

T.R.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES M.A. PROGRAMME

M.A. THESIS

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL LIFE:
A CROSS-CASE STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
IN ISTANBUL AND ROME

ZEYNEP BILGEHAN CAN
14735012

THESIS SUPERVISOR
Asst. Prof. A. TEYFUR ERDOĞDU

ISTANBUL
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ISTANBUL
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ÖZ

SOSYAL MEDYA VE SOSYAL HAYAT: İSTANBUL VE ROMA'DA ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ARASINDA ÇAPRAZ DURUM ÇALIŞMASI **Zeynep Bilgehan Can** **Ekim, 2018**

Bu çalışma sosyal medyadaki gelişimler ve sosyal medyanın yaygın kullanımı nedeniyle üniversite öğrencilerinin online ve günlük hayatlarındaki yaşadıkları değişiklikleri incelemek adına tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmanın daha kapsamlı olması için ve bağlamın bu değişikliklere etkisini gözlemlemek adına, çalışma özellikle çapraz durum çalışması olarak planlanmıştır. Çalışmanın temel odak konuları aile, arkadaşlar (yakın, uzak, romantik) ile olan ve resmi ilişkiler, iletişim, mahremiyet, paylaşım kültürü ve sosyal medya kullanımı ile bağlantılı yaşanan günlük hayattaki değişimlerdir. Çalışma, sosyal medya kullanımıyla özellikle sosyal hayatta ortaya çıkan sosyal değişim ve dönüşüm anlayışına katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çapraz durum çalışmasına İstanbul ve Roma'daki çeşitli özel üniversite ve devlet üniversitelerinin farklı bölümlerinden öğrenciler katılım sağlamıştır. Katılımcı olarak seçilen öğrenciler yirmi ve otuz yaşları arasında, lisans veya yüksek lisans okumakta ve en az bir sosyal medya platformu veya uygulamasını aktif kullanmaktadır. Veriler katılımcılar ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile toplanmıştır. Bulgular sosyal medyanın farklı ilişkiler üzerinde farklı etkilerinin olduğunu göstermiştir. Paylaşma alışkanlık olarak yapılan, otomatik, kolektif bir eylem olarak görülmektedir. Paylaşmanın 'gösterme'ye evrimleştiği ve farklı amaçlarla kullanıldığına inanılmaktadır. Ciddi tartışmalar ve haberler için bir zemin olmalarına rağmen sosyal medya platformları aynı zamanda eğlenmek ve stress atmak için kullanılan alanlardır. Sosyal medyanın önemli bir fonksiyonu da kullanıcıların kolayca ulaşabilecekleri bir arşiv görevi görmesidir. Sosyal medyanın günlük hayata olan pozitif ve negatif etkileri neredeyse eşit derecede gözlemlenmiştir. Mahremiyet önemini korumaktadır. Fakat farklı platform veya içerikler için açıklık tercih edilebilmektedir. Çalışmanın iki durumunda da çok benzer sonuçlar bulunmuştur, farklılıklar küçük farklılıklar olarak tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya, Sosyal hayat, İletişim, Mahremiyet, Paylaşım, İlişkiler, İstanbul, Roma

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL LIFE: A CROSS-CASE STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL AND ROME

**Zeynep Bilgehan Can
October, 2018**

This study has been designed to explore the changes in social life of university students both online and in daily life due to the developments and wide usage of social media. Moreover, it was particularly chosen to be a comparative case study to examine whether the context affects these changes and to make the study more comprehensive. The study focused on issues such as relationships and communication with family, friends (close, far, romantic) and formal contacts on social media, privacy, the sharing culture and changes in daily life due to using social media. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of social change and transformation especially in social life brought about by using social media. The study was conducted as a comparative case study in which students from different departments of various public and private universities in Istanbul and Rome took part. Participants were chosen from undergraduate and graduate students who were between the ages of twenty to thirty and active users on at least one social media platform or application. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with students. The findings of the study indicated that social media has different effects on various kind of relationships. Sharing is seen as a habitual, automatic, collective action. Sharing is believed to have evolved into ‘showing’ and serves different purposes. Though they may be ground for serious debates and news, social media platforms are also spaces to have fun and to hang out. One important function of social media is the fact that it works like an archive which is easy to reach for users. Its positive and negative effects on daily life are observed to be almost equal. Privacy is still important, however, for certain platforms or content publicity can be preferred. The results in the two cases of the study were found to be very similar, there were only a small number of minor differences.

Keywords: Social media, Social life, Communication, Privacy, Sharing, Relationships, Istanbul, Rome

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Istanbul; October, 2018

Zeynep Bilgehan Can

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“... our liquid modern world, keeps surprising us: what seems certain and proper today may well appear futile, fanciful or a regrettable mistake tomorrow. We suspect that this may happen, so we feel that – like the world that is our home – we, its residents, and intermittently its designers, actors, users and casualties, need to be constantly ready to change: we all need to be, as the currently fashionable word suggests, ‘flexible.’”¹

Zygmunt Bauman

¹ Bauman, Zygmunt. 2010. **44 Letters From the Liquid Modern World**. Cambridge: Polity Press, p.2.

1. INTRODUCTION

This section describes the background, purpose and significance of the study, also includes the statement of the problem, definitions of some important terms and in conclusion an executive summary of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

With social media becoming an integrated part of our daily life; different aspects of social and daily life also go through some changes. These make it necessary to examine how individuals shape their way of life to adapt these and eventually change and get changed. Thus, those who use social media as a regular, daily habit also construct their identity and portray their individuality on these platforms. Referring to Georg Simmel's fundamental thought regarding mental life of those who live in the metropolis, likewise, the social and daily life of those whose online and offline lives are becoming more and more integrated via using social media actively, are equally great areas of inquiry (Simmel, 1903).

This thesis reports the findings of a thorough study in order to determine the social and daily lives of university students in cities like Rome and Istanbul, in connection with their social media habits. Emphasis is given to their relationships, privacy, daily life and what they share. The two cities of Rome and Istanbul were especially chosen as these two cities resemble each other in the way that they are the top destination for university students to go for university education.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

For centuries mankind developed a variety of social acts, connections and habits in order to live together in harmony within their societies. In time, in connection with the changes in the lifestyle of people due to technological advancements and cities becoming central places of residence, social life and social connections also changed. With the spread of globalism, this change had another twist as it totally affected

people's perception of the world around them. A wide network was being established in this new global world.

Using the metrobus, walking on the street, sitting in a café, it is possible to see someone on Instagram or hear a couple of friends talk about something a friend or a famous person posted on Twitter, or witness discussions on what social media is doing to social life. After having read a lot about cultural studies, urban studies and different social theories, such instances always makes one question the changes the society is going through in general terms and the effects on relationships, communication and interaction in more specific terms. Considering that the most active users of these social medias are the youth and that they will shape the future, it is vital to see the changes through their lenses, to interpret the changing habits, views, values and worlds of the youth especially in terms of their social life which transforms their life which concurrently transforms the current global society and social life in cities. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the way young people, university students as the focus group in this study, have adapted their social lives and relationships as they actively use social media and what consequences this has in their daily lives. To achieve this aim, the research will try to analyze whether social media has changed socialization, how relationships and daily life are affected, what social media enables and what discomforts it causes, and finally what privacy means to the participants.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore effects of social media on the lives of university students. It is more specifically designed to understand the impact social media has on people's relationships (family, friendship, romantic, formal), perception of privacy, sharing and practices in daily life from the perspective of university students.

Thus, this research study aims to answer these research questions:

1. How is the social media usage of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?
2. What are the ways social media affects different kind of relationships of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?

3. How is sharing on social media and how are its implications on sharing in real life described by university students in Istanbul and in Rome?
4. In what ways, has social media affected the lives of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?
5. What are the opinions of university students upon privacy on social media?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it offers an in-depth look at university students' social manners through their social media usage. The research done on youth mainly entails their usage of new media whereas this study takes on a more specific focus than new media which is; social media. That no research has been done about social media usage is not a statement that can be made, however, it can be said that most of these are about the political impacts of social media or its relation to disinformation. Also, many of these studies use a quantitative approach whereas this study tackles the problem with a qualitative approach. This study is a pioneering work for the literature as it contributes a comparative perspective to the field.

1.5. Terms

Network Society- One of the most renown thinkers of the field, Manuel Castells, prefers to call the new society that formed as a result of interaction with the new technologies as; the 'network society' instead of information or knowledge society because he argues knowledge or information have always been a central point in societies and what's more an eye-shocking characteristic is the form of organization that is networks which changed with the new capabilities brought forth.

SNS – Social Network(ing) Sites- Services that individuals use to construct a profile in the system and make a list of others with whom they have a network with. People exchange personal, general and cultural information, get links to commodities and contacts and find out about events (Beer, 2008).

Invisible Audience- On social media, the audience is normally believed to be the friends and followers already on the platform. On social media users get to decide who can be on their social media and those who can't, by using the privacy settings (boyd, 2014).

Scalable Sociality- Traditional media was divided into two; public broadcasting with large groups and private communication with smaller groups. One person could only do one at a time. With the launch of social media platforms, a bridge was created between the public and the private media. Social media enables scalable sociality which is a new type of media sociality that it has created. Users can themselves scale what they will share with whom – from the most private to the most public group.

1.6. Executive Summary

This thesis starts with the Introduction which includes the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and definition of terms. In this chapter, the main reason behind choosing the research topic of the study is explained. The social and daily lives of university students are the main issues to be handled. To make the study more meaningful two big cities in Turkey and Italy were chosen, which were Istanbul and Rome. The reason behind choosing university students for this study were due to the fact that they are active users of social media. The cities were chosen especially because of the fact that they are popular destinations for studying at university in the two countries in question. The comparative approach in the research questions were a result of a search for making the data more comprehensive. The questions touch upon the subtopics of social life and daily life which are relationships, communication, privacy, sharing and daily habits. In Chapter two there is a review of the literature explaining the research on social life and the latest research related to social media platforms, usage and effects. Firstly the research on social life is briefly explained, perspectives of important sociologists and thinkers such as Durkheim and Erving Goffman are explained. For the second part, the meaning of social media is defined, danah boyd's and Christian Fuch's interpretation are taken into consideration. With this definition different social media platforms are examined and compared with each other. Their affordances and services are explained. The platforms mentioned in this part are; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Youtube. Then, social media as a concept is looked into in more detail with its users, audience, context, culture. Also, research about popular issues concerning social media such as privacy, sharing and relationships are analyzed. And at the end of the chapter, the worldview that these social media platforms created and the relationship between social media and social

life is discussed. In Chapter Three the research method according to which the study was designed, that is; phenomenological cross-case study, the contexts, data collection instruments which are interviews, the process, and the analysis procedure of the study is explained in detail. In Italy, Rome using the snowball sampling method fifty students were interviewed from six different universities, three of which were private and three public. In Istanbul, the same method was used for finding participants and the interviews were stopped after fifteen participants as the answers given were becoming similar. In Istanbul, there were also various number of students from six different universities, three of which were public and the other three private. In Chapter Four which is called 'Social Media and Social Life, the results and analysis of the data is made and the findings are discussed. The themes and subthemes of the findings can be found within the same chapter which include; social media usage, relationships, sharing, daily life and privacy. The findings are discussed in this chapter. The recommendations for further research are presented in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six, comparison of the two cases and the conclusion are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter starts with a general explanation of studies on social life and continues with the literature on social media. The social media perspective is widened through the examination of a variety of recent studies done on the subject. Finally, the relation between social life and social media is linked and summarized in short.

2.1. Social Life

In the history of social life, enlightenment holds an important place for being the period when many intellectual developments and changes in philosophy took place. Ideas and beliefs that prevailed social life were overthrown and replaced. (Ritzer, 2010,8) The aims were to understand how the social world worked, to discover the natural laws of it in order to control it and to make it function better. This thought was not fully accepted by all latter sociologists however it provided basis for the study of social life.

To understand what social life means it is important to first take a look at what social means. According to Durkheim, 'social or social fact' means every way of acting within a society meanwhile 'existing in its own right'. (Durkheim, 1982, 59) These social facts were 'sui generis' and general in society. He divided social facts into two categories; material and non-material of which he focused more on the latter one, focusing more on culture, and social institutions and he argues these held the society together. Durkheim called these non-material social facts the collective conscience. Durkheim also mentioned social currents which were 'sets of meanings' produced and shared by the members of the society. Though Durkheim accepted that collective conscience lost its strength in time, he also argued in favour of common morality to be strengthened in modern society. Durkheim was criticized for downsizing the individual's effect in social matters. (Ritzer, 2010, 84) It can be said that these social currents are visible and found in interactions.

The theory concerning especially the interaction between people is the ‘symbolic interaction theory’; this theory helped understand better the social behaviors of people. Symbolic interaction theory suggests that in an interaction the importance should be attributed to the interaction between the actor and the world both viewed as continuously changing and dynamic, and the interpretation ability of the actor in interpreting the social world.

Here when talking about social life it is worth starting with face-to-face communication. One of the most important names that studied social phenomena and social interaction was Erving Goffman and regarding face-to-face communication, he argued in favor of his popular term ‘interaction order’ in which he claims that during any occasion of face-to-face communication people always try to control the impression they make on others. According to him, these face-to-face encounters are very much governed by certain norms and expectations of what is appropriate and moral. People act in certain ways in public spaces so as not to look awkward.

Goffman himself explains this in his book:

“Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a line—that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself.”
(Goffman, 1967, 5)

It can therefore be said that social encounters due to their nature direct people to act in certain ways. In other terms, this social context refers to the social structure or precisely the social relations linking individuals in a society. (Barnard & Spencer, 2002, 768)

The social facts and the social encounters explained by both Durkheim and Goffman revealed the ways people try to control their self, and their image and connections in social life. The acceptance of there being certain norms and processes constructing the social world led to a number of breaching experiments that were done to test these in real life situations (Garfinkel, 1967). An example breaching experiment was done was by Garfinkel where in a game of tic-tac-toe one of the players placed their mark between the cells on one of the lines instead of inside the cell. The situation then is studied to see how ‘the everyday world of tic-tac-toe is reconstructed’ (Ritzer, 2010). For Garfinkel, ‘recognizable sense’ or ‘methodic character’ is something that

is dependent on the socially organized occasion of its use. These occasions include features such as what the members do and what they 'make of' an everyday account which is why for Garfinkel studying actions in context was very important. (Garfinkel, 1967, 3). Garfinkel in his work also mentions another sociological theorist, Alfred Schutz, referring to his studies of phenomenology of the world of everyday life and that he described these unnoticed background expectancies as 'attitudes of daily life' (Schutz in Garfinkel, 1967, 37).

