why people use Facebook, why do they allow a commercial organization collect and "sell" their personal data?

To understand this paradoxical question this chapter offers a broad analysis of Facebook usage, which includes Facebook demographics, experiences and "culture" that Facebook creates

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<sup>27</sup> Christian Fuchs, "An Alternative View of Privacy on Facebook." Information 2, 2011. no. 1: 140-165. Available at <http://www.mdpi.com/2078-2489/2/1/140>

<sup>28</sup> Facebook Advertising <https://www.facebook.com/advertising/> Last accessed May 1 2013

<sup>29</sup> Facebook: Data Use Policy, <https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy> Updated December 11, 2012, Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>30</sup> "We're Quirring Facebook" Campaign Official Page <http://www.quitfacebookday.com/> Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>31</sup> Susan Waters, James Ackerman, "Exploring Privacy Management on Facebook: Motivations and Perceived Consequences of Voluntary Disclosure" Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, October 2011, Volume 17, Issue 1, pages 101–115

<sup>32</sup> David Griner, "Quit Facebook" protest draws away a mere .008% of users", The Social Path, Jun 1 2010 <http://www.thesocialpath.com/2010/06/01/>

as well as possible social benefits that users gain when giving up their privacy. By discussing privacy from social behavior perspective I aim to illustrate the complexness of Facebook users' self-disclosure and lead the discussion to defining and understanding privacy in the new Web 2.0 concept, which is the subject of my second chapter. In the first section of this chapter I describe Facebook users demographics addressing the issue of who is doing what on Facebook in general; in the second section I discuss the Facebook "culture" that encourages users to disclosure very personal information and the motivations of users in disclosure. In the third section I discuss the three key factors in Facebook usage, namely social capital, social curiosity and social surveillance.

## **1.2. Facebook "Demographics": who is doing what on Facebook and why**

Facebook, is based on Web 2.0 format internet, which allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of content in a virtual community, in contrast to earlier websites where people are limited to the passive viewing of content. Facebook's membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges and in 2006 so far to anyone aged 13 and over spreading all over the world. Visitors register in Facebook before using it, after which they create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, share photos, news and other stories, create pages and groups as well as get automatic notifications about personal and "friend" activities. Facebook users are also encouraged to share their geographic locations,<sup>33</sup> indicate

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<sup>33</sup> Facebook Help Center, Sharing Locations <https://www.facebook.com/help/337244676357509/>, Last accessed May 1, 2013



relationships with other users such as being family member or being in a romantic relationship,<sup>34</sup> create and save a lifetime events such as becoming an organ donor<sup>35</sup> and other “opportunities” for portraying self online.

When users register in Facebook, they must agree to the terms of service, which includes the provision that Facebook Inc. has the right to collect users’ demographic information, so from this we know that Facebook users come from 210 countries of the world<sup>36</sup>. 20-29 year old users represent the largest age group in Facebook, among which college graduate dominate, 13-19 year old users are the second, 40-49 year old users are the third, and accordingly 50-59 year old users are forth and 60+ year old users are fifth<sup>37</sup>.

From gender perspective Facebook is a female “dominated” space, where numbers of female users in exceed the numbers of male users visiting the website from majority of countries at almost 45/55 per cent Male/Female ratio<sup>38</sup>. Female users also surpass male users with their sociability, which means in particular, sharing considerably more personal information.<sup>39</sup> Overall, gender has a significant importance in usage and content of Facebook. Specifically, women spend more time on Facebook, have a greater number of Facebook friends, share more photos and more postings about themselves than males do, as well being more concerned about

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<sup>34</sup> Facebook Help Center, Adding Friends & Friend Requests <https://www.facebook.com/help/360212094049906/> Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>35</sup> Facebook Help Center, Share Your Organ Donor Status <https://www.facebook.com/help/organ-donation>, Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>36</sup> Facebook Demographics Worldwide powered by Visual.ly <http://visual.ly/facebook-demographics-worldwide> Last accessed May 1, 2013

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> "Men vs. Women on Facebook", Infographics designed by the information publicized by "Social Bakers" Statistical service. Available 2011 <http://fanpageflow.com/men-vs-women-on-facebook/>

<sup>39</sup> "How Much Do You Know About Facebook Photos"?, Infographics designed by the information publicized by Mikolaj Jan Piskorski, Harvard Business School, Available at <http://theotakukid.com/wp-content/gallery/facebook-photos-infographic/facebook-photo-infographic.png>

their privacy<sup>40</sup>. Interestingly, according to Moore although women overall spend more time on Facebook, they visit their Facebook site less frequently than men do<sup>41</sup>. McAndrew found that females are more likely to use profile pictures for impression management on Facebook, which means that female users are more likely to be judged by their Facebook appearance. McAndrew also indicates that relationship status had an impact on the Facebook activity of males, but little effect on the activity of females<sup>42</sup> and single woman hardly ever indicate their status, which more likely will be perceived as an “invitation”, while single male does.

Studies found out 67 per cent of all internet users have Facebook account<sup>43</sup>, and the average user has 130 friends, contributes 90 pieces of content per month, and is connected on average with 80 community pages, groups, and events<sup>44</sup>. Interestingly, the average age in Facebook, which was 29.53 in 2010 has grown to 30.11 as of January 2013<sup>45</sup>, which suggests that Facebook users habitually consume this SNS and get mature with it. As we can see, Facebook represents wide range of demographics, which means different needs, different perceptions of social network usage, still all of them once connected to Facebook, in most of the cases continue to use it, and constantly keeping updated their “friends”, therefore Facebook Inc. about their personal lives. How can we understand this?

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<sup>40</sup> Amanda M. Kimbrough, Rosanna. Guadagno, Nicole L. Muscanell, Janeann Dill. "Gender differences in mediated communication: Women connect more than do men", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2013

<sup>41</sup> Kelly Moore, James C. McElroy, "The influence of personality on Facebook usage, wall postings, and regret", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28 (2012) 267–274

<sup>42</sup> Francis T. McAndrew, Hye Sun Jeong, "Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex, and relationship status as predictors of Facebook use", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28 (2012) p. 2359–2365

<sup>43</sup> Maeve Duggan, Maeve Duggan "Social Networking Site Users: A demographic portrait of users of various social media services", The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, February 14, 2013  
[http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP\\_SocialMediaUsers.pdf](http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_SocialMediaUsers.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Robert E. Wilson, Samuel D. Gosling and Lindsay T. Graham, "A Review of Facebook Research in the Social Sciences", *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2012

<sup>45</sup> Kevin Allen, "The average Facebook user is getting older and more masculine", RAGAN's PR Daily, January 3, 2013, Available at  
[http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/The\\_average\\_Facebook\\_user\\_is\\_getting\\_olderand\\_more\\_13483.aspx](http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/The_average_Facebook_user_is_getting_olderand_more_13483.aspx) Last accessed May 1, 2013

When examining this phenomenon from the perspective of convergence in privacy issues and self-disclose, it can be seen, that its not new in the history of human life; as one author notices personal diaries have long been held to be discoverable<sup>46</sup>. However, Facebook brings new practice with its two invisible features. Firstly, the term “friend” in its very linguistic meaning plays a significant role sharing personal information in the subconscious level of users because Facebook says - share with your “friend” - even though one has never met that “friend” in real or theoretically knows that sharing with “friend” means sharing with “whomever it might concern”<sup>47</sup>. Secondly, there is a sense of “virtual comfort” in Facebook, because information disclosure manifests differently in this virtual environment compared to the offline arena<sup>48</sup>. It is largely confirmed<sup>49</sup> that people feel far more liberated online than they do in the “real world”, thus they tend to disclose more in Internet mediated interactions, while as in face to face communications they would be more discreet. As a result, Facebook elicits higher levels of general information sharing than the “real” world, as well as greater information disclosures, that is, more communication of personal or sensitive information. To some extent this is even an expectation “content sharing” among Facebook users recognized explicitly by Facebook’s founder as a shift in “social norms”<sup>50</sup>.