Further research also questioned whether structure determined the action or vice versa. The connection between the agency and structure was explained with the coin metaphor that they are like the two sides of a coin as put forth by Giddens. Therefore, all social actions involved a structure and structures involved social actions. The recursive activities of daily life are recreated by social actors by means of which they express themselves (Giddens, 1984).

To sum up and to draw the outline for what is meant by social life, it can be said that the different ways people conceptualize their social world and the different aspects of social life are important factors. These different aspects of social life include social interactions, its norms and rules, the way social life operates and the connection between the individual and the collective (Gilbert, 2008, 9).

To conceptualize the modern social world, it is important to firstly make a list of what makes up any social world. What constitutes a society is its rules, population, institutions, culture and ideology (Barnard & Spencer, 2002, 775). Society is important as it provides space for social relations that occur in social life and individuals on the other make up a society. However, society as essentially defined is also losing its ground. Instead, nowadays 'sociality' is a more prevalent concept as it suggests an intersubjective process of social life rather than a normative order (Barnard & Spencer, 2002, 783). In contemporary anthropology as well, the structural views of society are rejected. This can also be interpreted as the return of the subject.

So what is meant by sociality? Sociality refers to an individual's level of being social or capability to associate with groups. According to Fiske, people are social inherently and they engage in social relationships (Fiske, 1992). What is meant by sociality if necessary to put in detail is the identity, social behavior, communication

and relationships including public, private and family (LaMendola quoted in Murphy, 2014, 23). With spread of online communication technologies, sociality is affected as well; it is both delimited and enriched. In this study, these delimitations and enrichments will be studied with respect to social media.

The world as we used to think of it has changed a lot. In the global world today a variety of phenomena can be found both locally and globally due to modern communication technology. The pace of transportation, communication or life in general is quite rapid. With such advancements and the talk about the death of distance, space has acquired a whole new meaning (Eriksen, 297). It's important to keep in mind such a change when examining the social life in our day. Also, just as the changes in people's lifestyles after the French Revolution were worthy enough to prompt Comte to found sociology, it is as important to consider the life of people today after they have started using social media.

2.2. Social Media

What does social media mean? How can media be social? Fuchs argues that social media is not an easy term as it has many layers of meaning. In order to be able to understand the meaning fully, one would need to carefully examine the different modes of sociality on the internet (Fuchs, 2014).

There have been different explanations regarding what social media or social network sites mean. Firstly, a social network according to Garton, Haythornthwaite, and Wellman's definition is "a set of people (or organizations or other social entities) connected by a set of social relationships, such as friendship, co-working or information exchange" (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1997). Instead of this term, some researchers have also argued for using the term social network-ing sites to point out that there occurs an initiation of relationship between people who don't know each other and the scope these sites offer (Boyd, Ellison, 2007). However besides sites, these platforms also have apps and therefore 'social media' can be argued as a more umbrella term.

To break up the term social media, first the words that make up the term can be defined. The first part which is 'social' signifies the interaction between people, which could be either one to many, one to one, many to one or many to many. The

second part on the other hand, ‘media’ indicates the instruments used for delivering information such as text, image, sound, video and the examples of which are books, television, mail the telephone or the internet. Taken as a whole, the term refers to the web-based technologies that people nowadays use for sharing or communicating via the Internet (Murphy, 2014, 3/31).

For this thesis, the term social media was used especially in respect to boyd’s definition in which she uses:

“...social media to refer to the sites and services that emerged during the early 2000s, including social network sites, video sharing sites, blogging and microblogging platforms, and related tools that allow participants to create and share their own content” (boyd, 2014, 6).

Therefore it can be said that social media is more of an umbrella term which encompasses more than just social networking sites, and you can do much more than just connecting with others. Social media is not just merely seen as a place for communication but also as a place where people socialize (Miller et al., 2016, x). Just as Miller argues in his book *How the World Changed Social Media*, it would be just to say that this research is also not about platforms but rather about people and how they use these platforms.

When looking at the history of social media, the birth of social media can be traced back to the 1990s. Together with the spreading of the Internet in the 2000s, the launch of Myspace in 2003, the era of personal homepage and participation in commenting and sharing content began. With the launch of Facebook, Youtube and Twitter, by 2006 millions of users started adopting to the changes and using these platforms for connecting, and building relationships. The term that started to be used for such sites was; ‘Social Network Sites’. These sites, platforms established a space for online communities which could use this space for creating their own profiles, establishing ‘friends’, making ‘contacts’, and communicating with others.

According to the recent statistics by The Statistics Portal which lists social media platforms by active accounts, Facebook surpasses all other platforms with its 2.2 billion active users. It is followed by Youtube and WhatsApp meanwhile Instagram ranks as the sixth with 813 million users. Twitter is at a much lower rank with 330 million active users.

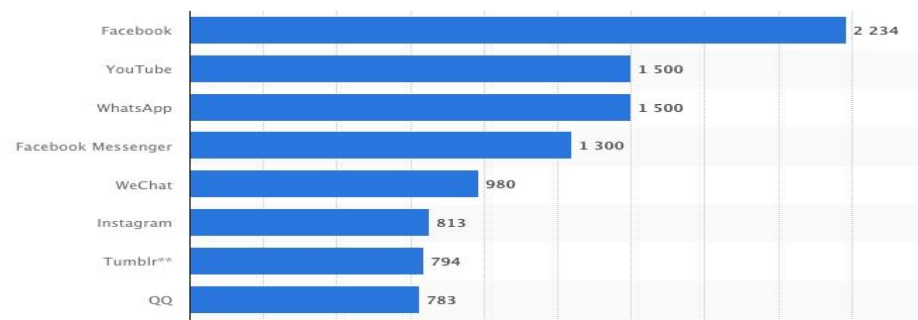


Figure 1: Most famous social network sites worldwide as of April 2018, ranked by number of active users (in millions)

Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

Based on the findings of the same statistics portal, it is stated that the usage of users varies according to platforms. Facebook for example fosters exchanges with friends and family and mostly the interaction on the platform consists of sharing photos, status or playing social games. Twitter on the other hand consists more of fast communication. It is important to mention that though it seems like there is a huge gap between Facebook and other platforms, this dominance is not assured, just as the once favourite of good old days Myspace has become history, so can other social media platforms. However it is a fact that the everyday presence of social media and its impacts have become critical discussion points. Also when it comes to the choices of users. Though many might think what makes a social media website more preferable is its design however it is more about its popularity and presence in a social environment. The preferences of the public that is around a person or the public that the person chooses to view or be viewed by also affects that person's usage.

2.2.1. Different Social Media Tools

In order to talk about the traces of social media platforms in the different courses of social life it is important to first look at the uses and layouts of each platform. It is argued that each platform entails affordances and cultures associated with it and brings certain challenges and complexities. There exist many different categorizations of social media platforms by different researchers such as Baym (2011) and Motion (2016) however, as companies overtake each other and as their characteristics overlap more and more, it becomes even more difficult to put them in

distinctive categories. A categorization that might be more suitable for the platforms of today can be; social platforms and video platforms and micro-blogs. Social platforms would be the platforms where users make connections, share with others, organize events and have a bigger variety of opportunities to express themselves and where they can control their interaction with privacy settings. Video platforms have videos as their main medium for users. The final category, microblogs have a more limited interface, and does not give the users the same freedom as social platforms for controlling their content. For the purposes of making the data in this research easier to analyze, only those platforms that were relatively more actively used were chosen to be discussed in this research. These platforms and their categories are; Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat under the category of social platforms, Twitter under the category of microblogs as it is of the type where users publish a short message, update etc., Youtube is under the category of video-platforms as users on this platform upload, watch and comment on video content.

2.2.1.1. Facebook:

With more than 2 billion users worldwide, Facebook remains as the most popular platform with a vast record of social activity (Sumpter, 2018). The platform includes different media, information and communication technologies some of which are the images, videos, discussion groups (Fuchs, 2014, 6). Facebook is used to get in touch with friends, family, institutions, customers, to share photos or videos or information with others. Founded by Zuckerberg and his friends in 2004, Facebook became a public company in 2012. As years passed, Facebook changed many times and its user kept increasing in number, moreover, it started buying other social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp.

To better understand the popularity of Facebook it is worth looking at the qualities of Facebook and the facilities it offers. Some of the prominent features on Facebook can be listed as being able to post on someone else's page either by directly posting on their page. However, this feature can also be blocked by the users if they do not let others post on their wall. Another important quality is that Facebook lets users manage which of such postings gets to be seen or is kept hidden by having the user decide if they want to add or hide the post on their timeline. It is also easier to see

your past actions such as which videos you have watched and which posts you have commented on.

With its ‘On this day’ feature, users are able to look back on what they had done on the same day in the previous years which proves Facebook’s capacity to track the history of its users. On this day feature as stated in a research done in research labs of Facebook by Konrad (2017) was seen an instrument ‘to experience the past in new ways’. From his research, he had found that memories of especially children were seen as even more interesting because it let the users see how much the children had grown. Users also have control over choosing the people with whom they don’t want to be shown memories with.

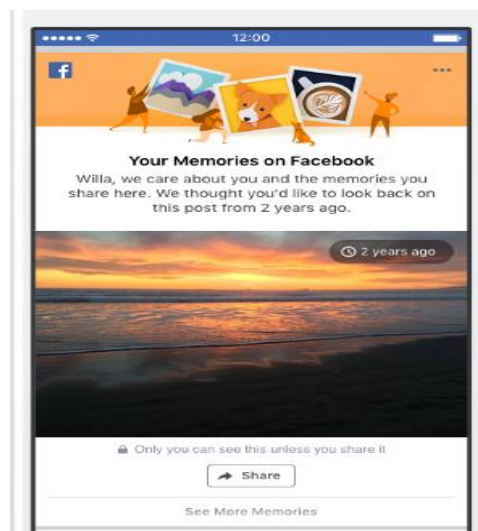


Figure 2: ‘On This Day’ Feature on Facebook

Prototypr. <https://blog.prototypr.io/facebook-memories-the-research-behind-the-products-that-connect-you-with-your-past-f9a1d8a49a43> Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

As another feature, Facebook enables its users to download the data on their account. So all the data of the users can be taken from the platform when the user decides to deactivate the account. Users can also choose a person to be their legacy contact which means after they pass away, the person assigned can manage their account for them, approve requests or upload media and download a copy of their data. However there are also things the legacy contact can’t do such as deleting a friend, changing past posts or reading messages.

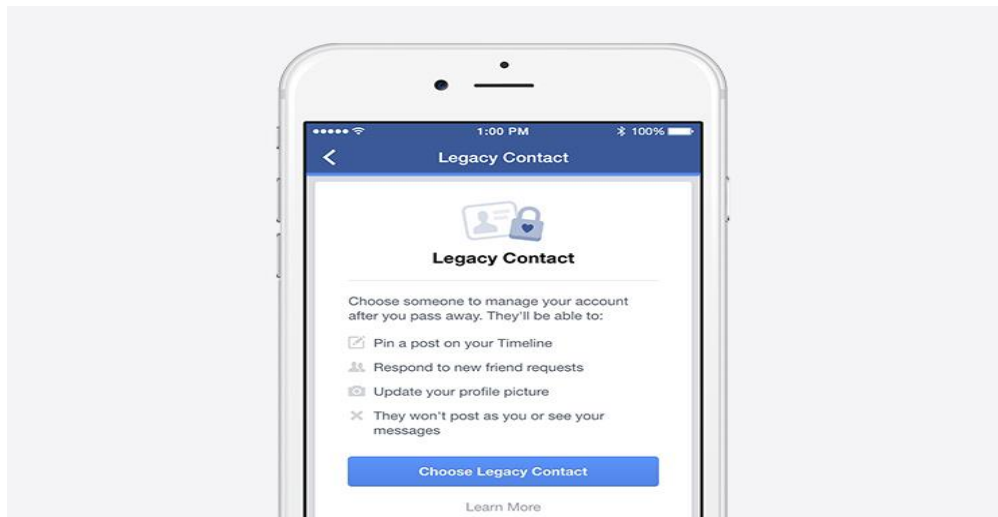


Figure 3: Adding a Legacy Contact on Facebook

Newsroom FB. <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2015/02/adding-a-legacy-contact/> Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

The introduction part on Facebook is another well-designed and structured aspect. The user is provided with sections s/he can decide to fill-in; such as the books, music, sports or movies he or she likes. The contacts list on Facebook is similarly different from some of the other platforms as they are called 'Friends' whereas on some others they are referred to as followers. Facebook also allows a 'follow' option which would mean a one-sided relationship on Facebook whereas 'friendship' means a two-sided relationship. With its reserachers, Facebook tries to provide its users with the best social media experience which is why its users are asked to answer some survey questions from time to time. Facebook seems to be most user-friendly of all the platforms and attempts to cater for its users needs. Therefore, having a friend and follower distinction gives its users more options to control their audience on their social media. However, it also limits the user with a limit of 5000 friends the reason for the limit is a debatable topic. Additionally, the acceptance of a request from one user means the two users can then see each other's data whereas on some platforms the acceptance of a request only means only one side can see the other side's page. Also, the friends added on Facebook can easily be seen and found categorized in groups according to the city or the university etc. In terms of media, users are able to make albums for the pictures or videos they would like to post. Via its 'Messenger' application, Facebook also provides users with a separate medium for chatting, audio and video-calls. The Messenger app also makes it possible to share transient photos as a part of its story feature. Live videos are now an integrated

part of Facebook. Furthermore, Facebook allows its users to create a page for an event and to invite people via this page.

Having a Facebook account also allows people to sign up for a page or register in an app as it offers to directly take the information via Facebook. None of the other social media platforms enables its users with such means. Another aspect differentiating Facebook from the other platforms is its 'Crisis Response' page, which lists the crisis situations from around the world and gives the option to mark oneself safe during such a crisis. One more distinguishing aspect about Facebook is the games options it provides its users with; some popular examples for which are Candy Crush, Okey Plus and Farm Heroes.

2.2.1.2. Twitter

Twitter is considered one of the most used microblogs in the world. A microblog enables its users to share their message or content either publicly or with a certain group they have allowed (Fuchs, 2014, 180). According to Dijck, Twitter came out at a time when people did not yet have so much knowledge about microblogging. He also argues that "tweeting" has changed meaning many times, from meaning to send a short message to expressing a flood of opinions, ideas" (Dijck, 2013, 68-70).