In fact, at the age of Facebook there is a shift in “social norms” of communication, because it basic technological retooling of the social structures that communities usually use to

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<sup>46</sup> "Facebook Isn't Your Space Anymore: Discovery of Social Networking Websites", Kansas Law Review, 2010

<sup>47</sup> Gordon Hull, Heather Richter Lipford, Celine Latulipe, "Contextual gaps: privacy issues on Facebook" Ethics Inf Technol, 2010

<sup>48</sup> Emily Christofides, Amy Muise, Serge Desmarais, "Privacy and Disclosure on Facebook: Youth and Adults' Information Disclosure and Perceptions of Privacy Risks", Policy Research Delivered to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, March 26, 2010, Available at [http://www.psychology.uoguelph.ca/faculty/desmarais/files/OPC\\_Final\\_Report-Facebook\\_Privacy.pdf](http://www.psychology.uoguelph.ca/faculty/desmarais/files/OPC_Final_Report-Facebook_Privacy.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Petter Bae Brandtzæg, Marika Lüders, Jan Havard Skjetne, "Too Many Facebook “Friends”? Content Sharing and Sociability Versus the Need for Privacy in Social Network Sites", Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, 2010

<sup>50</sup> Beth Anderson, Tom Woodnutt, Patrick Fagan, Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic "Facebook Psychology: Popular Questions Answered by Research", Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 2012

interact with each other, but it tooling also creates new practices. Facebook allows users to connect with existing personal friends, reconnect with old ones, or expand their networks by joining groups and by browsing pages based around common interests. New users can join the site in a matter of minutes by setting up a personal profile. So one study<sup>51</sup> among first year university students found out that the percentage of students using Facebook increased up to 95 per cent in 2011 in comparison to previous study at 2008, which comes to prove that at certain social circles it is becoming a norm to use Facebook, so students who are not registered in Facebook are influenced by their peers to open an account for further communication if they wish “to be in”. The same study also found that first year students are more dependent on using Facebook because of its format in comparison to other social media, such as Twitter<sup>52</sup>, and Facebook is a more popular method for communication between students.

Another relevant study<sup>53</sup> found that as of fall of 2009, 73 per cent of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 use social networking sites, and further research indicated that 83 per cent of teenage social networking users have added comments to pictures that friends have posted, 77 per cent have posted public messages to a friend’s page, 71 per cent send private messages to friends through these sites. Additionally, a very recent study<sup>54</sup> found that teens tend to disclose more personal information as of 2012 than they tended to share in 2006, preferring to disclose own life from preferred perspective, which I will analyze in detail in the second section.

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<sup>51</sup> Kevin Johnston, Mei-Miao Chen, Magnus Hauman, University of "Changes in use, Perception and Attitude of First Year Students Towards Facebook and Twitter", European Conference on Information Management & Evaluation, 2011

<sup>52</sup> Twitter is an online social networking site that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters. It was created in 2006 and has over 500 million registered users as of 2012. <https://twitter.com/about>

<sup>53</sup> Aaron M. Fewkes, Mike McCabe, "Facebook: Learning Tool or Distraction", Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 2012

<sup>54</sup> Mary Madden, Amanda Lenhart, Sandra Cortesi, eds., "Teens, Social Media, and Privacy", Pew and the Berkman Center, May 21, 2013 Available at [http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP\\_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy\\_FINAL.pdf](http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_FINAL.pdf)

### 1.3. Facebook Culture: Belongingness and Self-Presentation

The theory of ritualized media<sup>55</sup> states that any type of media is not just consumed for informational or entertainment purposes, but rather is habitually used as part of individuals everyday life routines, which can also explain the enormous success of Facebook and in some basic sense users' lack of attention to privacy issues<sup>56</sup>. But even more importantly Facebook usage is motivated by two primary needs of people - the need to belong and the need for self-presentation<sup>57</sup>. As study proposes, demographic and cultural factors contribute to the need to belong, whereas neuroticism, narcissism, shyness, self-esteem and self-worth contribute to the need for self-presentation<sup>58</sup>.

By breaking the concept of “persistent identification of place with community”<sup>59</sup>, Facebook makes the “global village”<sup>60</sup> a new sophisticated platform in belonging to the communities of users' choice, which makes Facebook persuasively safe place, since people believe they are not alone even if being “targeted or threaten”. “They conceive of themselves as interacting in a protected environment”, another study explains<sup>61</sup>. At the same time, when having a sense of belonging to certain communities Facebook users get a chance to showcase their personality. It enables users to portray the “salient aspects” of their identity for others to see and interpret by communicating personal interests upon commonly known “sharings” - music or

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<sup>55</sup> Liebes, Tamar, James Curran, and Elihu Katz. *Media, ritual, and identity*. Psychology Press, 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Bernhard Debatin, Jennette P. Lovejoy, "Facebook and Online Privacy: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Unintended Consequences", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2009

<sup>57</sup> Ashwini Nadkarni, Stefan G. Hofmann, "Why do people use Facebook?", *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52 (2012) 243–249

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Doreen Massey, “A global Sense of Place”, 1994

<sup>60</sup> Marshall McLuhan in: Daniel J. Solove, *The Future of Reputation: Gossip, Rumour, and Privacy on the Internet* (Yale University Press 2007) 33.

<sup>61</sup> O' Bien, Deirdre; Torres, Ann M., "Social Networking and Online Privacy: Facebook Users' Perceptions", *Irish Journal of Management*, 2012

movies, photos or news about their achievements. In addition, they also have choices in what aspects of their life will be visible for the others; the majority of users are selective in terms of the type of personal information they post on Facebook. For example, most would publish their photos, sexual orientation, relationship status, birthday and major information with complete and accurate details<sup>62</sup>. Apparently, many of users conceal their political affiliations, religious views, address, home phone and mobile phone numbers from other Facebook users<sup>63</sup>.

In further examination of self-disclosure and self presentation if we look at the outcomes of several recent studies dedicated to the understanding Facebook's role in identity construction, we can see Facebook gives individuals three major capabilities: the ability to construct a semi-public profile; the ability to identify a list of other users with whom a connection is shared; the ability to view and track individual connections as well as those made by others<sup>64</sup>. Of course, Facebook profiles are not created in a social vacuum, and interactions with other users play an important role in shaping identity presentation. In addition, assumptions about the perceived audience as well as cultural norms may also influence how users portray themselves on Facebook<sup>65</sup>. Yet, gender remains a significant predictor of Facebook usage, even when controlling for Facebook intensity and presence in sharing news related links for self-presentation<sup>66</sup>, and female users tend to disclose more personal information. Simultaneously, the opportunity for showcasing a self might vary based on personality type. For example, having the ability to

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<sup>62</sup> Christopher M. Hoadley, Heng Xu, Joey J. Lee, Mary Beth Rosson, "Privacy as information access and illusory control: The case of the Facebook News Feed privacy outcry", *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 2010

<sup>63</sup> Ibid p 3

<sup>64</sup> Ashwini Nadkarni, Stefan G. Hofmann, "Why do people use Facebook?", *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52 (2012) 243–249

<sup>65</sup> Robert E. Wilson, Samuel D. Gosling and Lindsay T. Graham, "A Review of Facebook Research in the Social Sciences", *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2012

<sup>66</sup> Carroll J. Glynn, Michael E. Hulse, Lindsay H. Hoffman, "All the news that's fit to post: A profile of news use on social networking sites" *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2012

carefully manage self-presentation could be a particularly attractive feature of Facebook for individuals high in attachment anxiety, who desire closeness but anticipate and rejection fear when acting offline. By managing how they present themselves to others in Facebook, through text, pictures, links, etc., such individuals may feel more confident in their ability to maintain interpersonal relationships<sup>67</sup>.

There are important questions to be raised in the light of self-presentation: are Facebook users really who they say they are, is there evidence, that the information shared in Facebook is real, therefore a real threat to individuals' privacy? At the first sight it seems that virtual media offers more scope for control or variation of identity than in the real world; they seem to provide an environment in which identity is malleable and the reality or fantasy boundary can be blurred easily, however, Facebook is defined by scholars as a "nonymous" environment<sup>68</sup>. The last means that users have some control over their self-presentation, but not total control, because the activities in which they are involved online, and the people with whom they connect, also provide identity validation or refutation. Therefore, Facebook users are far more likely to present a realistic, if slightly exaggerated, version of their true personalities than to represent an overly idealized virtual identity<sup>69</sup>, which I will discuss in the next section upon social surveillance.

On the whole, the need to belong is the fundamental drive to form and maintain relationships and a major motivator of Facebook use, because allows users to fulfill belonging needs through communicating with and learning about others. Furthermore, self-presentation seems a motivation for Facebook use, because it provides a unique venue for maintaining and

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<sup>67</sup> Julian A. Oldmeadow, Sally Quinn, Rachel Kowert, "Attachment style, social skills, and Facebook use amongst adults", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2013

<sup>68</sup> Beth Anderson, Tom Woodnutt, Patrick Fagan, Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic "Facebook Psychology: Popular Questions Answered by Research", *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 2012

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

expressing alternate selves. Additionally, some individuals, particularly those in high social anxiety feel able to express hidden self-aspects (characteristics currently part of the self, but not normally expressed in everyday life) on Facebook<sup>70</sup>.

#### **1.4. The Facebook “effect”: Social Capital, Social Curiosity and Social surveillance**

Facebook is based on the concept of sociability, and users are expected to create and share content about themselves as a result of voluntary self-disclosure<sup>71</sup>. However, sociability and privacy are conflicting needs. Facebook users constantly express concerns about their privacy and in the meantime constantly share on Facebook to build and maintain their social capital. If users’ personal privacy is protected, then sociability and content sharing - which is the very essence of Facebook - are compromised, whereas if sociability and content sharing are promoted, the personal privacy is violated. To understand sociability in Facebook I suggest looking at the three main factors of sociability proposed by Brandtzæg<sup>72</sup> – social capital, social curiosity and social surveillance.

Facebook is a place when all kinds of “friends” are put together and available simultaneously, however the level of openness in sharing with friends typically varies. Facebook is also associated with different types of social capital, for example, family, friends, and acquaintances, and the trust between those people in interaction is very high. Sobel describes social capital<sup>73</sup> as circumstances in which individuals use membership in groups and networks to

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<sup>70</sup> Gwendolyn Seidman, "Self-presentation and belonging on Facebook: How personality influences social media use and motivations", *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2012

<sup>71</sup> Petter Bae Brandtzæg, Marika Lüders, Jan Havard Skjetne, "Too Many Facebook “Friends”? Content Sharing and Sociability Versus the Need for Privacy in Social Network Sites", *Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2010

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Joel Sobel, "Can We Trust Social Capital?" *Journal of Economic Literature*, 2002



secure benefits. According to Bourdieu social capital is an attribute of an individual in a social context. “One can acquire social capital through purposeful actions and can transform social capital into conventional economic gains. The ability to do so, however, depends on the nature of the social obligations, connections, and networks available to you”<sup>74</sup>. In a line with Bourdieu’s concept, participation in the Facebook communities enables efficient and convenient contact to be maintained with a larger and more diverse group of acquaintances, thus extending potential social capital<sup>75</sup>. A key concept related to social capital is social trust, which relates to the degree to which people can rely on each other. It is likely that the more time is spent and the more data is shared in Facebook, the user is more likely to tolerate any privacy intervention, satisfying the curiosity of users in relation. Studies also suggest a possible connection between high levels of privacy and decreased social capital, and a contradiction between high levels of sociability and the need for privacy<sup>76</sup>.

“Transparency” on Facebook is referred to social curiosity by Switzer and Taylor<sup>77</sup> and they found that Facebook users find it both exciting and somewhat addictive to follow other people’s personal lives without one’s interest becoming too invasive or visible<sup>78</sup>.

“It can be good to know what another person is doing without having to ask. There is an element of voyeurism in Facebook; you just can’t get away from that. It’s fun to see what other people are doing, but at the same time, you might not want them to know that you are

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<sup>74</sup> Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology" *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 1998. 24:1–24

<sup>75</sup> Kirsty Young, "Social Ties, Social Networks and the Facebook Experience", *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*, 2011

<sup>76</sup> Switzer, R., & Taylor, R. B. “Predicting privacy vs. sociability of residential choice: Impacts of personality and local social ties”, *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 1983

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

looking at their pages. I imagine that I would think quite a lot about anyone who had visited mine”, underline Squicciarini and Griffin this quote in their study<sup>79</sup>.

In Facebook everyone’s behavior can be observed by many and too much information given and received by too many people can reaffirm privacy problem, but we should speak about “social privacy” when using Facebook, rather than “institutional privacy”<sup>80</sup>, where the former refers to how people protect themselves from other users and the latter refers to how the company that runs Facebook uses people’s data. Even though perceptions toward privacy issues in Facebook vary based on age, gender and motives of using it - for example, the aim of gaining or maintaining popularity is closely related to the amount of information users choose to reveal<sup>81</sup> - users interpretation of other users “visits” to their pages is associated with curiosity and social surveillance rather than institutional privacy invasion, which is the less visible.

Social conformity<sup>82</sup> often occurs when an individual’s actions are exposed to increased visibility or surveillance by other members of a group, for example “followers”. However, what should be discussed is the perceived degree of surveillance in different types of personal networks - based on size and diversity- among different groups in relation to conformity. The conformity effect decreases when participants respond in private. In light of the foregoing, whether conformity emerges as a strategy to protect privacy when Facebook users have a large

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Kate Raynes-Goldie, "Digitally mediated surveillance, privacy and social network sites", Curtin University/EDGELab, 2011

<sup>81</sup> Anna Squicciarini, Christopher Griffin, "An Informed Model of Personal Information: Release in Social Networking Sites", 2012, Available at <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1206.0981.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> Mark Seidenfeld, "Cognitive Loafing, Social Conformity, and Judicial Review of Agency Rulemaking", 87 Cornell L. Rev. 486 (2001-2002)

and diverse group of friends is an important issue<sup>83</sup>. Brandtzæg and Lüders revealed that some users feel uncomfortable with the idea that others may have looked at their photographs.

Another concern among the users is that they sometimes get more information than they would like to get about others, when they sneak into other profiles or view information provided by the “newsfeed.” These concerns might be a result of too much and too different social capital; as I mentioned earlier, the problem is that, on Facebook, people from different social circles mix in the same communication context, which in turn leads to social context tension<sup>84</sup>. Whom to trust and what to reveal about oneself suddenly become complex issues when the audience is diverse. Due to the mix of different ties and sociability in Facebook, users perceive themselves to some extent as appearing in a “public or semipublic space”, thereby exhibiting a greater sense of self-awareness. It seems that after all people on Facebook share only a part of themselves, without becoming too private and personal. This applies, for example, to status updates, which are potential points of departure for conversation. This less open and private content sharing might indicate increasing social pressure toward conformity inside Facebook, or conformity as a strategy for maintaining social privacy<sup>85</sup>

It is important, whether this conformity might lead to social boredom in the long run and that less sharing of private content will challenge the original purpose of using Facebook. If this were so, mixed social capital could be a problem for Facebook, However, the relationship between privacy and a person’s social network or social capital is multifaceted. In other instances, people are willing to reveal personal information to strangers or those with whom they have weak ties but not to those who know the users better.

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<sup>83</sup> Petter Bae Brandtzæg, Marika Lüders, Jan Havard Skjetne, "Too Many Facebook “Friends”? Content Sharing and Sociability Versus the Need for Privacy in Social Network Sites", *Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2010

<sup>84</sup> Ibid p 13

<sup>85</sup> Ibid p 13 (at the bottom of the page)

## 1.5. Conclusion to the chapter

All in all, Facebook is a phenomenal tool for social interaction and its mass usage is motivated by two primary needs - the need to belong and the need for self-presentation. However, Facebook profiles are not created in a social vacuum and interactions with other users play important role in shaping identity presentation. Thus, users have some control over their self-presentation, but not total control, because the activities in which they are involved online, and the people with whom they connect, provide identity validation or refutation. From this we know that the wide range of users presented in my forth section, are more likely to present a realistic, if slightly exaggerated, version of their true personalities than to represent an overly idealized virtual identity, therefore the personal information shared in Facebook is more than real and privacy concerns are more than reasonable.

Simultaneously, Facebook is constructed around strong psychological features. The terms used such as “share with your friend” motivates users to share with Facebook Inc. even in subconscious level, and the sense of “virtual comfort” plays Facebook’s benefit, because people feel more liberated in self-disclosing online rather than in face to face interaction. As a result, users are expected to create and share content about themselves in order to be sociable to benefit from Facebook, but if sociability and content sharing are promoted, personal privacy is compromised. Since female users are the ones who share more in Facebook, they are the most concerned Facebook users. An overall increase in the number of people searching Google with the term “delete Facebook” (Google, 2011) provide some evidence to suggest changing attitudes in this respect<sup>86</sup>, which I will discuss in my next chapter dedicated to privacy.