The fact that there is a limit to what the users can do on Twitter is due to the fact that having such a limit to a message would make it compatible with the text-messages on mobile phones and also the message is more brief but can be deep in meaning. Users can also use hashtags to reference certain issues or to make trend topics or they can repost tweets by retweeting. Twitter also tries to update itself and add new features for its users.

Murthy explains Twitter as the public version of the status update on Facebook (Murthy, 2013). Many public figures are on Twitter and can easily be accessed. Though simple as it seems, tweets are very powerful in connecting with bigger themes and groups. Hashtags enable strangers to converse on the same topic. The role of Twitter in many social movements such as Occupy Wall Street is a crucial one. Generally the discourse on Twitter is public and the most democratic as it lets any user to directly address anyone, even celebrities or political figures, it also enables any user to be seen by commenting on such people's pages and these comments get to stay there as they can't be deleted.

On Twitter's help page, Twitter claims to be:

“... a place to share ideas and information, connect with your communities, and see the world around you. In order to protect the very best parts of that experience, we provide tools designed to help you control what you see and what others can see about you, so that you can express yourself on Twitter with confidence.”²

Recently Twitter has also made changes in the facilities it provides its users. These include changing the character limit from 140 to 280, allowing users to mute or block other users, turn off retweets or replies, use stickers on photos.

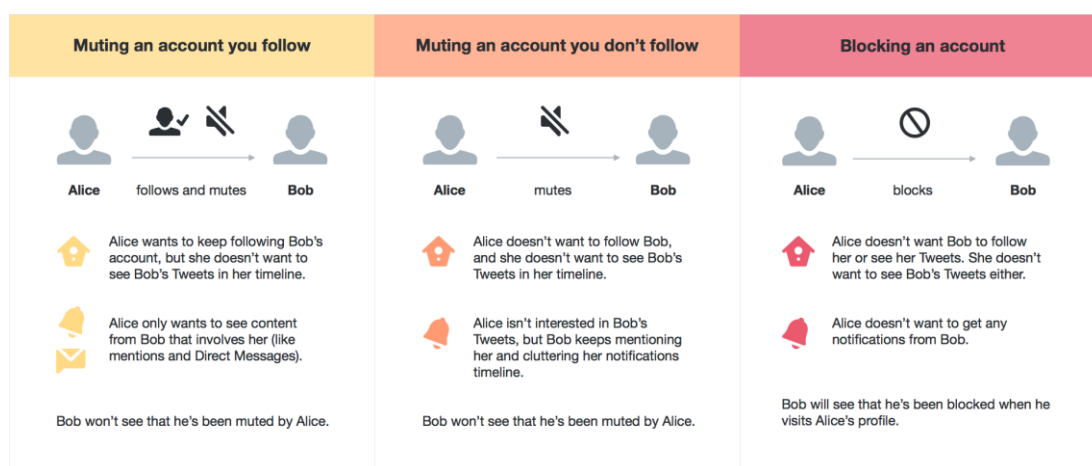


Figure 4: Relationship Affordances on Twitter Explained

Twitter Help Center. <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/control-your-twitter-experience>
Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

Another popular attribute of Twitter is the ‘trending’ feature. It enables the user to easily find current events, to engage in cultural expression and involvement in conversations that are ongoing (Weller et al., 2014).

2.2.1.3. Youtube

Another platform that changed the traditional habits of people is Youtube. It meant that people now had an alternative to television and cinema, and could even share their amateur self-made videos (Dijck, 2013, 110). With the help of Google, Youtube made a quick success. Besides sharing their own videos, it provided people with the freedom of choosing what to watch when unlike the traditional television. Though Youtube is popular with amateurs being discovered by its help, the percentage of passive users who only watch videos is much higher than the percentage of active

² For detailed information: <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/control-your-twitter-experience>

users who share videos (Dijck, 2013, 116). These passive audience however still can be considered somewhat active – since they can like or dislike the video or write comments on it. A user can choose to leave the comment button inactive so it does not appear at all which would mean no comments are accepted. If there is a comment the owner of the channel does not like, then they also have the chance to remove it.

It is possible to look at trending videos on YouTube which can be found grouped in different categories such as music, gaming etc. Previously watched videos can be watched again from history. YouTube also lets its users go live. What's primarily different is that on YouTube instead of following or friending there's subscribing. Users can subscribe to other YouTube accounts to follow their activity. However, for commenting on a shared video, it is not necessary to subscribe. Lists of favorite videos or videos to be watched later can be made.

Active creators, vloggers on Youtube can also earn money from their videos which makes Youtube more attractive. Youtube has created a website which it calls 'Academy' to provide curious users with necessary lessons to help with establishing a well-designed page. Besides Youtube is organizing camps, events and creating spaces in different cities. It can be said that Youtube in this sense acts more like an advertisement company, reaching out to its customers in multiple ways.

2.2.1.4. Instagram

Launched in 2010, by Stanford University graduates, Instagram attracted millions of users with its platform enabling users to capture and share their life moments with friends and others via filtered or no-filter photos and videos (Hu, 2014, 1). Users can post these photos and videos with captions and hashtags, mention and tag others in their videos or photos. The hashtags offer a commentary for what is shared. Very recently, Instagram also added the story feature which was like a feature first used by Snapchat. It is different from Facebook or Twitter as it serves more for visual sharing of photos and videos. Social media platforms changed the way we look at the photograph and since appearing to focus more on the visual, Instagram is the biggest actor today with the biggest role. Photograph has turned into an ephemeral reflection of that day which becomes something that people can like or comment on, it is no longer just something people put in their albums to take out to look at from time to

time. This change in the perception of the photograph also changed the engagement with it. The image is also easier to manipulate and garnish with the filters it provides. Posting on Instagram is compared to crafting, something that would normally not catch so much attention can turn into an aesthetic picture which receives likes and comments from people (Miller, 2016). It can be said that picture-editing is Instagram's strongest function. Instagram offers more freedom to its users thanks to its features. It is similar with Twitter as the following on Instagram is nonreciprocal (Waterloo et al. 2017).

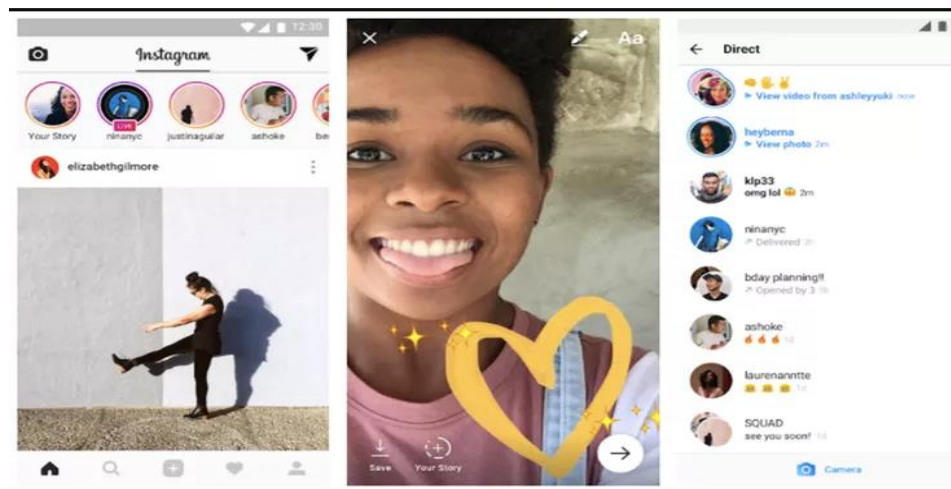


Figure 5: Different features of Instagram

Google Play Store. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.instagram.android> Last Accessed on: July 20, 2018

Stories have also been included in Instagram as in other platforms. The difference on Instagram now is that you can pin the transient stories that you shared on your profile through 'stories highlights'. The search option lets users find trending posts displayed based upon the accounts users follow or the posts they like. Users are able to save posts of others to keep for themselves without the other person knowing that their post is saved in someone's collection. There is also the archive option to save the posts they don't want to show on their page so it doesn't appear on the page but it is from then on saved in their archive which is only for them to see.

2.2.1.5. Snapchat

Snapchat was first brought into play in 2011 and it was generally 'used for sending funny pictures, selfies, or snaps' (Utz, Muscanell & Khalid, 2015). The user of Snapchat can send images that can be viewed up to 10 seconds or a set time and only

twice and when a screenshot is taken a message is sent to the user which is now also possible to do on Instagram. Snapchat is closer to the traditions of daily vocal communication as the interactions are not permanent, however it provides the user the chance to choose if they will keep the conversation, photo, video or not. Unless a screenshot is taken, the talk or what is shared disappears and is lost except in the memories of those who saw or heard it at the moment of sharing.

Snapchat was the first platform to use stories before all the others. However, the fact that other platforms were able to integrate this idea caused Snapchat to lose one of its distinctions. At the time this thesis was written what still remained as a distinct feature of Snapchat was the augmented camera which enables users to change frames to add different looks to themselves or swapping faces in their photos with someone else. Snapchat is integrated with the bitmoji cartoon app which allows users to send creative and more personalized emoticons. Messages sent are also transient and disappear very quickly and it is not possible to see them again after they disappear.

One issue to tackle when thinking about Snapchat is how come people would spend from their time on a platform like Snapchat where what they do disappears when they can keep it on Facebook or Instagram? However, this issue is the reason behind Snapchat's popularity. Snapchat is appealing because you 'can cheer when your team scores without worrying about looking dumb if they end up losing' (Constine, 2014). Constine argues that ephemeral social media is perfect for sports. Also the archive function of other platforms may cause a pressure feeling on the users which makes Snapchat's temporary nature more preferable (Billings et al., 2017). It is also for the same reason that the studies done about Snapchat are mostly about sexting (Soffer, 2016). Besides its transitory feature, Snapchat is popular among young people because its interface seems too difficult for older generations which provides them with a separate social media where they are not followed by their family or parents like on Facebook. It can also be said that social media such as Snapchat or Instagram can be seen as proof that for the generation of social media of today, visuals are becoming much more important than the texts.

2.2.1.6. WhatsApp

Facilitating messaging, calling and communication, Whatsapp has become an indispensable application of every smart phone. The fact that the users do not need to pay anything made Whatsapp gain popularity very quickly and pushed traditional text messaging and even calls into the background (Montag and his friends, 2015). Whatsapp is convenient as it enables users to create small groups and get their message across to a smaller public, group of friends that they choose, this feature is important as it enhances communication (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). The main difference between Whatsapp and other platforms is that in Whatsapp, users usually know the people their message gets read by as the message falls into the person's message screen. Meeting unknown people is much more rare on Whatsapp as a phone number is required to use the app. Whatsapp is also bought by Facebook now and the 24-hour-story function is available for use. WhatsApp is seen as more private, a platform used more for friends and family where users engage in a more intimate interaction (Waterloo et al., 2017). The latest feature that was adapted to Whatsapp is the story. Users are also able to use WhatsApp in the very similar way they use Snapchat or the Instagram story. WhatsApp is also improving its application and adding different usages such as being able to delete a sent message which was not possible before.

Having examined various different platforms that will be a part of this research, it is possible as a conclusion to make a comparison on how much freedom these platforms provide its users with when they are interacting on these platforms and the features they have.

Table 1- The freedom and features platforms provide the users with

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Whatsapp	Snapchat
Editing the entry /post /message	✓		✓		
Taking back the sent message			✓	✓	✓
Deleting others' comments	✓		✓		
Liking comment	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Disabling comments	✓	✓	✓		
Seeing if the message is recieved	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The table above shows what users on different social media platforms are capable of doing. From the information, it can be said that Instagram is the most user-friendly in this respect and enables its users freedom the most. Snapchat seems to be the one that is the most different which also proves why it is not as widely used as Facebook or Instagram. Social media platforms try to improve their popularity by improving these features. Similarly, they can use these features in different ways to differentiate themselves from others. The fact that deleting someone else's tweet on Twitter is not possible gives Twitter a uniqueness and a distinctness.

2.2.2. Research on Social Media

There has been quite a good number of research recently done concerning the social media effects and especially the effects on youth. Most of the studies have focused upon issues concerning how social media is used, in which ways and for what purposes we have adapted ourselves and our lives to use social media. The first two issues to be touched on are audience and context inspired from Erving Goffman's statement that they are the two primary factors influencing self-presentation choices and strategies. Castell's network society, study done by danah boyd on teens and their social lives, Daniel Miller's 'Why we post' project, Jenkins' studies about participatory culture and Jose van Dijck's contributions, Joe Murphy's research about social media and sociality and Bauman's interpretations will be examined.

2.2.2.1. Users, Audience and Context

In the book *It's Complicated-Social Lives of Networked Teens*, boyd examines the ways teens use this new media and how their lives are since they have used social media. One significant finding in her book is that teens have different concerns when it comes to using social media. boyd tries to explain in her book how the way teens portray themselves on networks is primarily for not standing out and so as not to confront alienation within their group or community. She uses the term 'imagined audience' in order to refer to the group of people that users assume are watching them. Our acts are affected by who we imagine to be our audience (boyd, 2014). One argument can be made against Danah Boyd's term which is the fact that on Twitter and Instagram etc. the users are able to see who has interacted with their content so it is not so imagined anymore but more visible.

The users within social media context have been categorized in many different groups. The most known idea for this is 'digital native and digital immigrant' categorization (Prensky, 2001). The categorization which says that the new generations are more native speakers of this language to which the older generations are like immigrants, tries to explain the different groups of users for this media. Concerning these terms, a very important argument is brought to attention by boyd when she mentions the issue brought up by an anthropologist, Genevieve Bell in an event she attended:

“At a private event I attended, anthropologist Genevieve Bell invited everyone in the room to interrogate the underlying implications of these terms. She reminded the room that, throughout history, powerful immigrants have betrayed native populations while destroying their spiritual spaces and asserting power over them. Although this is not the story of all immigrants, this reminder raises serious questions about what is recognized in discussions of digital natives.” (boyd, 2014, 179)

Therefore, it can be said that immigrant users of social media are as powerful as the digital users when it comes to using medias. The digital native and digital immigrant divide is not so applicable in our day where people adapt to changes even within the same platform.

Another important fact users deal with on social media is the ‘context collapse’, which is something most users have to face everyday when using social media.