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<sup>86</sup> Beth Anderson, Tom Woodnutt, Patrick Fagan, Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic "Facebook Psychology: Popular Questions Answered by Research", *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 2012

## Chapter 2. Facebook: Privacy 2.0

### 2.1. Introduction to the Chapter

Facebook privacy is a complex issue and is deeply rooted in the activities and sharing options that Facebook offers to its users. As we can see from the analyses provided at the first chapter Facebook facilitate some new values and behaviors such as sharing favorable information for the sake of gaining a social capital, but the last takes place at the expense of others. More precisely, if users are creating and sharing content about themselves in order to be sociable to benefit from Facebook, they are likely to compromise their personal privacy simply because Facebook is designed “that way”. When discussing SNSs’ designs connections to users’ shared content Hull brings the following example: “although a door that closes too slowly wastes heat, a door that closes too quickly “discriminates” against the disabled and delivery personnel”<sup>87</sup>. Indeed, for understanding Facebook it can be suggested that the “architectural” features of Facebook – interface, design, default settings - seem to facilitate certain kinds of social interactions and not others, therefore relations between privacy norms and application and interface design is more than important, which is I analyze at this chapter with its further implications.

On the one hand, Facebook users need to be aware of what, exactly, might happen with their shared information and their Facebook friends’ information, because sharing comes with certain potential privacy risks<sup>88</sup>, including unintentional disclosure of personal information, damaged reputation due to rumors and gossip, unwanted contact and harassment, vulnerability to stalkers or pedophiles, use of private data by a third party, hacking, and identity theft. As Hull

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<sup>87</sup> Gordon Hull, Heather Richter Lipford, Celine Latulipe, "Contextual gaps: privacy issues on Facebook" *Ethics Inf Technol*, 2010

<sup>88</sup> Robert E. Wilson, Samuel D. Gosling and Lindsay T. Graham, "A Review of Facebook Research in the Social Sciences", *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2012

says, users need to be aware of the outward flow of their personal information so that their consent, if they give it, will be based on informed decision. Additionally, they also need to be reminded that their updates are going to be seen by people whom they have forgotten are part of their audience. Thus, the issue whether Facebook users personal information disclosures are informed decisions is also an important issue to be discussed upon the chapter dedicated to understanding privacy in Facebook context.

Presumably, the compromise between potential social benefits and privacy risks is a dilemma not only for Facebook users, but for the company and its administrators. The last have an incentive to encourage users to share more personal information to make their company appealing to advertisers, therefore, keeping privacy controls vague and open. Yet, Facebook administrators are conceivably interested to keep the Facebook data system secure from hacking and other interventions to be able to maintain the trust of the users. At this context a study indicated<sup>89</sup> that privacy concerns are primarily determined by the perceived likelihood of a privacy violation and much less by the expected damage, specifically, the perceived likelihood of a privacy violation had a medium effect on privacy concerns, but perceived damage had a negligible effect on privacy concerns. Therefore, to understand the issue of privacy Facebook it is important to discuss not just the reported cases, but rather expected implications of privacy violations in Web 2.0 format Facebook, which will be discussed at the chapter.

All in all, the second chapter offers a broad analyzes of determining and understanding privacy in the context of Facebook. At the first section of the chapter I discuss the notions of privacy from the spatial perceptive, namely, how humans came to the idea of privacy and why it was important and what it means so far. The second chapter provides wide range of definitions

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid

and explanations of privacy and self-disclosure from the legal and social perspectives, which will help to understand the specificity of Facebook privacy issues. The third chapter concentrates on Facebook Web 2.0 format's inconsistency with personal and informational privacy.

## 2.2. Understanding privacy

The lack of privacy and chances for having private life were deeply rooted in spaces and how people related to them in the past. The houses of sixteenth century were constructed as interlocking suites of rooms without corridors, so that the only way of moving about was by passing through other people's rooms. And only in the late seventeenth century house plans did allocate space to corridors, which now allowed access without intruding upon privacy (Stone 1979, 169).

“They first invade your table then your breast,

Explore your secrets with insidious art,

Watch the weak hour and ransack all the hearts,

Then soon your ill-paid confidence repay,

Commence your lords, and govern or betray”.<sup>90</sup>

The above cited piece is not about Facebook, even though one can find a lot of similarities described at the piece to what some users experience in Facebook. The piece was

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<sup>90</sup> Samuel Johnson “London: A Poem. In Imitation of the third satire of juvena”, 1783, Available at <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/london.html>

written by Samuel Johnson in 1783, and in his chapter about affective individualism<sup>91</sup> historian Lawrence Stone brings this poem as evidence of the earlier need of personal and bodily privacy for individual members of the family, especially the need to escape for the prying eyes and ears of the domestic servants in middle and upper-class households. When discussing this poem Stone highlights that in trials for noble adultery in eighteenth century the key witnesses were always servants, whose curiosity clearly made sexual privacy almost impossible for anyone who wished to conduct a discreet affair in their own home (Stone 1979, 170).

However, by the nineteenth century living space had begun to grow less crowded, and single beds were adopted in monasteries and hospitals as a sanitary precaution, which was also a reason for accelerated need for privacy after the cholera epidemic in London in 1832. Even working class couples little by little secured their privacy by surrounding their bed with curtains. “The new solitude of the bedroom or at least a single bed strengthened the sense of individuality” says Perrot<sup>92</sup> inferring that “spaces” were reasons for inner monologue for person. The basis of institution of privacy is intimately connected to the development of personhood as such in its value systems (Stone 1979, 159). So the need for a separate space for private matters, which I conditionally call as “bedroom” concept, has grown into the understanding of “privacy” as such and a basic human right to possess it.

The need for privacy for was also connected to identity, which by nineteenth became more distinct with the system by which individuals were named. (Perrot 1994, 457) Later on, another important factor in the development of individual self-awareness connected to privacy was the portrait, a “direct consequence of the efforts of individuals to gain insight into their

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<sup>91</sup> Lawrence Stone, “The History of Family, Sex and Marriage in x-1900 England”, 1979

<sup>92</sup> Michelle Perrot, “History of Private Life”, 1994 (p. 479)



personalities” (Perrot 1994, 460). In other words, a private space, individuals naming and self-portrait could construct and maintain identity after which individuals could deliberately divulge something personal to another in public communication, and this is how the idea of privacy as a right was developed. So what is privacy? What’s the notion of it?

According to Reiman<sup>93</sup>, privacy is a social ritual by means of which an individual’s moral title to his existence is conferred. Privacy is an essential part of the complex social practice by means of which the social group recognizes – and communicates to the individual – that his existence is his own. And this is a precondition of personhood. To be a person and individual must recognize not just his actual capacity to shape his destiny by his choices. He must also recognize that he has an exclusive right to shape his destiny. Simmel focuses on the normative aspect of privacy saying that privacy is a concept related to solitude, secrecy, and autonomy, but is not synonymous with these terms; for beyond the purely, the curiosity, and the influences of others, privacy implies a normative element: the right to control to access to private realms; ... Any invasion of privacy constitutes an offense against the rights of the personality - against individuality, dignity, and freedom.”<sup>94</sup> Westin describes privacy<sup>95</sup> as “the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others.

When speaking about privacy it is critically important to indicate that privacy is not an absolute, but rather contextual and subjective, and the right to privacy is based on wide array of socially and culturally salient understandings of private spheres. It is also noteworthy, that even though the passion surrounding privacy discussions, and the attention to electronic and internet

<sup>93</sup> Jeffrey H. Reiman, "Privacy, Intimacy and Personhood", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6 (1):26-44, 1976

<sup>94</sup> Arnold Simmel, "Privacy is Not an Isolated Freedom", *Privacy* (pp. 71-87), 1971

<sup>95</sup> Alan F. Westin, "Privacy and Freedom" 1970

privacy<sup>96</sup>, little consensus exists regarding what “privacy” means. Cate<sup>97</sup> raises number of questions to understand the privacy with regard to the variety of contexts in which privacy issues are discussed - what values are served, or compromised, by extending further legal protection to privacy; what values are affected by existing and proposed measures designed to protect privacy; and what principles should undergrad a sensitive balancing of those values, particularly in light of privacy’s many definitions, contexts, and sources of legal protection. Cate also addresses those questions referring to David Flaherty, data protection commissioner for British Columbia, who has analyzed<sup>98</sup> information-related privacy interests reflected in the discourse creating the following listing: The right to individual autonomy; the right to be left alone; the right to a private life; the right to control information about oneself, the right to accessibility; the right to exclusive control of access to private realms; the right to minimize intrusiveness; the right to expect confidentiality; the right to enjoy solitude; the right to enjoy intimacy; the right to enjoy anonymity; the right to enjoy reserve; and the right to secrecy (Cate 1997, 21-22). According to Cate (p 130) while privacy may be characterized as fundamental human right in Europe and as an amorphous, shifting constitutional right in the United States, the protection of informational privacy is always balanced with competing rights and the contours of that protection are shaped by context.