“A context collapse occurs when people are forced to grapple simultaneously with otherwise unrelated social contexts that are rooted in different norms and seemingly demand different social responses.” (boyd, 2014, 31)

To give an example, it can be said that normally no one would feel comfortable seeing their parents in a party with friends, however these different contexts come together on social media which can be very discomfoting. Users of social media have to deal with multiple contexts that normally have different social norms and demands. People can’t really foresee or calculate the audience that will see what they share or how they will interpret it, or how it will be interpreted after some time has passed. It is important to note that context collapse is more likely to happen over time- when new viewers see the old shared posts, messages, since what is shared on social media is left there like an archive, accessible at any time. In time, owing to their experiences of using social media, users on social media tried to find ways to deal with the context collapse by either changing their privacy options or using different platforms with different audience or contexts. Here, on this stage, users also play a very important role. It can therefore also be said that the context on social media is ‘socially constructed’ (boyd, 2014, 39) and also ‘personally, politically, economically constructed’.

2.2.2.3. Culture

Having talked about the audience and the context, it is also noteworthy looking at the culture of social media. As used by two media scholars (McRobbie, Garber, 1975)

‘bedroom culture’ is a meaningful metaphor used to define the self-representation on social media. Just like teens use their bedroom walls to portray themselves with posters, photos etc. and use their bedroom to hang out with their friends, users on social media do something similar. Yet, the limits and privacy online is more difficult to control.

Social media brings forth a different culture for creating networks. It enables people to connect with their friends and the world, basically to create networks without having to leave their couch and through these networks they create their own networked public. (boyd, 2014, 201) People nowadays have social media which provides them with some public they need to socialize and feel some attention or connection. boyd uses the term ‘flaneur’ and adapts it to the digital world by calling the users of social media ‘digital flaneurs.’ The reason for calling them ‘digital flaneurs’ is because the main aim of a flaneur is to see and to be seen which is also basically what is done on social media. (boyd, 2014, 203) Another crucial argument is put forth by Erdoğan, as he states that ‘in the past, people would go to a higher point or place to see more people however nowadays, it is the opposite, they desire to be seen which is why they go higher’ (Erdoğan, 2015).

Social media can also be called a stage for impression management. We choose to share and we share to impress, others comment on what we share and we adjust and adapt according to their comments. We are provided with a chance to construct our self-representation and not all is in our control. The profile photos or names of the friends we have added that show on our page is not something we can control but they appear as a whole and play a part in the construction of our representation. Everyone decides for themselves which photo will show in their profile and this eventually comes up on the ‘friends’ section on anyone who adds that person.

Attention also has gained great importance since now via social media people can do the same practices as celebrities and also show the same kind of attention they would to a famous person to their friends on their account (boyd, 2014, 148). As Terry Senft puts it, they get a chance to become a ‘microcelebrity’ because they face the same objectification that celebrities face. This attention however can be both positive and negative and sometimes one side can outweigh the other and the negative attention is not something easy to be controlled. Therefore it can be said that attention can also have negative sides when it comes to social media.

An important term regarding the matter is ‘civil inattention’, a term put forth by Erving Goffman, which signals to the recognition of each other in public space that provides respect and still maintains the distance. To give an example, when two strangers come across each other on a bus, sometimes even standing closer than they should, they can’t ignore that there is someone with them on the bus and it gives them a feeling of distress but they can’t start a conversation or do anything else either. This is the core reason behind the ‘civil inattention’ concept, you see them but you pretend to not see. Those that come across on social media sometimes also feel the same discomfort, the fact that one can’t ignore someone they don’t want to be too close with is within their proximity can cause distress however to be polite they might still accept their friend or follower request. The same case applies for when older family members add young people on social media and they wish to see what they share. However, if the user can show courage, they may choose to ‘ignore’ and not accept their friendship, in this case they would be performing ‘civil inattention’ on social media. Users also have the control over who can’t see their content or those that can’t reach them by blocking.

According to Fuchs on the other hand, social media is ‘a culture industry.’ Therefore it can be said that participants here produce cultural goods or commodities (Fuchs, 2014, 57). For Jenkins, what matters is if users will be able to shape the content of these cultural commodities. It is indeed one of the main discussion topics of this research as well. Users on different social media platforms produce ‘goods’, contribute to this culture industry each time they share something. As an answer to Jenkins’ question, it can be said that users in our day can do more than shaping the content, they can even manipulate the content.

2.2.2.4. Relationships

Besides the audience, our own representation of our self, the context we are provided with, some of the most important aspects of social media usage are the relationships we are engaged with. Social media enables people to connect with many different relations in their daily life on a digital platform. These relations include family, friends, partners, teachers, and even their boss. Our connection with them is no longer confined to face-to-face communication or telephone calls, but we are given the opportunity to watch their profile even when we don’t deliberately try to reach

them. Castells argues that now our society is built up around information technologies which is the reason why 'the network society' as the basis of our society is flourishing as the new social structure (Castells, 2005).

Concerning the overall system of relationships on social media, Miller points to a key term which is a core factor in relationships which is 'sociality' where he mentions two scales of which we have publicity and privacy on one and small and large groups on the other. Together with sociality he argues for 'polymedia' which he uses to speak about the various options that people now have for deciding on their sociality. This results in another key term 'scalable sociality'; people engage in different kinds of sociality in different platforms depending on with whom they'd like to socialize on which platform (Miller et al., 2016, 6).

Wellman and Hampton on the other hand argue that people's sociality online actually can foster their sociality offline which is indeed contrary to the belief that the online world is making people less social (Miller et al. ,2016, 189). The previous belief could have been true when users of internet were autonomous however with the facilities of our day and most people with their own personal name and image, it is true to say that it does contribute to people's sociality.

Though seeming simple, social media seems to make people's preferences of sociality more complex. But does it necessarily mean that people are losing control or they are less humane? An important argument put forth by Miller is defined with the 'theory of attainment'. In contrary to those who complain that humans are changing their habits and ways due to excessive use of social media, Miller argues that is not the case, further to that, he argues that this change is also innate to humanity and with the developments in technology, humans have come to use this capacity. In such a theory there is no judgement, it portrays the reality and it is up to others whether to accept it or not. As stated by Erdoğan, social media can make the one you are with distant, and another distant person closer to you. (Erdoğan, 2015)

A concept that is borrowed to explain relationships on social media is Goffman's concept of 'framing.' Being in the frame of a social context, causes people to act in a certain way. These frames tell people what is proper. Within these frames, there are also sub-frames which are divided according to different social relationships. The one way to escape these frames is to carry the relationship to 'direct messages or

messenger’. Direct messaging is the harem of social media. What goes on in these messages is kept private and remains only with those people that were invited in the conversation. The social media that is solely based on this is WhatsApp which is why it is seen as the most private social media and other social media platforms also have this feature integrated in their interface. Miller explains this distinction of social media platforms with his ‘scalable sociality’; users prefer certain platforms accordingly, changing from what they will keep as private or public.

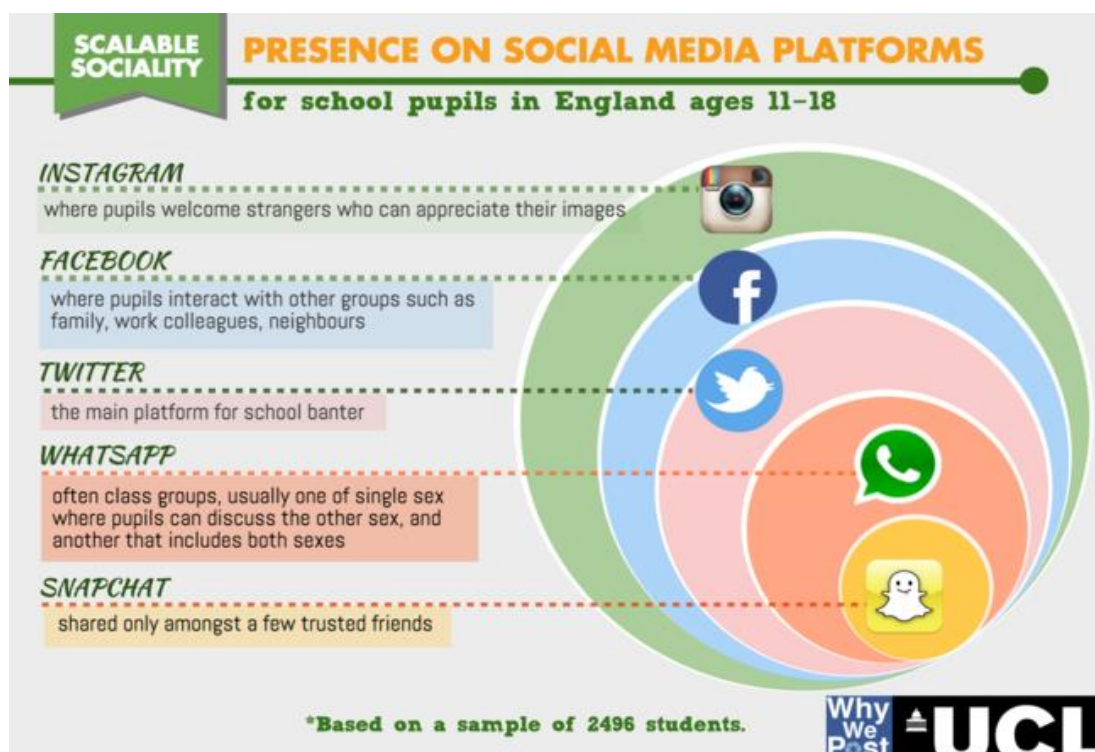


Figure 6: Scalable Sociality, Presence on Social Media Platforms

UCL, Why we Post. Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

Yet, it is widely accepted that social media does have certain effects. Considering the effects of social media on people, most generally the negative feelings it causes are listed such as depression, jealousy and loneliness. This may be due to not getting enough attention, comparing themselves with those whom they think ‘look’ or ‘live’ better and the attention that they are getting is not enough when compared to those others. They crave to be liked more and noticed more. There are also some others who claim the opposite and argue that social media has positive consequences. The issue of happiness therefore is one where it is difficult to find a common ground (Miller et al., 2016, 196). However it is for a fact that social media has emancipatory effects (Miller et al., 2016, 210).

2.2.2.5. Social Media Usage

Another important matter is what is and gets done on social media. Though they are not used solely for connecting with others, contacting people is one of the main reasons for usage. Social media are described as an example of participatory culture as the content is produced by all participants (Jenkins 2008, 331). According to Jenkins, participatory culture is a ‘strong support for creating and sharing creations with others’ the members of which feel what they share is of importance and that there is to a certain degree a social connection among them (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton and Robison 2009, 5f). Describing social media as a participatory culture is remarkable as it provides insight into the patterns of everyday social media usage. One of the most powerful acts on social media is the political participation and engagement on social media. An example would be the national elections in the Netherlands, (Effing et al., 2011), and another example is the Facebook case which showed how social media can be used as a political tool. Just like in real life, some people also choose to share their political views and identity with those on their social media. When sharing something more political or making political comments though, people are more cautious and the reason for this is explained in Miller’s book with Noelle-Neumann’s term ‘spiral of silence’ (Miller et al., 2016, 146). This spiral term explains that people are afraid that politics might cause them to be alienated so they remain silent and people are more careful especially on social media because there they are more visible and vulnerable. Furthermore, another fear people have is that any kind of political view that is shared can later on be used as an evidence for state surveillance. In countries like Turkey, it is possible for the state to access what’s shared on social media whether it is public or private and also to control users’ access to social media.

It is however, as important to avoid seeing the word participatory as a political act though social media may also be used for political purposes. Likewise Jenkins also uses the term in a culturalistic sense as a platform where people meet, form, create and share content.

Social media is therefore seen as the media that gave individuals the democratic freedom of content and transformed consumers of content into the publishers of it (Scott and Jacka, 2011, 5). As it provides a space to practice deliberative democracy,

it is also argued that these social media platforms provide people with a civic sphere (Dijck, 2012, 163). However this democratic potential also brings about the risk of turning people's engagement into a more inactive "point-and-click" politics (Dijck, 2012, 164). This democratic space is also vulnerable to intervention by the government and other powers.

The last point to be considered about social media usage is the time spent on social media. From the results of a recent survey done by 'Wearesocial', it can be seen that in Turkey, people spend almost three hours on social media using any kind of device. In Italy on the other hand, it is less, people spend about two hours. The average time spent on Internet also portrays a similar result.

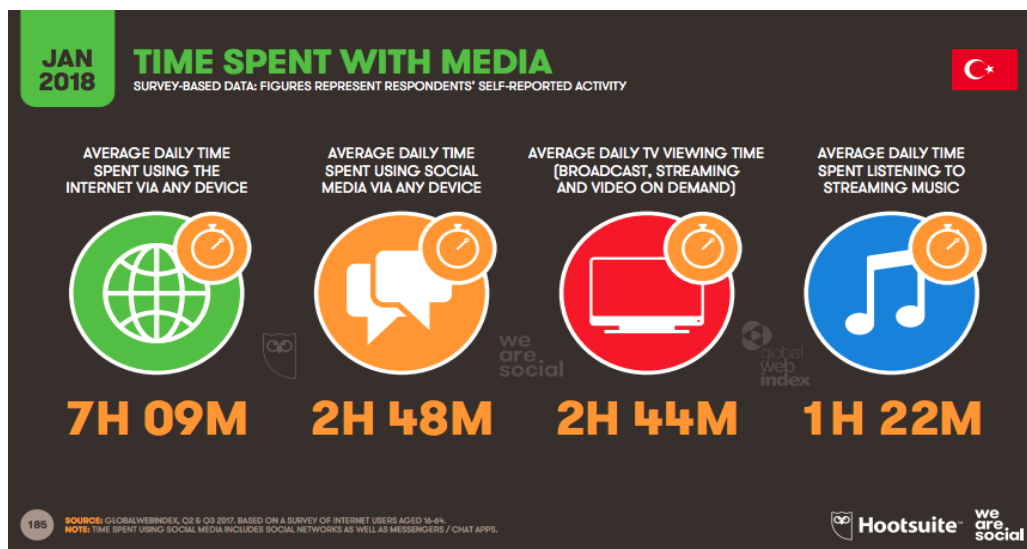


Figure 7: Time spent on social media in Turkey

Wearesocial.https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/digital-in-2018-in-western-asia-part-1-northwest-86865983?qid=5ea7d0d3-c2c5-48c4-9aa2-f3188eee0d8f&v=&b=&from_search=9 Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