To sum up, in the logic of privacy definitions, privacy is not an end itself but rather an instrument for achieving other goals. Thus, what it has been said above privacy is - an expression of one’s personality or individuals right to define his or her essence as human being; individuals ability to regulate information about themselves in order to control their relationship with other

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<sup>96</sup> Reg Whitaker, “The end of Privacy: How total surveillance is Becoming a reality”, 1999

<sup>97</sup> Fred H. Cate, "Privacy in the Information Age", 1997 (p 3)

<sup>98</sup> David H. Flaherty, "Reflections on Reform of the Federal Privacy Act", 2008, Available at [http://www.priv.gc.ca/information/pub/pa\\_ref\\_df\\_e.pdf](http://www.priv.gc.ca/information/pub/pa_ref_df_e.pdf)

individuals; essential components of individuals life such as secrecy, anonymity and solitude. Noteworthy to mention again, I by privacy I infer personal and informational privacy, but not other types of privacy.

### 2.3. Privacy and self-disclosure

In the first section when speaking about privacy I used of the concept of “bedroom” which is similar to the expression of “a man in his castle”. American lawyer James Otis when speaking about privacy in eighteenth century said – “while man is quite, he is well guarded as prince in his castle”<sup>99</sup>. In the context of Facebook the concept of the “bedroom” or “castle” metaphorically looks like a scene where one enters own bedroom, locks the door that nobody can enter, switches on the web camera, and broadcasts one’s own life - sometimes taking poses in front of the camera, and sometimes “doing private life”, forgetting that the camera is still switched on. More specifically, Facebook users share their private life for a propose - for portraying themselves from a certain favorable angle, however, they seem to be not always prudent about the proportions of information they share and the consequences the last can have in their offline life. This can be illustrated by a recent study, indicating that 39.3 million users in Facebook identify family member in their profile, 20.4 million include their birth date and year in their profile, 4.7 million “like” a page pertaining to health conditions or treatments, 4.6 million discuss their love life on their wall, 930.000 discuss their finances on their wall<sup>100</sup>. Even if one piece of information about an individual is not problematic, the pieces of information shared all together makes the individual an owner of a bedroom or a castle without walls, which, however,

<sup>99</sup> James Otis biography and thoughts at United States History page, Available at <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1204.html>

<sup>100</sup> "Facebook & your privacy: Who sees your data on the biggest social network", ConsumerReports.org, June 2012

can't be qualified as privacy "intervention" – it's just an individual, who prefers a bedroom without walls. So how can we understand self-disclosure and privacy in the context of Facebook?

As introduced at the beginning of the chapter, sharing personally identifiable information is connected to the Facebook's design, which encourages "sharing" to be able to benefit from it. Mills<sup>101</sup> argues that informational technologies in a larger context change the way we acquire and disseminate personal information, because sometimes giving personal information is a requirement of living in modern society. Just think of online banking services, online airplane check-ins, insurance industry and e-government databases with information about registered voters or remember less compulsory requirements of modern society as the example of first year student described at the first chapter, who is recommended by his peers to open a Facebook account if he wants "to be in". People are compelled or coerced to give information to the government that then becomes public information. Information given to private actors may be available to marketers or may be acquired by the government, sometimes without a warrant. According to Mills (p 46), much of this accumulation and trading of personal information goes on without our knowledge or consent even though we may have voluntarily given pieces of information over time, and that's the problem of Facebook privacy, where the main factor of data gathering is the self-disclosure. So how the self-disclosure can be defined?

Disclosure is a fluid term that often has number of definitions. A reflective definition discussed by Waters and Ackerman explains that disclosure is "the telling of the previously unknown so that it becomes shared knowledge".<sup>102</sup> This definition implies that a recipient of the

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<sup>101</sup> Jon L. Mills, "Privacy: The lost right", 2008

<sup>102</sup> Susan Waters, James Ackerman, "Exploring Privacy Management on Facebook: Motivations and Perceived Consequences of Voluntary Disclosure", Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 2011

information should be present and that the recipient of the disclosure plays an important role in the process itself. If to be specific I would say a link to song shared at one's Facebook page is a disclosure, because even though at first sight it might not have something common with personally identifiable information such as birth date and some can regard it as "unimportant", in composition with other pieces of information it becomes more than expressive private data and sharing the song is "disclosure" because otherwise users in relation might not learn about the song as an information about someone.

To understand the commonplace of self-disclosure on Facebook, it is important to look at the reasons for disclosure. In intimate relationships self-disclosure assumedly involves relationship maintenance and development, reciprocity of information, self-clarification and social validation, whereas in less intimate relationships the reasons for disclosure involve reciprocity of information and impression management<sup>103</sup>. According to Waters and Ackerman, numbers of principles govern disclosure of private information among which are: culture, gender, motivation, context, and risk-benefit ratio. Culture explains how cultural expectations about privacy values influence the level of disclosure. Gender relates to how male and female norms and perspectives contribute to the rule structures of privacy management. Motivation depends on the person's needs/motivations for establishing and enacting the privacy or access rules which are mutually agreed upon, co-constructed, and established by individuals. The context means that the circumstance can relegate how a person develops rules for privacy or disclosure; how a person applied the privacy settings for Facebook disclosure would be an example of context. Lastly, risk-benefit ratio identifies that there is always risk and benefit

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid

involved with privacy or disclosure, so before disclosing or staying private, individuals determine the risks and benefits of that action.

The basic problem with Facebook users' disclosure is the fact that almost all communications over the Internet - whether motivated by above mentioned disclosure principles and shared among targeted users - are stored and taking places at the third party's platform. The last is problematic also because the third party is a commercial organization in the Facebook case. Although many Facebook users believe<sup>104</sup> that their communications will remain privately held and free from government intrusion, Bedi argues<sup>105</sup> that under the "third party doctrine" all of these communications seem to lose Fourth Amendment protection<sup>106</sup> because users voluntarily disclose this information to Facebook.

All in all Facebook users' experiences based on self-disclosure, because the typicality of sharing and revealing for different target audiences/friends information about users themselves. Self-disclosure is also the core of Facebook privacy issues, because with few exceptions of Facebook mistakes<sup>107</sup> its users who give communicate and share at the third parties platform, and the Web 2.0 platform is offered to discuss at the next section.

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<sup>104</sup> Monu Bedi, "Facebook and Interpersonal Privacy: Why the Third Party Doctrine Should Not Apply", Boston College Law Review, 2013

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> The Fourth Amendment (Amendment IV) to the United States Constitution is the part of the Bill of Rights which guards against unreasonable searches and seizures, along with requiring any warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause.

<sup>107</sup> Lane v. Facebook was a class-action lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California regarding internet privacy and social media. In December 2007, Facebook launched Beacon, which resulted in user's private information being posted on Facebook without consent. Facebook ended up terminating the Beacon program, and created a \$9.5 million fund for privacy and security. There was no money awarded to Facebook users that were affected negatively by the Beacon program. See Lane et al v. Facebook, Inc. et al,

## 2.4. Privacy Web 2.0: why it is impossible

One of the paradoxes of the internet is that it simultaneously empowers its users and makes them vulnerable to supervision and control<sup>108</sup>. While the earlier version of the Web granted visitors of the web democratized access to information letting them to overcome the monopoly of mainstream media, Web 2.0 manifested democratized participation, which makes users not only a visitor, reader, consumer, but equal contributor and participant. Web 2.0 is a social web rather than informational, because in these platforms people share their experiences, thoughts, perspectives, bringing fundamental shift in the way people communicate. The problem is, however, that 1,1 billion Facebook active users “equally contribute” to Web with their personal information and they do so in voluntarily bases, giving to the third parties what otherwise they would never give. So on one hand it can be observed a congestion of absolutely intimate information of millions of people worldwide at the hand of one commercial organization – the Facebook, on the other hand the information of users is not collected through invasion of their private lives, but given by users themselves. Can the notion of privacy coexist with Web 2.0 internet and Facebook in particular? I would say it is mostly impossible with two arguments in mind – the issue of ownership of personal information on Facebook and the phenomenon of the permanent memory of the Web.