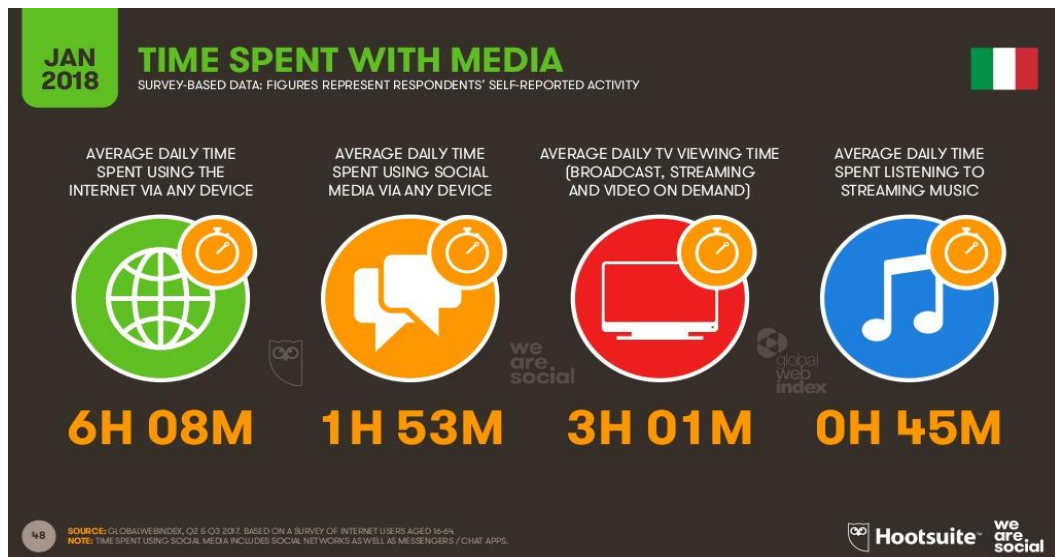


Figure 8: Time spent on social media in Italy

Wearesocial. <https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/digital-in-2018-in-southern-europe-part-1-west-86864268> Last Accessed on: July 19, 2018

2.2.2.6. Sharing

What is shared on social media is also important to consider and it can be said that more recently most of what is shared on social media is visual (Miller et al., 2016, 155). Especially the popular platforms today such as Instagram prove the fact that the visual aspect of social media platforms make them more attractive. Photos and videos have become very ubiquitous. However, the portrayal of one's self on these kind of platforms is usually interpreted as their best image that they are showing.

Miller also compares Bourdieu's conception of 'sociogram' which he uses to explain the photos peasants used to take in 1960s of their social gatherings or relations –with photos on social media. Bourdieu defines photos as these peasants' sociograms as they provide 'a visual record of social roles and relations'. Miller's conclusion of this comparison on the other hand is that contrary to previous task of materializing the significant moments in life the photos now shared on social media are more mundane and transient. Instagram as a sociogram can also be another argument to be discussed in this sense since it also shows the social moments of its users and enables them to socialize (Miller et al., 2016).

An important aspect for the continuous sharing such of mundane, everyday photos is the public gaze. It can also be said that, especially when people may not want to share the faces of people publicly which could be for many reasons; due to religious

sensitivity, personal choice of privacy, or pressure from their surrounding or family, then people tend to take more photos of other things such as food or items on the table or the view (Miller et al., 2016, 168). Concerning the visual aspect making social media more popular Miller has also made a remarkable comparison with comic books which he argues just as ‘comic books invited those with poor literacy to read more, visual aspects of social media encourage similar groups to become more digitally active’ (Miller et al., 2016, 170). Famous people or scholars also use social media to increase their popularity. All these examples show how visual images and videos are now as important for communication as text. Another research based on a study conducted by Dr. Lev Manovich also proves the idea that in the time of social media images can be used as data to analyze society and this data can give important insights about personal, communal and social practices (Tifentale, 2014). Besides, this data is cheap and easy to obtain (Murphy, 2014, 16). Miller’s project (*How the world changed social media*) also proves that social media makes life and relationships more visual and creates its place in maintaining social traditions.

According to Murphy, social networking sites provide people with a mass-scale sharing of thoughts, opinions and behaviors to users around the world (Murphy, 2014, 18). Besides the culture it creates, social media equally has effects on other cultures. One assumption for the effects of using social media is that cultures will come closer and the hatred will lessen. Despite serving this purpose to a certain extent, it also strengthens the divisions. As boyd mentions, some facts are pervasive also on social media; such as prejudice, racism and intolerance (boyd, 2014, 159). In this sense, Twitter can be said to bring together mostly the locals of a place or country whilst Instagram is more multinational. It can be argued that the internet or social media is not a solution to mankind’s long unsolved problems but rather what it does provide is to bring these problems or issues under a brand-new light. As the public has received a voice of its own that can be heard and have great impacts, the problems of a group, a nation or of all people can be discussed more openly and be heard.

2.2.2.7. Privacy

In her study, Jose van Dijck mentions three breakthrough aspects of social phenomenon in the era of social media and primarily Facebook; which are changing

social norms for communication, transformation of norms around privacy and the private sphere and the change in business models. An important question discussed in the study is whether the private and the public spheres are being reconstructed. The argument put forth in the research is that the interpenetration of these two spheres which illuminates our current culture in which sociality and connectivity are more and more produced on these social platforms (Dijck, 2012, 161). She lists the informal communication that takes place on these platforms as; likes, dislikes, buzz, news.

An important name that discussed the transformation of public sphere was Habermas. He argued that between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century there occurred a transformation in the structure of institutionalized social life. During the eighteenth century the social structures of the public sphere were the coffee houses and the salons which were places independent from the market and the state. However, in the beginning of the nineteenth century with the spread of press and literacy rates becoming higher, there happened the intrusion of the public sphere by the state authority using mass media for political manipulation and the market using commercial forces in the end changed the discourse of the public sphere. These two powers controlled the flow of the communication and the interaction which eventually influenced people's social behaviours (Dijck, 2012,163). Some hoped and thought that with the advent of the internet, the public sphere could be left alone again and called it fancy names such as electronic coffee-houses, digital salon. In 2006, a new term which was 'networked public sphere' was suggested by Benkler (Dijck, 2012, 163). However with the critical examination of the new facilities that internet provided, it was stated that though networked this new public sphere created more isolated individuals. When looked at social media, the social media tools we use today are mostly corporate platforms with commercial concerns.

Speaking by means of Habermas' public sphere criteria, he sees it as a means of creating norms and patterns for social interaction and communication. For him, media helps form the public knowledge and opinion, but again for him digital media is not capable of fulfilling such a purpose. Private sphere on the other hand is defined by Bauman as 'the realm that is meant to be one's kingdom. Here the individual decides 'what and who I am.' However, modern society is at a point where people don't cater to fight for their private domain, their kingdom. On the contrary, in our

current day, what worries people is not that their private sphere might be violated but being stuck in this private space and not having the means to share it with their eager audience or to put it on public display. This public view brings with it a celebrity feeling and in a way, makes one feel successful. Therefore, nowadays secrets that one can share happily with everyone else is more favorable (Bauman, 2010, 63). So it is fair to say that nowadays the intrusion has been reversed and the public sphere is now being invaded with private matters.

Despite all the criticism concerning whether the new media or social media create a new or different public sphere, it is apparent that it does restructure our sociality and social conduct. According to Papacharissi (2010) now the two spheres are mixed which she considered overlapping spheres.

Just as people are changing their privacy habits, social media platforms also change their privacy policies. Yet, it is questionable whether all users understand these policies. Besides, although these platforms provide users with the option to make their information private. Some users' data are still public either because they intentionally make it public or because they aren't attentive to who see what on their social media profile. In terms of relationships whether professional, public, family or friendly, it can be said that social media is making it harder to keep the balance in terms of the disclosure it feeds its users (Murphy, 2014, 24).

boyd, unlike some media scholars is not as negative and thinks young people's understanding of 'privacy' may be different which may be the reason why they seem as illogical to adults she argues (boyd, 2014).

2.2.2.8. View of the World

It is also reasonable to acknowledge the different categorization of our world after the spreading of internet into categories such as; virtual and real or online and offline. However, the relevance of such categories in our day can be questioned since there is no longer a sharp line between the reality of our online world or the virtuality of the offline world. Social media is now seen as a part of our daily lives just like eating or sleeping.

The phenomenon of living in a more offline world is also described as living in a 'floating world' as we try to adapt to the 'challenge of absent presence' as Kenneth

Gergen puts it (Baym, 2011, 3). The new media has enabled us to use forms of communication which don't require our instant physical presence which does give us the control over our interaction, as much as it gives control to others over their interaction with us. The boundaries of personal and group or mass communication have also become more blurred. Scholars also emphasize the fact that the changing culture on social media is making it more ubiquitous, mundane and a part of everyday life routine.

In the past, the internet was not seen as compatible with face-to-face interaction as it had so much deficiency in terms of interaction, social cues, mobility and for almost all the key terms mentioned above. With developments in the field, these all improved and today digital media is starting to adapt and apply oral paradigms and other features of face-to-face communication (Soffer, 2016,1). Therefore it can be said that as new medias are developing, new uses are also developing, social media does play an important role in this development considering people's usage of internet today. Social media platforms by integrating all kinds of commenting technologies, voice or video call, notifications, comments, feeds of news and many more and these all provide users with facilities to create new social networks and maintain the already made ones (Kokkinos & Saripanidis, 2017).

Discoveries such as telephone and electricity were also once thought to have the potential to change people's daily life. Telephone was hoped to help people feel less lonely and electricity was hoped to decrease the divorce rates as it would make housework much easier. It was also expected from the internet to make life in general easier. However the dystopian idea of internet was that it was dangerous. People thought that it would destroy relationships and marriages as people in the late 1990s complained that their partner used it to find another lover. Internet was also thought to create its own neighborhood (Dertouzos in Anderson 2005, 49). The thought was based on the fear that it might cause the same social inequalities as in real life since people would only make contact with others like themselves (Baym, 2011, 35). Just like there were once such utopian and dystopian ideas about discoveries like the phone which later on were 'domesticated' and turned very ordinary, so will the new media. These technologies are defined as having been wild and then turned tamed (Baym, 2011, 45). So social media which seems like it is going wild today will become more mundane and ordinary and maybe will be replaced by another

discovery in the future. Nevertheless, there are many fictional films and tv series around the same topic which can be listed as; Black Mirror, Her, 13th floor, West World.

2.3 Relationship Between Social Media and Social Life

It can be said that one of the fundamental issues that sociology tries to address is how relationships or connections between individuals in a society or in a group are made and how they are regulated. The main aim of this research is to take this approach and try to apply it to the era of social media. Just as in real life other forms of interaction, it is also significant to analyze the interactions, habits, and norms of relationships social media has brought forth or changed. Relationships and interactions have been carried onto new platforms and this is starting to turn into our everyday reality, a mundane fact. Therefore, a new perspective is necessary to reinterpret the findings of social scientists regarding aspects of social life and interactions.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the overall research design, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and limitations of the study. The decision-making process and the aims in choosing the method, approach used in the study will be discussed under these headings.

3.1. Design of the Study

During the inquiry process, the interpretivist paradigm to frame the study was selected to better analyze the subject matter. It is interpretive as in the explanation made by Creswell (2012) that the researcher makes descriptions and interpretations of the vital parts of data collected based on personal assessment. Phenomenological research design was used to structure the interviewing frame of the study. Then, to best collect and analyze data, comparative case study was chosen as the approach to use in this qualitative research. The reason for using qualitative research methods was to have a better understanding of social phenomena from the participant's perspective in a social, cultural and political context (Glesne, 2006). Another important reason for choosing qualitative research is due to the fact that it provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of social, cultural or political phenomena in a society.

3.1.1. Phenomenological Paradigms

This study also draws on the essence of phenomenological paradigm. The phenomenological paradigm was used to frame the interviews as research instruments. It is crucial for a phenomenological study to define its phenomenon well, as it is for the universal essence of the phenomenon the researcher looks at when analyzing the experiences of individuals. There are also two approaches to phenomenological paradigm; hermeneutic and psychological. In hermeneutics, the researcher interprets the experiences or “text” of life whereas psychological

phenomenology is less concerned about the interpretations of the researcher but more about the descriptions of the lived experiences. (Creswell, 2007).

The procedure for conducting a phenomenological research inspired by psychologist Moustakas's (1994) laid out by Creswell (2007) was followed for the research, this included; the steps of determining the approach and phenomenon, deciding on the assumptions, finding the participants, collecting and analyzing data, describing the experience of the participants and defining the essence of the phenomenon. The phenomenon to be examined in this study was the common experiences in the social and daily lives of university students using social media. As for the assumptions, the sub-topics mentioned in research questions were thought to as the aspects of social and daily life that could provide a better perception of the essence of the phenomenon.

3.1.2. Case Study

Case study is a sub-topic of ethnographic research and “may focus on a program, event, or activity involving individuals rather than a group per se” as stated by Stake (1995) and cited by Creswell (2012, 465). The main process of a case study is to gather data in forms of experience to offer basis for judgement or evidence to reach theories which can apply to various conditions of action (Stenhouse, 1985).

Case study also has different types or variations; single-instrumental, collective or comparative, and intrinsic (Cresswell, 2011). The type selected for this research is the collective or the comparative case study where more than one case is examined to gain a better understanding of the issue. The reason for constructing the study as a comparative study rather than focusing only on the case of Turkey was to have data from different contexts where the same media tools are being used to see to what extent changes occur in the way the same tools are used in social and daily life. The second case to compare with Turkey being Italy was not chosen deliberately. The second case was sought to be a different country, mainly a country in Europe. As part of an Erasmus exchange agreement, as the researcher, I had a chance to live for a full semester in the country which gave me the opportunity to closely experience the culture and familiarize with the lifestyle there.

The research could have also been done with only one case, however, that would bring the risk of not having enough multiplicity. Having different cases, enabled the

research to provide pictures of the issue from different perspectives, providing a more enhanced and richer look onto the phenomena. Moreover, to enhance the multiplicity and for data triangulation the study was carried out with students from different government and private universities.

3.1.2.1. Case One: Istanbul

In Turkey today, Istanbul is the main center for commerce, history, education, culture and arts though it is not the capital city. It goes through a constant change with its architecture, inhabitants meanwhile maintaining pace with the developments in the global world. Istanbul also had its own modernization process starting during the last years of the Ottoman empire continuing on to current day (Çelik, 1993).