Personal data has become the currency in Internet, and it is collected, stored and used in an ever-increasing variety of ways by a countless amount of different users, producing a “panopticon beyond anything Bentham ever imagined”<sup>109</sup>. Additionally, if sharing personal information involves cultural and social background of the users influencing the amount and

<sup>108</sup> Reg Whitaker, “The end of Privacy: How Total Surveillance is Becoming a Reality”, 1999 (p 101)

<sup>109</sup> Lawrence Lessig, Code: Version 2.0 (Perseus Books 2006) 208. The author also refers to disproportional monitoring of behaviour and the dangers of profiling (manipulation and discrimination).

quality of shared information, decoding and collecting that information is inherently global: it represents no boundaries; even some scholars argue that the very existence of information technology is threatening the nation states<sup>110</sup>. Users' search-history, location-data, browsing-habits, reading-behavior and much more, is collected and/or used to a degree one can hardly imagine; technology, nowadays, allows for unprecedented forms of data-matching, de-anonymisation and data mining, all contributing to extensive "digital dossiers".<sup>111</sup> As I said earlier it is Facebook's best interest to keep users personal data in secure, however, the questions remains - who has a right to it? From the privacy rights perspective "ownership" over one's "personal data"<sup>112</sup> implies a certain "control-right" of the data subject, which means that the individual decides what happens with the information and maintains control over it. Do really Facebook users have a control over their personal information? The issue evokes new questions, but there is no actual answer to it expect for the option to delete a Facebook account<sup>113</sup> suggested by Facebook. Facebook however, doesn't clarify if the account is permanently deleted by user, does this mean that Facebook will delete the data from its servers as well? More likely that once user shared anything on Facebook, it will be kept by Facebook<sup>114</sup> and the control over deceased person's account will also remain at Facebook's hands<sup>115</sup>.

At the meantime, the status of people's collective privacy on web is changing continually – a reflection of a society with changing mores and changing technology. Web never forgets

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<sup>110</sup> Fred H. Cate, "Privacy in the Information Age", 1997 (p 11)

<sup>111</sup> Jef Ausloos, "The 'Right to be Forgotten' e Worth remembering?", Computer Law & Security Review 28 (2012) 143-152

<sup>112</sup> "Personal data" is defined in Europe (DP Directive, art.2(a) juncto preamble (26)) and interpreted in: Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 'Opinion 4/2007 on the concept of personal data' WP 136, Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/privacy/docs/wpdocs/2007/wp136\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/privacy/docs/wpdocs/2007/wp136_en.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> Facebook, How do I permanently delete my account? Available at <https://www.facebook.com/help/224562897555674>

<sup>114</sup> BBC News, Websites 'keeping deleted photos', 21 May 2009, Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8060407.stm> Last accessed May 15, 2013

<sup>115</sup> Facebook: Deactivating, Deleting & Memorializing Accounts <https://www.facebook.com/help/359046244166395/>



anything<sup>116</sup>. In Web 2.0 world it is practically impossible to predict all the negative consequences of the use of personal data. Even if one can foresee a few, they are very abstract, distant and uncertain. According to Ausloos<sup>117</sup>, they are abstract because privacy harms often only concern societal, psychological issues and the like, they are distant as they do not present themselves right away, and they are uncertain because they might never occur, or at least not in a foreseeable way. Additionally, personal data is often collected and used outside the individual's control or without him/her even knowing. As part of today's culture and society, no individual is immune. According to Mills, there are very few private aspects of a "day in the life" of a modern citizen. We all are part of the privacy interest group. So far, most of us are underinformed as to what is happening to us and are largely unaware of any effective legal remedies<sup>118</sup>. Additionally, personal information, once online, is there forever, which has led many European countries, the European Union, and even the United States to establish a right to be forgotten<sup>119</sup> to protect users from the shackles of the past presented by the Internet.

## 2.5. Conclusion to the chapter

As we can see, privacy has both spatial and social meaning and private space, individuals naming and self-portrait were in the roots of privacy and its need from the human rights perspective. Privacy is an expression of one's personality or individuals' right to define his or her essence as human being; individuals' ability to regulate information about themselves in order to

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<sup>116</sup> Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, "Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age", Princeton University Press 2010

<sup>117</sup> Jef Ausloos, "The 'Right to be Forgotten' e Worth remembering?", Computer Law & Security Review 28 (2012) 143-152

<sup>118</sup> Jon L. Mills, "Privacy: The Lost Right", 2008 (p 306 - conclusion)

<sup>119</sup> The right to be forgotten - between expectations and practice <http://www.enisa.europa.eu/activities/identity-and-trust/library/deliverables/the-right-to-be-forgotten> European Network and information Security Agency

control their relationship with other individuals; essential components of individuals life such as secrecy, anonymity and solitude. Lot of these aspects of privacy rights are compromised in Facebook, but privacy issues are very specific there, because they are not based on privacy invasions, but on self-disclosure of users' personal information.

The basic problem with Facebook users' disclosure is the fact that almost all communications over the Internet is taking places at the third party's platform. Although Facebook users private messages might not be disclosed by Facebook Inc, but under the "third party doctrine" all of these communications seem to lose Fourth Amendment protection, because users voluntarily disclose this information to Facebook. To sum up, privacy can't coexist with Web 2.0 internet and Facebook in particular, because ownership of personal information is voluntarily given to Facebook by users in exchange with other "social values" which will be discussed at my third chapter.

## Chapter 3. Facebook “unprivacy”

### 3.1. Introduction to the Chapter

Privacy has been seen by feminist scholars as both a blessing and a curse for women's rights. According to Annabelle Lever<sup>120</sup> feminists' ambivalent approaches towards legal protection for privacy is reasonable, because privacy rights have so often protected the coercion and exploitation of women, and made it difficult to politicize personal forms of injustice. Nevertheless, there are no legal feminist voices in academia discussing the asumable dual character of privacy rights in Facebook, but is not because privacy rights are gender balanced in e-space. Quite the contrary - recent announcements<sup>121</sup> and online campaigns<sup>122</sup> by feminist activist groups' addressing cases of privacy violations on Facebook manifest it. Theoretically, Facebook empowers its users with new tools and female and male users supposedly benefit of it equally. However, new technologies develop too fast to handle, in practice resulting new forms of privacy violations<sup>123</sup> targeting female users in most of the reported cases<sup>124</sup>.

With my attempt to discuss Facebook privacy issues with its gender implications the first section at this chapter discusses violation experiences and cases reported in mainstream. The last helps to understand the complexity of issue not only from theoretical perspective, but also in application. The second section of the chapter discussed the benefits users gain when

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<sup>120</sup> Annabelle Lever, "Feminism, Democracy and the Right to Privacy", ISSN 1393-614X Minerva - An Internet Journal of Philosophy Vol. 9 2005.

<sup>121</sup> Facebook is a feminist issue, Geekfeminism.org, 2010 Available at <http://geekfeminism.org/2010/05/08/facebook-is-a-feminist-issue/>

<sup>122</sup> Petition, 3037 supporters "Demand For Facebook's Response To Cyber-Bullying On Their Pages" at Change.org <http://www.change.org/petitions/demand-for-facebook-s-response-to-cyber-bullying-on-their-pages>

<sup>123</sup> Tamara Holder, "The DC Opinion: Inside Facebook's dark and violent alleys", Dailycaller.com, 2010 <http://dailycaller.com/2010/11/09/inside-facebooks-dark-and-violent-alleys/>

<sup>124</sup> Facebook is a feminist issue, Geekfeminism.org, 2010 Available at <http://geekfeminism.org/2010/05/08/facebook-is-a-feminist-issue/>

compromising their privacy and the third section reflects on further implications of Facebook “unprivacy”.