Istanbul plays an important role for the higher education institutes in Turkey, it has more than fifty universities most which are private universities and only nine are state universities. It is a popular destination for students seeking quality higher education in a big city. Istanbul also hosts the oldest university in Turkey which is Istanbul University. According to a survey done on people in Turkey about their social media usage, it can be said that Turkish people use a wider variety of social media platforms, applications. Facebook still remains on top of the list followed by Twitter, Foursquare, Youtube and Instagram (Statista, 2017). Turkey is one of the top countries when it comes to using social media. According to results of 2018, as website, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter are on top of the list. As apps, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are top four in the order written.

3.1.2.2. Case Two: Rome

Rome has undergone its own modernization period starting from the day it became the capital city, and continued to grow into a global mega-city (Thomassen, Vereni, 2014). Having the most number of universities in the country, it is also a major destination for students aiming to get a good higher education. It also hosts one of the oldest universities in Europe and the most crowded one in Italy, Sapienza Università di Roma. Besides, it has many other universities both state and private. According to the Global Mobile Consumer Survey done in Italy by Deloitte, Italians are number one when it comes to dependence on their phones following trends in the matter (Deloitte, 2015). Based on the Statistics Portal's data of 2016, it can be stated

that Italians use Facebook as the most popular platform and Youtube, Twitter, and Instagram follow in the written order (Statista, 2017). According to another data in 2018 Facebook still remains as the popular website followed by Youtube in Italy. When asked as smartphone apps, WhatsApp has ranked first followed by Facebook and Instagram. (Wearesocial, 2018)

Table 2: Overall Research Schedule

1 st Case – Universities in Istanbul	2016-2017 Academic Year, II. Term
2 nd Case – Universities in Rome	2015-2016 Academic Year, II. Term

3.2. Data Source and Participants

The participants for the study were selected via using a snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a kind of purposeful sampling where the researcher asks people to recommend others to take part in the research. The students to participate in this research were sometimes recommended by the professors who were friends of thesis advisors, or friends of the friends that the researcher met. As the main goal was to have students from six different universities, people could recommend friends from their own university but it was not easy to find people who had friends in other universities. The thesis advisor in Rome also played the major part in arranging professors from those other universities where the researcher could not reach anyone on her own. These professors then asked their students who could speak English well, if they would like to take part in such a study. The participants in both contexts were students of a diverse range of fields; mainly from Medicine, Law, Anthropology, Languages to Engineering. However, it was not very easy to have many different fields from every university, as sometimes some universities had a limited number of fields, or it was difficult to reach students from different fields. The age range of the students was between the ages of twenty and thirty. Students studying a bachelor's degree and students studying a master's degree were interviewed.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To collect the data connected to the relationship between social media and the predetermined aspects of social and daily life of university students, a self-designed

interview was carried out in six different universities in two different contexts; three of which were chosen as public universities; Sapienza University, Tor Vergata University, Roma Tre University and the other three were chosen as private universities; Link Campus University, Lumsa University, and Luiss University in Rome. In Istanbul the universities were; Boğaziçi University, Yıldız Technical University, Marmara University as public universities and Bahçeşehir University, Beykent University and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University as private universities. The first part of the interview process was carried out in Rome in the spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year and the second part was conducted in Istanbul in the spring semester of 2016-2017 academic year. In this study, the university students interviewed were selected from various faculties and departments ranging from Psychology to Architecture to Anthropology. The group consisted of both graduate and undergraduate students in different years of their education. The age prerequisite was chosen to be the ages of twenty to thirty, therefore mainly consisting of students in their twenties.

In the interviews, the pre-determined aspects to be tackled were; relationships, sharing, privacy and daily life. After the interviews in the first case site, notes were taken to improve the interviews in the second case site.

To have pre-determined list of questions provides the researcher with a systematic, methodical tool to frame the interviews done with all the participants. The type of interview chosen for this study was a semi-structured interview. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher when needed can tune certain factors such as the language level, the way the questions were asked or omit and add some questions during the interview (Berg, 2004). Using a semi-structured interview makes it much easier for the researcher to elicit the thoughts and perspectives of participants. During the first couple of interviews, eliciting answers to questions were a bit difficult, therefore different ways were found to paraphrase questions to make them easier to understand.

Due to the fact that the researcher conducted the first set of interviews in English, which was not the mother language of the participants, when they had a difficulty expressing a word, they could say the Italian version of the word to ease the participant's expression of thoughts.

All participants were given an information sheet explaining the research to the participants and also the interview questions so they could take a look and think beforehand. The interviewees were then given a consent sheet to sign assuring to them that their information would be kept confidential and the interview would be audiotaped and later used in a thesis which would be published. All the interviews done with students in Rome and in Istanbul were audio taped and then transcribed by the researcher herself.

The research interviews were mainly conducted on campus, at times outside, or behind a class when professors recommended certain names from their classroom, at other times a common location that suited the participant was chosen to ease the interview process for the participant.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

To keep the data as a whole and not to impose the researcher's frame of reference on the interview, the transcriptions were done without omissions and written entirely. The interviews were handled with an open attitude at the same time with the focus of the determined phenomenon. During the data analysis process 'coding' or 'classifying' was used. Coding is done by noting down the important parts in the data, labelling them and then putting them in appropriate categories. (Seidman, 2006) Participants were all given a number so as to keep their names confidential. Then during analysis, the chosen excerpts were also labeled and then put into corresponding categories. Afterwards, the 'dialectical process' was carried out by reading the categories one by one and going over the excerpts to check again for any that can be eliminated or the ones that seem too compelling which is, kind of a response to what the participants have spoken (Seidman, 2006). These were presented in the following chapters as the main themes.

3.5. Trustworthiness

Two different cases and different theoretical approaches such as comparative case study to collect data and phenomenological paradigm to analyze it were used to make the research more trustworthy and credible. The interviews to collect the data were

designed to be semi-structured. Validity was assured by examining an alternative case.

In terms of referential adequacy, during the interview process the fifteen interviews done in Istanbul were seen to be sufficient for grasping an insight of the students' views and experiences concerning the related topics regarding social media. These interviews resulted in similar themes. These were enriched by the following interviews. Data saturation was reached around the fifteenth interview. The same was true for the interviews in Rome. Data saturation was reached around the twentieth interview. However the interview process continued to gather more information to determine the results and ensure similarities with initial interviews which is why in Rome there are more interviews than in Istanbul.

3.6. Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of the study can be mentioned because of it being a comparative research in two different countries. The first part of the research had to be completed during the Erasmus period spent in Rome in the second semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. And the second part concerning the second case had to be completed after returning from Italy in the second semester of the following academic year. For the cases to be simultaneously examined, there would need to be two researchers carrying out the study. Moreover, the first part of the study provided useful insights in the research matter and for the general design of the study which helped redesign the second part of the research to reach better results. The fact that social media is such a dynamic field and that changes in this field happen quite often constitutes another difficult aspect of this study. As stated in the Cultural Studies book by Chris Barker 'it is impossible for a dead tree work such as this one to keep up with the pace', nevertheless, it can provide a good understanding of the period in which the study was carried out (Barker, 2016).

The study being partially carried out in another country where the mother language was not Turkish or English meant that the participants had to speak in a second language which was English. However, during participant selection process, the participants were carefully selected from those that were comfortable in expressing themselves in English. Where the participant had difficulty expressing themselves in

English, they were encouraged to use their mother language which would later be translated during the transcription process.

The fact that the research was designed to be carried out in two different countries was the biggest difficulty of the research. As there was only one person carrying out the research the cases were analyzed in different time periods, a simultaneously carried out research would have shortened the research process and increased the reliability of the data however, the number of researchers then would need to be more than one. Another difficulty for carrying out the research and especially the interview process was the language aspect as the interviewees in Italy would not be speaking in their mother tongue. However, the participants were chosen among those that would feel comfortable talking in English. The biggest hardship of the research was the dynamic aspect of social media which constituted the core of the issue being examined.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL LIFE

This section presents the results from the data collected via semi-structured interviews. The transcriptions of the recordings were meticulously examined and the results of the two cases were comparatively reported in a deductive way.

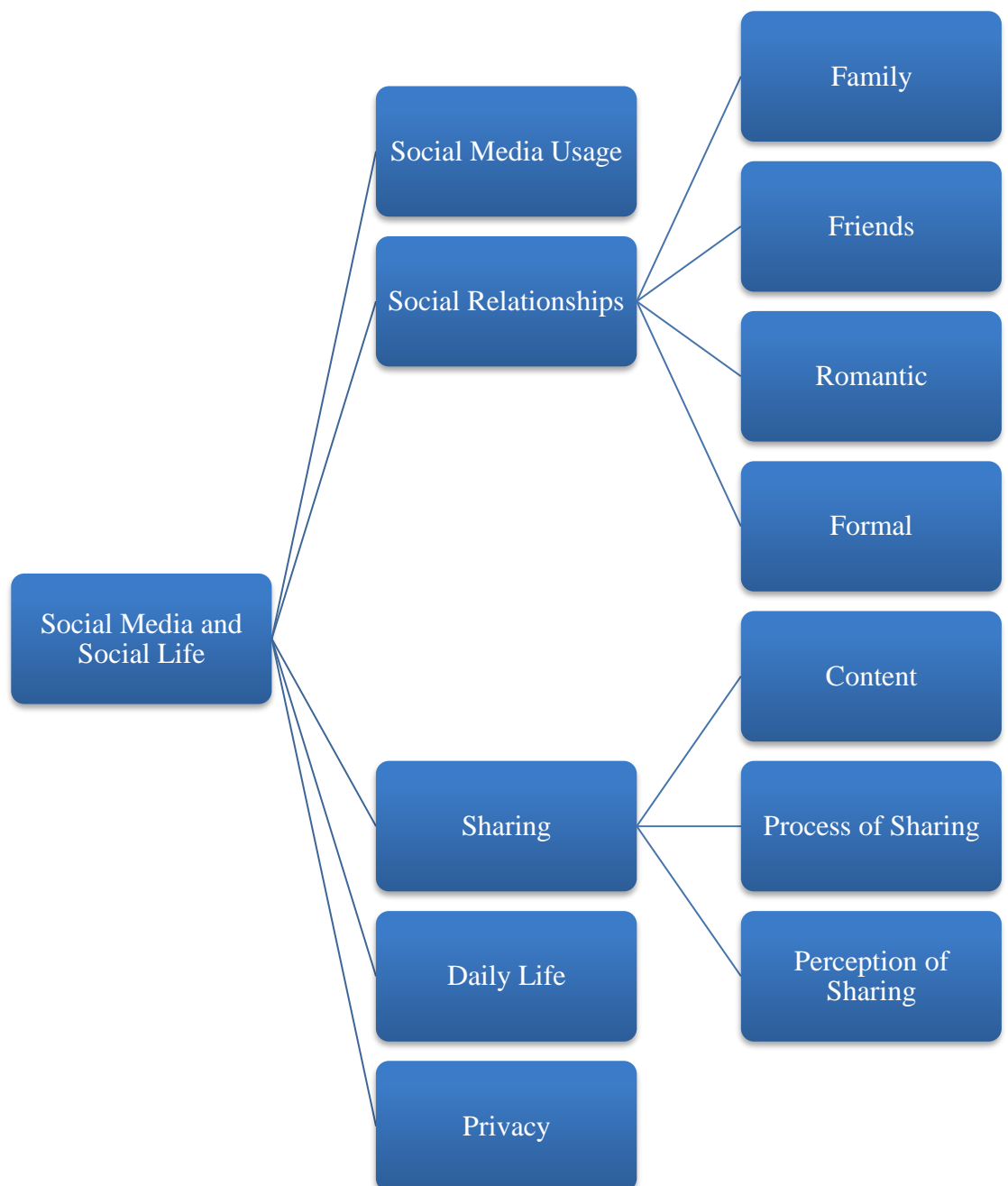


Figure 9: Themes and Subthemes - Focus Areas of Social Life on Social Media

4.1. Results and Discussion of Social Media Usage Theme

Firstly, from the findings the general social media usage of participants were examined. The popularity of social media platforms and the time they spend on these social media platforms were the main focus of this sub-theme.

4.1.1. Social Media Usage in Istanbul

Participants were firstly asked questions about their general usage of social media. In Istanbul, there is a higher variety in the social media platforms used.

Table 3: Different social media used by the participants in Istanbul

	Facebook	Twitter	WhatsApp	Instagram	Snapchat	Youtube
TRS1	X		X		X	X
TRS2			X			
TRS3	X		X	X		X
TRS4	X	X	X	X	X	X
TRS5	X		X	X		X
TRS6		X	X			X
TRS7	X		X			
TRS8	X	X	X	X	X	X
TRS9	X	X	X		X	
TRS10	X		X	X		X
TRS11		X	X	X	X	
TRS12		X	X	X	X	X
TRS13	X		X	X		X

TRS14	X		X		X
TRS15		X	X		X

Regarding the reasons why they use social media students generally stated they use it mainly for communication and keeping contact as well as keeping memories and simply for themselves, their own pleasure. Students like to follow what friends are doing besides following famous people, celebrities and micro celebrities. It was stated by many students that they spend their free time and they do some of the things that people do in their free time on social media like having fun, listening to music. One of the most notable terms of social media world; ‘sharing’ was also used a lot to explain the reasons behind social media usage. Participants claimed to use it to share ideas, photos and happy moments. A good number of students also stated that they use social media to follow school groups and news about school or other groups, organizations or clubs they belong to. Half of the students in Istanbul pointed out that they use social media to follow news and a few of them said they use it to get information.

4.1.2. Social Media Usage in Rome

The first part of the interview consisted of questions regarding the participants’ general usage of social media. In Rome, there is a less variety of social media platforms used. Facebook and Whatsapp remain as the most popular social media platforms.

Table 4. Different social media used by the participants in Rome

	Facebook	Twitter	WhatsApp	Instagram	Snapchat	Youtube
ITS1	X	X	X			
ITS2	X		X			
ITS3	X		X	X		
ITS4	X		X			X
ITS5	X	X	X	X		X

ITS6	X		X			X
ITS7	X		X			
ITS8	X		X			X
ITS9	X		X	X		X
ITS10	X		X	X		X
ITS11	X		X			
ITS12	X		X	X		X
ITS13	X		X	X	X	
ITS14	X		X			X
ITS15	X		X			
ITS16	X	X	X	X	X	X
ITS17	X	X	X			X
ITS18	X	X	X			
ITS19	X	X	X	X	X	
ITS20	X	X	X	X		
ITS21	X	X	X			
ITS22	X		X	X		
ITS23	X		X	X		
ITS24	X		X	X		

Participants use social media to communicate very quickly, to keep in contact with far friends as well as to keep being updated about friends and the world. Students use

it to share photos, videos, messages. It is also seen as a tool to sometimes save time and sometimes to kill time especially when they are bored, it is a connection to find events to do in their free time. Another reason for using social media was for academic purposes. Participants claimed they use social media to follow classes and to get information about their university.