### **3.2. Compromising privacy: Facebook cases**

Though right to privacy clearly includes the right to prevent unjustified disclosure of personal information, it is not limited to that. John Arthur brings the example of the case, when somebody repeatedly phones someone at his or her home despite requests to stop<sup>125</sup>. Such an invasion of privacy, for surely can’t be described as disclosure of personal information. Nonetheless, the person’s privacy is violated: the caller has intruded into one’s personal, private life. Facebook is a wide arena for these kinds of privacy violations. Most common Facebook crimes<sup>126</sup> include scams (enticing an individual to click on a link that would interest almost anyone, such as an innocent-looking notification that you’ve won a free prize like a gift card and then, in order to claim the prize, scammers require to submit some information, such as a credit card number or social security number), “stalking” (harassing a person with messages, written threats, and other persistent online behavior that endangers a person’s safety), identity theft (breaking into users’ e-mails and making fake Facebook accounts for a propose), harassment (sexual harassment and assault towards other users), and cyberbullying (the most common Facebook crimes that involves all the above mentioned with intention in repeated nature).

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<sup>125</sup> John Arthur, “The Unfinished Constitution: Philosophy and Constitutional Practice”, 1989 (p 179)

<sup>126</sup> 7 Most Common Facebook Crimes, Security Affairs, 2012 Available at <http://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/4891/cyber-crime/7-most-common-facebook-crimes.html>

The most common cyberbullying cases involve teenage girls<sup>127</sup>, where in most tragic ones they committed suicide, as the suicide of Amanda Todd<sup>128</sup>, Angel Rehtaeh<sup>129</sup> and others<sup>130</sup>. According to “Cyberbullying by Gender” report<sup>131</sup> girls are as likely, if not more likely, to be involved in cyberbullying. When looking at recent experiences, boys and girls report about the same involvement in cyberbullying offending. Lifetime participation rates are higher for girls, however, suggesting that they have been engaging in these types of activities longer. In numbers the same study suggests that adolescent girls are significantly more likely to have experienced cyberbullying in their lifetimes (25.8% vs. 16%). This difference disappears when reviewing experiences over the previous 30 days. Girls are also more likely to report cyberbullying others during their lifetime (21.1% vs. 18.3%). The type of cyberbullying tends to differ by gender; girls are more likely to spread rumors while boys are more likely to post hurtful pictures or videos. Another study<sup>132</sup> found that 15% of online teens have had private material forwarded without permission, 13% have received threatening messages and 6% have had embarrassing photos posted without permission as well as revealed that more cyberbullying takes place on Facebook than rest of Web. Facebook users also constantly report on sexual harassment cases

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<sup>127</sup> Daniel Bates, "The schoolgirls arrested 'for cyberbullying their former friend with a fake Facebook page'", Daily Mail, 14 January 2011 Available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1347034/Facebook-cyberbullying-Schoolgirls-arrested-creating-fake-page-naked-pictures.html>

<sup>128</sup> Brian Hutchinson, 'Like a terrorist attack on our kids': Amanda Todd's tormentors and 'avengers' worse than bullies, National Post, 2012 Available at <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/10/16/like-a-terrorist-attack-on-our-kids-amanda-todds-tormentors-and-avengers-worse-than-bullies/>

<sup>129</sup> Josh Visser, 'The justice system failed her': Nova Scotia teenager commits suicide after being raped, bullied: mother, National Post, 2013 Available at <http://news.nationalpost.com/2013/04/09/the-justice-system-failed-her-nova-scotia-teenager-commits-suicide-after-being-raped-bullied-mother/>

<sup>130</sup> Chris Boyette, "N.Y. police probe possible cyberbullying after girl found hanged" CNN, May 26, 2013, Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/23/us/new-york-girl-death/>

<sup>131</sup> "Summary of our Cyberbullying research from 2004-2011", Cyberbullying Research Center, 2013, Available at <http://cyberbullying.us/research/>

<sup>132</sup> Sarah Perez, "More Cyberbullying on Facebook, Social Sites than Rest of Web", Readwrite.com, 2010 Available at [http://readwrite.com/2010/05/10/more\\_cyberbullying\\_on\\_facebook\\_social\\_sites\\_than\\_rest\\_of\\_web](http://readwrite.com/2010/05/10/more_cyberbullying_on_facebook_social_sites_than_rest_of_web)

asking for help from lawyers online,<sup>133</sup> and they alarming about how Facebook specifically hurts women<sup>134</sup>. Why these practices take place?

It is noteworthy, that past researches in gender differences in the overall Internet use has been contradictory, with inference to e-space as a place where the “traditional” gender problems do not apply<sup>135</sup>. Some asserted men use internet it more than women, while others asserted there are no gender difference. However, both camps concluded that men and women differed in their motivation and utilization of time spent online and Kimbrough and Guadagno indicated<sup>136</sup> that women, compared to men, are generally more frequent mediated communication users. Compared to men, women prefer and more frequently use text messaging, social media, and online video calls. What can be observed within the above mentioned Facebook cyberbullying cases, women continue to be targeted both offline and online, the difference is that when privacy violated offline there are number of legal tools to address the problem, whereas in Facebook all the cases are quite new and create new discourses.

### **3.3. Exchanged: Self-centrism and self-control**

As discussed at the first chapter of the thesis, Facebook privacy disclosures are related to social advantages that user take in return. Users disclose own private information for self-presentation using behaviors to intentionally present oneself to others in a favorable style<sup>137</sup>.

<sup>133</sup> "How do I stop sexual harassment on Facebook?", Avvo.com <http://www.avvo.com/legal-answers/how-do-i-stop-sexual-harassment-on-facebook--795518.html>

<sup>134</sup> Facebook and gender-based hate speech, Women's Views on News, May 28, 2013 <http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/2013/05/facebook-and-gender-based-hate-speech/>

<sup>135</sup> Amanda M. Kimbrough, Rosanna. Guadagno , Nicole L. Muscanell , Janeann Dill. "Gender differences in mediated communication: Women connect more than do men", Computers in Human Behavior, 2013

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Susan Waters, James Ackerman, "Exploring Privacy Management on Facebook: Motivations and Perceived Consequences of Voluntary Disclosure", Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 2011

Secondary motives as discussed already include relationship management<sup>138</sup> - interpersonally developing and sustaining relationships with close friends and the third factor of keeping up with trends emerged from disclosers that do not want to be perceived as old-fashioned. However according to Waters and Ackerman<sup>139</sup>, the major factor in online disclosure is that individuals want control over what and how their private information is collected and with whom it is shared<sup>140</sup>. Control over personal information is extremely difficult online, since it can be relinquished without the user knowing it. It seems that users also acknowledged these difficulties which is illustrated at a one very recent study<sup>141</sup>, which says that teens, the second largest age group among Facebook users, tend to disclose more personal information as of 2012 than they tended to share in 2006. More specifically, they share more photos of themselves, school name, city they live and in some cases email address and cell phone number. The last can be connected to the “tagging-involving” format of Facebook, where users share other users personal information, such as “bad” photos<sup>142</sup>, thus users give preference to disclosing own life from preferred perspective, this is what they “receive” from Facebook. However, as discussed in the second chapter all the disclosure take place at the platform of third party, so theoretically users don’t have ownership over their shared content and their disclosures don’t grant them control over their personal information. But now they are open now for cyberbullying and other

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<sup>138</sup> Namkee Park, Borae Jin, Seung-A Annie Jin, "Effects of self-disclosure on relational intimacy in Facebook", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2011

<sup>139</sup> Waters and Ackerman, "Exploring Privacy Management on Facebook: Motivations and Perceived Consequences of Voluntary Disclosure", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2011

<sup>140</sup> Gina Masullo Chen "Why do women write personal blogs? Satisfying needs for self-disclosure and affiliation tell part of the story", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2012

<sup>141</sup> Mary Madden, Amanda Lenhart, Sandra Cortesi, eds., "Teens, Social Media, and Privacy", Pew and the Berkman Center, May 21, 2013 Available at

[http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP\\_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy\\_FINAL.pdf](http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>142</sup> Damien Scott, "Survey Shows 25% of Female Facebook Users Intentionally Post Bad Photos of Friends", *Complex Tech*, July 3 2012, Available at <http://www.complex.com/tech/2012/07/25-of-female-facebook-users-post-bad-photos-of-friends>, Last accessed May 1, 2013

mentioned new types of privacy invasion in Facebook. Thus in Facebook we can only speak about illusionary self-control.

Conversely, the “revolution” of social media merely parallels other cultural reversals, all of which seek to return humans to the center of the universe<sup>143</sup>, and this desire and delusion to be at the center of everything lies at the heart of contemporary issues facing the global civilization. Vacker and Gillespie suggested<sup>144</sup> that if Facebook is a celebration of narcissism, exhibitionism, and voyeurism and all this seems rather obvious, there is something less invisible which can explain motives of agreeing upon all the terms and conditions of Facebook – “Facebook is the latest example of the human drive to represent the world and our lives back to our selves”. Facebook empowers almost a billion people to gaze upon the images of themselves and their lives in infinite detail, which means that Facebook ranks as perhaps the most powerful “mirror” ever invented. “The narcissism, surveillance, and social networking function in perfect harmony with the global celebrity system and the global media spectacle, where the image is more important than the reality it represents and misrepresents”, - Vacker and Gillespie state. Facebook is seems to be a micro-celebrity system that positions each user at the center of a global panoptic network, a network constructed such that each user is at the center of a media universe, a universe created for their self. Above all, Facebook and social media in general allow humans to feel as if they are special; existing at the center of everything, and this can explain Facebook’s enormous success and users voluntarily disclosure, even though they clearly acknowledging the risks. This finding however, doesn’t answer the questions, quite the opposite, raises new ones, specifically, who’s best interest these “empowerment” represents?

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<sup>143</sup> Barry Vacker, Genevieve Gillespie, "Yearning to be the center of everything, when we are the center of nothing: The parallels and reversals in chaco, hubble, and facebook", *Telematics and Informatics* 30 (2013) 35–46

<sup>144</sup> Ibid



### 3.4. Future implications: Should we care about privacy

Too often discussions of privacy parade a horde of horrible, raising fears of new technologies developing too fast for the privacy law to handle. “We are left with a sense of hopelessness – technology will continue to erode privacy and there is little we can do to stop it”, - says Solove<sup>145</sup> suggesting however much cause for optimism and suggesting that we are still in the early days of the Information age, and we still have the ability to shape the networks of information flow.

So far, Facebook already changed number of notions and aspects of human lives. Nowadays, in romantic relationship partners monitor each other on Facebook<sup>146</sup>, employers monitor employees on Facebook<sup>147</sup>, Facebook results “disorders”<sup>148</sup> or negatively influences users emotional stability<sup>149</sup>. There is a dramatic increase in our ability to know what those in our social circle are doing, what (and whom) they like and dislike, where (and with whom) they go - and how they feel about pretty much everything without much effort, consequently however, in our life on the screen, we might know more and more about others and care less and less about them<sup>150</sup>. Facebook changes social norms, therefore changing privacy, what should we do with this? To my view either this much personal information accessible to anyone interested in will result the depreciation of personal privacy making us to rethink traditional notions of privacy in

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<sup>145</sup> Daniel J. Solove, “The Digital Person: Technology and Privacy in the Information Age”, 2004

<sup>146</sup> Millie J. Darvell, B.Behav.Sc., Shari P. Walsh, Katherine M. White, "Facebook Tells Me So: Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to Understand Partner-Monitoring Behavior on Facebook", *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 2011

<sup>147</sup> Gina L. Genova, "No Place to Play: Current Employee Privacy Rights in Social Networking Sites", *Business Communication Quarterly*, March 2009 vol. 72 no. 1 97-101.

<sup>148</sup> L.D. Rosen, K. Whaling, S. Rab, L.M. Carrier, N.A. Cheever, "Is Facebook creating “disorders”? The link between clinical symptoms of psychiatric disorders and technology use, attitudes and anxiety", *Computers in Human Behavior* 29 (2013) 1243–1254

<sup>149</sup> Kelly Moore, James C. McElroy, "The influence of personality on Facebook usage, wall postings, and regret", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28 (2012) 267–274

<sup>150</sup> Timothy L. Hulsey, "Empathy 2.0: Virtual Intimacy", *Education and Academics*, 2011

order to solve these problems. Privacy in the Facebook age is about social design and culture on how we related to it.

### **3.5. Conclusion to the chapter**

As discussed in the chapter, Facebook privacy invasions include not the unjustified disclosure of personal information by Facebook, but most commonly privacy related crimes, including scams, “stalking”, identity theft, harassment and cyberbullying. The last involve teenage girls, where in most tragic ones they committed suicide. But the critical moment is the “social benefits” that Facebook offers and users accept it in spite of the harsh consequences for some of them - users possess illusionary self-control over their appearance on Facebook and are granted a feeling as if they are the center of the universe. As a result people in Facebook tend to share more in 2012 in comparison to earlier periods acknowledging raising privacy concerns too. Facebook raises new unprecedented social paradoxes, and to address it there is a need for rethinking traditional notions of privacy, which is not just a democratic right but the roots of individuality and personhood, so by changing the notions of privacy, social design and culture also changes.

## Conclusion

Facebook is a phenomenon of current times which challenges and changes communications and human interactions. While Facebook's interface and design influences certain kinds of behaviors, so far we can state that its mass usage is motivated by two primary needs - the need to belong and the need for self-presentation, which is satisfied by Facebook. Simultaneously, psychological features contract a certain kind of trust atmosphere on Facebook, because it says "share with your friend", which however means sharing with Facebook Inc. The last can provide Facebook users' personal data to third parties according to Facebook privacy policy, upon each user agrees on when registering on Facebook. Additionally, Facebook users tend to feel "virtual comfort" in online interactions having control over their time and appearance in each communication. All these circumstances influence users' self-disclosure on Facebook with enormous amount of personally identifiable information. What is more, sharing on Facebook has gender specificity, because female users tend to share considerably more personal information than male users, therefore they have more privacy concerns and experience more privacy violations.

While it becomes difficult to define privacy, therefore personal information, therefore the public and private divide at the age of social media, still the several definitions were used throughout the theses. Privacy is an expression of one's personality or individuals' right to define his or her essence as human being; individuals' ability to regulate information about themselves in order to control their relationship with other individuals; essential components of individuals life such as secrecy, anonymity and solitude. Most of the mentioned privacy rights are compromised in Facebook, but not through privacy invasions by an institution – the Facebook - rather based on self-disclosure of users' personal information, which is taking places at the third party's platform. Thus Although Facebook users' private messages are not likely to be disclosed

by Facebook Inc, under the “third party doctrine” all of these communications seem to lose Fourth Amendment protection, because users voluntarily disclose this information to Facebook, therefore its Facebook that possess the ownership 1,1 billion users personal information, but not users themselves. The last reinforces the argument that privacy can’t coexist with Facebook, because ownership of personal information is voluntarily given to Facebook by users in exchange with other “social values”.

Social benefits that Facebook gives in exchange of personal information are appealing, yet problematic. Firstly, users possess self-control over their appearance on Facebook, however, the control is illusory; profiles are not created in a social vacuum and interactions with other users play important role in shaping identity presentation. Thus, users have some control over their self-presentation, but not total control, because the activities in which they are involved online, and the people with whom they connect, provide identity validation or refutation. Secondary, Facebook makes the humans the center of the universe, and this desire and delusion to be at the center of everything lies at the heart of contemporary privacy issues. Facebook empowers more than one billion people to gaze upon the images of themselves and their lives in infinite detail, which means that Facebook ranks as perhaps the most powerful “mirror” ever invented, making them to believe that each user is at the center of a media universe, a universe created for their self. For this benefit Facebook users voluntarily disclosure their private lives acknowledging the privacy risks too. As a result, Facebook privacy invasions include not the disclosure of personal information by Facebook, but privacy related crimes by other users including scams, “stalking”, identity theft, harassment and cyberbullying, which can even result even a suicide.

With my thesis I didn't aim to address all the questions related to privacy in Facebook and answer them, but rather tried to raise new ones. For that reason I would like to sum up with some of the questions resulting from my discussion specifically, I would like to highlight again - whose best interest Facebook "empowerment" represents? How the self-disclosure and privacy reaffirms the boundaries between public and private as well as how Facebook influences the social design of privacy institution? How can we foresee future implications of this fast growing phenomenon and how the rethinking traditional notions of privacy will influence gendered based positionality in the society? These are the further questions that should be addressed as another step forward understanding privacy in Facebook.

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