“...to share ideas, posts, news that I found interesting. Even to share my drawings, for example I like to draw, that’s why I share it, I share it on facebook.” (ITS4, Male)

WhatsApp is mentioned as the one mostly and the most used. Facebook is also very popular among university students in Rome. Some participants tried social medias like Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram but didn’t like it, others don’t want to be torn between different platforms or just use it to follow politicians.

One participant also proposed that it is more difficult to say something with words on Twitter that is why they are not able to use it much. Instagram in this sense is seen as easier to use. Two participants explained this as:

“Twitter I tried but I found it not so powerful to express any things, it is a lot of commercial. It is more bad. Because it is short phrases, not too deep. Instagram I tried but I got a bad cellphone, so it’s ... you have to have an iphone 6.” (ITS4, Male)

“I had Twitter account and Instagram account, Twitter never really attracted my attention it has a peculiar way of facing with users. I don’t like the fact with 140 characters and the fact that there is not much multimedia content and so on I don’t like the way it looks, I think the people tweeting are those sitting all day just tweeting somewhere. So really, I am a bit too critic. And Instagram I have it because I follow my ex-girlfriend but I don’t use it, I don’t want to see her photos I mean.” (ITS17, Male)

Instagram was advocated to be more private by 8.33% of the participants because it doesn’t allow you to share too much information about yourself like on Facebook. 4.16% of the participants said that Snapchat was starting to become more popular.

4.1.3. Discussion of findings of RQ1 : How is the social media usage of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?

According to The Statistics Portal, Statista’s results of 2017, Facebook ranked as number one of the leading social networks of the global world. Following Facebook are Youtube, WhatsApp and Instagram consecutively.

In attempt to find out about the results of this research question, students were asked which social media platforms they prefer to use and the reasons they use them in a semi-structured interview.

The findings of this study put forth that university students in Istanbul use social media for four main reasons which can be listed as; keeping contact and having communication, having fun and spending free time, sharing and keeping memories and lastly to get information and news. The most common used social media tools are WhatsApp, Facebook and Youtube. Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are also used by quite a number of students.

The findings of the second case indicated that university students in Rome also use social media for four reasons; fast communication and keeping contact, to spend time and have fun, sharing with friends and the world and finally for getting information about their school and the world.

The results indicated that WhatsApp, Facebook are the top two social media platforms which are widely used among university students. Besides these, though Instagram has become very popular among students, Twitter and Snapchat are not preferred as much. By most students in Rome, platforms such as Twitter and Snapchat were stated to be difficult to use or not liked and therefore there were a very small number of students using these.

The results of the findings of the first research question correspond with the Statista's statistics about the popularity of social media platforms. The findings for the reasons why the participants use social media comply with boyd's study (2014) which states that youth use social media to connect with their community.

4.2. Results and Discussion of Social Relationships Theme

An individual's first social interactions and relationships occur within the family they are born into. Then they meet with the world outside and their social relations take on a new level; the friendship level. They also start adapting to new roles as they have romantic relationships or formal relations when they start school or work. These relationships are all simultaneously carried out on social media nowadays. Therefore it is noteworthy to examine these relationships; family, friends, romantic and formal on social media.

4.2.1. Family Relationships in Istanbul

13.33% of students indicated that they do not friend or follow their family members on social media platforms however some have done it before. The remaining 86.66% have their family as contacts, friends on their social media. When explaining the reasons why they are okay with adding their family members, they argued that family increases their number of likes, or that they write nice comments or sometimes even exaggerated comments. 60% of all the participants argue that having their family could affect what they share, one participant compared it to censorship.

The case of family relationships on social media is mentioned to be mostly consisting of likes. One participant implied that s/he likes her family but not really what they share on social media, only sometimes nice photos that the family shares. The participants explained their relationship and the difference in life as:

“Yes. I add them because I get most likes from them. They increase my number of likes. That’s why the best followers are aunts and uncles. The difference is like this; all family members only ‘like’. We do not see anything else. No talking, nothing. The talking is mostly done- I am from Muğla, when I go to Muğla. Under those circumstances.”(TRS3, Male)

“Generally when they write they can’t write so long. It seems short and strict what they say.” (TRS2, Female)

“I used to share more on social media before but now I am not shy about my family seeing the things I post as I post less. Also I like my relatives but I don’t put a like on most things they post, I put a like when they post nice photos.” (TRS6, Female)

“I think everyone has a different communication with different people or groups. I think social media is a field that destroys this and therefore should be examined psychologically. I mean, I choose differently the topics or words I use with a teacher or someone I respect. But I use slang when talking with a friend. I mean when choosing a topic I am less restrictive. Of course with family it is totally different in this point. Maybe you come across such a thing, I don’t know, in every family there are people with different political views or religious views. And you –like everyone else- also have a view. When you share that, and you will see each other after a week, there happens unnecessary arguments about you wrote this or that. Because social media destroys the distance between people.” (TRS7, Male)

Based on other responses it can also be said that social media is a tool that keeps far relatives some of whom barely even know each other –connected as stated by one of the participants:

“... I have a cousin in Germany whom I haven’t seen for years. Now s/he makes really nice comments but if I saw, I wouldn’t even recognize him/her.” (TRS4, Male)

Those students who do not like to add their family or parents explain their discomfort by stating that their family will see social media as another platform where they can monitor and control their kids. One students gave an example for considering the same issue:

“In high school, I was sharing song lyrics and talking and making jokes with different people or friends but things that would not make sense to others that don’t know me or my friends. My olders brother with whom I have a more distant relationship saw them and had said what are these they are nonsense! And I was so disturbed so I blocked my brother.” (TRS12, Female)

“It does affect. What I share, or not share I decide accordingly. If I comment... My dad stalks me.” (TRS8, Male)

“Actually I didn’t use to add them, then they found me. I can’t now you know, my aunt my uncle added me what can you do? you can’t you know... They also want to watch you in a way, they are curious. I am over it now but it is a problem when they comment. I don’t like those things.” (TRS11, Female)

It was also stated that families nowadays have WhatsApp groups. Participants said that they mostly share photos in this group. It creates a platform for elder members of the family to join in. On the other hand one participant argued that it affects the communication within the same house badly because interacting on social media is seen as enough.

4.2.2. Family Relationships in Rome

More than half of the participants (66.66%) do think that having close family on social media would make them think about it before they post something but argue that it does not affect what they do. 12.5% of the participants nevertheless stated they are afraid to be judged negatively by their family or relatives based on the photos they posted on their social media. 70.83% of participants in Italy are okay with adding family on their social media and mostly parents are an exception (33.33%). Students still want to keep what they do on social media private from their parents because it is argued to be a platform where you can also do silly or funny things. Otherwise it would turn into a place where they are being controlled. Another reason

for not having family on social media is because they don't use it. Students explain their views as:

“When a friend of mine says –my mother added me on Facebook, they begin to publish less and less and they ask their friends don't publish this photo. It would be the same with me because they will see –ahh you aren't studying or you're going to parties because of one photo.” (ITS2, Male)

“Family, only on WhatsApp. On Facebook I have only my sister. I prefer having family members on WhatsApp because maybe they can ask –Oh! But why you chose this photo, this status? Facebook, for me privacy is very important, I don't share a lot of things with friends and the situation with family members of course. Because you know especially in Erasmus I went to partying every night and they could ask me –Oh! You aren't studying but maybe they don't know and they think you are wasting your time, money.” (ITS12, Female)

“Because on Facebook, if you have to contact your family you can call them. In my idea, Facebook is used to control people, whatever they do, they publish, they share. We are being controlled even in virtual life? It is really worse.” (ITS14, Male)

“My mom controls what I publish. I understand she wants to protect me but I am 22 and I know what to post. I have for example published many things that me and my friends only can view but not my mother. She cannot see everything. I want my privacy.” (ITS22, Female)

Social media such as Facebook is not used much to communicate with family but rather the communication there consists more of likes and the communication is mostly simple. (20.83%)

“Not to communicate with them like chatting, we have the telephone numbers. I just check them and they check me and like my, like my aunt everytime I publish some photo- Oh! Amore di zia! Oh my god... It is a little bit funny because every time...” (ITS5, Female)

Another commonly mentioned way of using social media with family is the family group created on Whatsapp (20.83%). The family usually send photos through this group.

“I usually use WhatsApp as well, like we have a group for family with me and my sister and my parents where we send pictures.” (ITS6, Male)

4.2.3. Relationships with Friends in İstanbul

More than half of students (66.66%) answered that they would not add on their social media someone they do not know in real life. One participant explained that s/he would add someone s/he doesn't know but could add if that person has a lot of followers and shares things that s/he likes.

“I generally accept people that I know but sometimes I add those I don’t know if they have a lot of followers or if their pictures are public, or if they have posts that I like then I follow.” (TRS8, Male)

“I take into consideration that they are people I know. I am careful that they don’t do something that would harm my social media. I care for that person to be reliable. I don’t add people I don’t know, I don’t allow, or I don’t add people that could go extreme.” (TRS9, Female)

“First of all certainly I add on my Facebook people that I know. I mean, I don’t use my Facebook account to meet new people or to socialize or things like that, there needs to be only people that I know. I use Instagram like that too. In our day normally Instagram can be used to socialize or to get to know new people.” (TRS10, Male)

Out of those they know, more than a quarter (33.33%) of the students said that they add according to the sincerity of their relationship with the person, and if this person would be a bother or not. Moreover, when adding someone participants said there are certain things they check for such as; if there are any common friends, if the person is fake or not, their pictures and interests.

26.66% of the students claimed that the relationship between them and their friends is not very different for close friends and that social media even improves friendship. However, 20% of the students argued that it is not the same. Students generally argued this is due to the messaging or the written aspect of the social media distinct from the aspects of oral, face-to-face real time speech. This written aspect also causes the interaction between friends to stay on this platform for a long time which was mentioned as a reason for being careful to talk in a politically correct way by one of the participants.

“I don’t know, I mean, when I sit with my close friends and when we are chatting we curse more for example but we don’t really use swear words on social media. Or I am more careful when sharing a political content. I try to write sentences which are more politically correct.” (TRS7, Male)

It is argued by less than a quarter of the students (13.33%) that with those people they are not so close with normally, the relationship is more formal on social media.

Contrary to this, 20% argued that people can be more friendly on social media with people whom they are not so close in real life. One participant argued that people who are shy in real life can be more comfortable on social media and speak more comfortably. The ‘confession’ (itiraf) pages on social media is shown as another similar tool, where people write comfortable about a person that they’re interested in whereas they could not speak to that person in real life. A helpful tool to aid is

emoticons, to give life to the feelings when communicating and to soften the speech more.

In terms of friendship relations, one student compared social media to smoking:

“... social media is like smoking. It’s a field for socialization. So, if you are not in a Whatsapp group, for example one that has your friends, you get fall behind the chit chat. It can cause you to be cut off. Like that. I think smoking was a good metaphor.” (TRS1, Female)

One student explained social media as a news source about friends and people one knows:

“... what I mean is, if I want to follow, if that person does successful things, to follow these, to know closely what happened I add, because they don’t always go on the news maybe but because they share the smallest things they do on facebook, Instagram, having them there means I am informed everyday. This for me is like a news source.” (TRS3, Male)

Another participant mentioned that s/he has different preferences for different social media platforms depending on how they are used and for which purposes. The participant is okay with adding people they don’t know on Instagram as it is a platform which can also be used for finding people who have the same interest or hobbies.

4.2.4. Relationships with Friends in Rome

When adding people, 87.5% of the participants stated that they add only people they know. Social media is generally not used to meet new people. One student who worked in the Erasmus group of the school said s/he adds people but s/he is careful about the posts or photos s/he shares. A few number of participants stated that they delete or unfriend people because they are no longer interested in that account or they think it is no good. 12.5% of the participants have people that they don’t know but it is just for chatting or because they are interested in following these people. Another participant stated that s/he is okay with adding someone if they met somewhere before:

“I prefer to meet someone first then I add as Facebook friends. But I have many facebook friends I have never met in my life. Even some are from other states, there is one from India I guess, one from Africa. They added me and started to chat. They don’t have any interest in me, it’s just I don’t know, it’s to chat and sometimes we chat on facebook- like what do you do?” (ITS4, Male)

When adding someone, a participant mentioned checking if the account is fake or not or if they have any friends in common (4,13).

“I sometimes add nice-looking girl but I always make sure it is not fake. I definitely know it because it’s... they use photoshop (laughs)” (ITS4, Male)

When asked about the relationship with friends, with close friends 12.5% stated that there seemed to be no difference. Social media is even seen as a tool to keep users updated about their friends and what they are doing everyday which is a kind of information people normally wouldn’t have since they don’t talk to that many people in a day. However, the friendship on social media is seen as consisting of only likes, comments and messages. The communication is also seen as more superficial. Usually the concern about likes and how it has changed our expectations from our interactions with others is something that is criticized. One participant stated that it is a joke between friends that as black humour they say: ‘Life is a big Like’ and they try to see what trends gets more likes from people.

“Maybe there is a difference between you and your friends. Especially friends that you don’t know very well. In Facebook, you are able to speak more and about more arguments. In real life maybe you don’t have the same relation.” (ITS7, Male)

“In real life, it’s real communication, on social media it’s stereotypic communication. Short messages, high cynicism, laughing and joking, is more extreme communication than normal.” (ITS21, Male)

“You can communicate everytime everywhere despite the differences – especially with Erasmus friends. Sometimes especially on Facebook, we are too worried, concerned about likes maybe, sometimes this is an issue. It has changed our expectation from communication” (ITS12, Female)

The friendship on social media is doubted, as what’s shown and done on social media is not seen so genuine. Another participant strengthened this view by saying that s/he doesn’t give that much importance to Facebook friendship because it’s not a real thing.

“Yeah, because everybody wants to show to Facebook world their life is perfect and in real life nothing is perfect. So I don’t know I always see a bit of a difference because everything is more beautiful on Facebook so I always doubt.” (ITS1, Female)

“Because in real life we talk about other people, other friends, what we do with our studies, our work, our vacations and these things on Facebook... our talks are maybe less important. We talk a lot of stupid things.” (ITS2, Male)

Usually when sharing something about their friend, participants in Italy don’t ask because they believe the other person can control this via their privacy settings.

“It’s about their privacy you know there is a way to decide when someone uploads a picture with you there is a notification for you and you can decide to remove that. Yeah, I prefer this way but if I have to upload something that the guys that are in the picture know that I am doing that.”(ITS6, Male)

The communication between friends on social media is seen as less serious (8.33%) and having less empathy. One participant mentioned using voice messages and emoticons to make the communication more similar to that in normal life. Other participant argued that with some people it is easier to communicate through social media (12.5%). This issue was also mentioned by another participant who said:

“It is easier to create closer friendships when you are away for Erasmus. It is faster to share pictures and it brings you closer in the beginning. It would be normally uncomfortable to share that much with someone you don’t know so well yet.” (ITS18, Female)

Therefore it can be said that in the past, the act of showing photos which was a private session we did only for those people who came to our houses is now a technique that we use to share for our audience on social media. Besides, it was argued by one of the participants that spending too much time on social media can be a hindrance to real-life face to face communication of friends when they meet as some of them spend too much time of their time together on their social media.

4.2.5. Romantic Relationships in Istanbul

When asked if they would share their romantic relationship on social media, 80% of the students in Istanbul answered that they would not or even if they shared, this would be very limited. The reasons for not sharing are because they don’t want it to be seen unless it is a serious relationship (26.66%), they’re afraid of comments by family and others (13.33%). For the 20% that share, they majorly do this because they want for it to be seen that them or their boy/girlfriend is in a relationship, and not available.

Students were also asked questions about whether they think social media affects the relationship between couples. Overall, all students (100%) believe that it does affect couples. All the students also argue that its effects are negative. One student proposed that cheating has become easier as now you can also cheat without meeting face to face. Another problem mentioned is that one partner’s expectations or wants may not meet with the other’s and that it can cause a problem when something is shared or not shared, liked or not liked.

It was also implied by one of the participants that couples now are constantly in a struggle to prove that they are happy which causes them to not live the moment. Also, it was indicated that couples' thoughts about their relationship might be affected by others' comments on what they share, or these comments might cause arguments.

It was openly stated by 33.33% of the participants that social media causes jealousy among couples. The 'last seen' feature of social media is seen as another reason for argument. The increased visibility in every aspect is believed to cause negativity between couples. Another participant argued that due to spending more time on social media instead of spending time together can be another problem caused by the usage of social media among couples.

The archive function of social media is another feature that is mentioned as having negative impacts on romantic relationships. One participant gave the following example:

“A friend of mine had this problem recently. He is here and his girlfriend is in America- of course they look from Instagram etc. She caught her boyfriends comments under some girls' photos- and due to this they had really big arguments. But the comments had been done before. But his girlfriend had gotten really angry.” (TRS10, Male)

60% of the students also indicated that they would not use it to meet someone for romantic purposes on social media though they are okay if others can do it or want to do it. However, it is accepted that social media can be used to get an idea about a person. This idea was supported by the statement that social media is now used to check for a person if someone is thinking about starting a relationship with someone which was mentioned by 26,66% of the students.

Concerning meeting someone new on social media, generally participants argued that it is more common to try to use social media to further get to know a person that you saw, or met somewhere before (26,66%). Participants mentioned another application; Tinder, that people use nowadays specifically for the purposes of meeting someone as a romantic partner and argued people should use that.

“Yes, once I had an experience like that. I had a friend, and she thought of a friend of hers, she was trying to make us meet. We got each other's names and last names. We met at a dinner first. Then we added each other on Facebook. What kind of a person s/he is, which places s/he has been... Immediately

looked at the photos, videos, comments... I had for example looked, and she probably also added me for the same reason.” (TRS10, Male)

4.2.6. Romantic Relationships in Rome

When asked if they would share their romantic relationship on social media, 70.83% of the participants said they would not share it. The reason for not sharing it was that it is ‘private’, that it is not necessary and that it is painful to delete the information after a break-up. 37.5% of participants indicated that they only put some photos.

“I think since romantic relationship is between two people it is something you have to discuss with the other person but I would not feel so comfortable because it is private so I am not really able to change the privacy of my contact on facebook so I just prefer not to share someone.” (ITS1, Female)

“No, I wouldn’t share. Maybe a photo if I want. But I am not very interested in sharing that kind of information. Because not for privacy it is not a problem. But because I don’t care to show it to others.” (ITS24, Female)

33.33% of participants stated that they don’t feel comfortable having a romantic relationship with someone they met online. However couples meeting online is seen as a very common act (12.5%). Social media is seen as a catalyzer in starting an interaction, communication or relationship. Participants also mentioned the platform Tinder and how people around them use it to meet new people.

75% of the participants suggested that social media affects the relationship between couples negatively. It was also claimed that couples try to show their relationships to others more now. And sometimes even not sharing could be considered negative as one of the couples might think the other that doesn’t share doesn’t give importance to their relationship. Other negative affects of social media on couples mentioned were listed as jealousy, stalking, causing problems with trust issues, betrayal and cheating. The ‘last seen’ feature or the ‘seen’ ticks are other factors that were said to cause problems between couples and hence it was argued that social media creates more expectations for couples to await from each other. Social media is also thought to destroy privacy. Shared profiles of couples is another disapproved act that the problems between couples has produced.

The fact that you expose yourself more was another important negative factor (20.83%). Due to this exposing, the ups and downs between couples become more obvious and open to others making the couple more vulnerable as well as disturbing those who follow their love story on social media. It is also thought that the pictures

don't really show the reality and are like masks to hide the real relationship. A participant explained the issue as:

“People want to show others they are in love, they are doing this, how great we are together. It happened to my friends, they were in a tough period as a couple, they broke up and came back together, one day he posted I hate you and the other day I love you... I don't like it.” (ITS12, Female)

“Social media induced people to get photos of their self and post on Facebook, maybe we see them together but it's not like that in real life. There is 'what is' and 'what seems' -Social media is totally about 'what seems'. The nice picture is hiding something.” (ITS21, Male)

“I don't prefer to share my romantic life on Facebook because it is manipulated by the pc and on internet. The images are destroyed by the information written as the comment of the other person. The relationship is destroyed inside.” (ITS22, Female)

One of the participants stated that they ended a relationship once because of Facebook. S/he explained that:

“One of my relationships ended because of Facebook. Because someone commented on my photo I didn't know, a girl. And my girlfriend was like - oh you are doing everything to not show you are not engaged to anyone. And you know in real life I behaved the opposite. So yeah that was what triggered stuff. I think mainly a large part of people are involved in how facebook interacts with social life. I guess okay- it's not a problem for me I guess.”(ITS17, Male)

Participants also mentioned the exception that the effects depend on the couples as some couples may and others may not care about a photo or a comment so it may not affect some couples negatively.

The one good effect mentioned was that there are less lies and everything is more transparent.

4.2.7. Formal Relationships in Istanbul

When asked if they would add formal contacts to their social media, 86.66% of students said they are okay with adding formal contacts on their social media and 40% stated that they can use social media also to communicate with formal contacts. Some students mentioned LinkedIn as the social media they use for their formal contacts (26.66%). The reasons for adding formal contacts on social media were stated as; social media being an integral part of any business nowadays, it being a way of advertising and forming networks for people who have established their own business.

“Yes because I have a possibility to do business on social media. At least whatever business you have, you can show it to other people on social media. That’s why I don’t find it wrong for social media accounts to intervene into business. I even support it.” (TRS3, Male)

When communicating with their formal contacts, participants pointed out that they still continue to use a formal language and nevertheless e-mail still is seen as a more appropriate way for communicating with formal contacts (46.66%).

The remaining 13.33% stated that they would not add their formal contacts on social media and they wouldn’t use social media to communicate with them.

4.2.8. Formal Relationships in Rome

66.66% of participants have their formal contacts on social media but 20.83% of the participants still prefer the e-mail for contacting. The other 33.33% stated they don’t have formal contacts on their social media. Respect is still mentioned as a very important factor in formal relationships. From those formal contacts they have on their social media, most are high school teachers. High school teachers are seen closer and more friendly, compared to university professors and since there is no academic relationship between them anymore, students add their high school teachers more comfortably. One participant mentioned that s/he used LinkedIn for formal contacts.

Social media however changed the perception of formal contacts as their daily life outside the formal sphere is more visible and known. When asked about the communication with formal contacts, participants answered that on social media generally the communication consists of putting likes or not doing anything.

“It’s very good. I have many teachers from my high school, I sometimes communicate or put likes on some posts- that’s it- that’s the communication.” (ITS4, Male)

4.2.9. Discussion of findings of RQ2: What are the ways social media affects different kind of relationships of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?

To address the second research question of the study, data was collected from the semi-structured interviews which investigated participants’ relationships in four categories; family, friends, romantic and formal.

Concerning family relationships, from the data collected, it was founded that students in Istanbul are generally okay with having their family members on their social media. However, their presence does play kind of a surveillance role. It was also stated by the participants that the fact that social media platforms join different group of relations in one place causes some difficulty in managing the communication and relations on these platforms. This result matches with boyd's (2014) 'context collapse' term which she uses to explain how users of social media must handle different social contexts with different rules and norms together in one platform. The results also match with Gidden's disembedding theory which explains the social relations of our world as being 'lifted out' of their local contexts and being restructured through undefined spans of time and space. (Ritzer, 2010)

It was also founded that the easiness of reach on social media made it possible to connect with elder members of family or with those members that live far away. Tough the quality of this connection is questioned, the fact that it is possible is a mentioned condition by participants. These results match with Costa's (2016) views that besides helping to maintain the connection between family members that can't meet face to face, social media also plays a crucial part in putting those family members that never met before in touch. It was also founded that WhatsApp groups are more common in families and enable elder members of families to connect with the rest of the families. The content of the messages shared on WhatsApp are mostly visual; families generally shares pictures with each other.

In the second case of the study, students are generally okay with adding their family members but mention parents to be an exception. In this site, not the bigger family but parents are considered to be the ones using social media to monitor their kids. WhatsApp groups nevertheless include parents and are considered as an important connection with family members on social media.

When it comes to friending on social media, more than half of the participants in İstanbul are careful when adding people and would not add someone that they do not know or someone they think would be bothersome to have on their social media. The friendship relationship on social media is interpreted differently; some think that it is formal due to the written and non-verbal aspect of social media, whereas others think it enables especially those who are shy to easily start making connections. It was

founded that participants have different preferences about accepting friend requests for different platforms.

In the second case of this study, regarding their friendship relations on social media, it was founded that participants in Rome are strict about not friending someone they don't know on their social media; yet the people whom they have seen or met somewhere before are considered an exception and a check to make sure the account is not fake was mentioned as another consideration by participants. Participants in Rome consider social media a news source about their friends which enables them to reach and see information easily without having to contact. However, relationship between friends on social media is to be questioned and is considered superficial. The communication is thought to be less serious and the empathy shown is less. Nevertheless, it was found that social media makes it easier for some people to start a conversation.

Romantic relationships were also another theme examined in the study. The finding of the first case of the study indicated that sharing one's romantic relationship is not a common act among university students in Istanbul. Students all think social media affects the relationship between couples and negatively. Some problems mentioned were jealousy, cheating, disappointments due to increased visibility, and self-criticism due to comments and reactions of others. Social media is mostly not seen as a tool to meet people for romantic purposes, yet, it is common to use social media to analyze someone after meeting them.

In the interviews with students in Rome, students stated that they would not share their romantic relationship on social media. Meeting someone online is seen more normal. A good number of students believe it has negative effects on relationships and causes problems such as; jealousy, stalking, betrayal, too much exposure and being exposed. The only positive aspect mentioned was that it forces couples to be more transparent and not to tell lies.

The last kind of relationships addressed were formal relationships. According to the results of the interviews done in Istanbul, students are generally okay with adding formal contacts on their social media as they see it as an integral part of the business world today. However, social media is not preferred when contacting a formal person and students are still attentive to use a formal language and e-mail is still more

preferable. Specific social media platforms developed for formal contacts such as LinkedIn are also popular among students.

In Rome, the results of this study were found to differ from the findings of ... in Miller (2016) which states students and teachers friended each other less in Italy because the teachers were not so eager about social media. In contrast the students in this study friended their high school teachers with whom they did not have academic relations any more but were more hesitant about adding their university teachers. The factor determining their connection on social media was more about their academic relations. One important factor mentioned was that the perception of formal contacts are changing due to the visibility on social media.

4.3. Results and Discussion of Sharing Theme

Sharing brings to mind a very different mind map than the mind map maybe people a century ago had when they thought about sharing. Sharing is the basis for authentic human relationships. Internet has ushered a new era of sharing. There is now a sharing economy. Sharing is considered the defining characteristic of social networks. Sharing means to participate online. This part will examine this act of participation in terms of content, perception and process.

4.3.1. Content in Istanbul

Students agree that everyone is free to share what they want. One argument is that these platforms already have their own filters and would not let its users posts inappropriate content. However, 53.33% of the students stated that they are bothered by the political posts of others, especially the ones about the political beliefs.

Another issue that bothers students is the sharing of food. (46.66%)

“Also let me put it this way, when people share the food they eat or what they drink, because many people can’t find that really. Me, as a child of a middle-class family, I am not that kind of a person who goes from restaurant to restaurant but I pay attention to not share, and I am bothered when it is shared.’
(TRS4, Male)

One student described the sharing of food as an effort to create a social status and stated that it is a kind of ‘reification.’

“The sharing of food is a very corrupted thing, I mean – I am eating this food? What does this mean? If you are eating, you are eating. Of course there, it is

something that determines social status. This man went to Nusret, or this man has money, or this man can go to these places, this man is around such kind of people... But the status created there- that's irritating. I don't like these I mean. You can make this food at home for 5 liras. So what if you ate outside, food is food. This is thingification of it. We shouldn't turn it into reification.' (TRS7, Male)

One other issue that bothers students is the sharing of too much information which causes information pollution (26.66%) or the sharing that hints traces of arrogance (13.33%).

The posts or messages that are considered inappropriate was another point mentioned. Some examples given were photos of porn or sexual content, harassment or rape, violent or explicit material, torture to people or animals, anything that would harm or bother others or sharing from hospitals or funerals. Participants besides stated that they find it wrong to share things that don't fit the Turkish culture or traditions, unethical posts or posts with cursing.

26.66% of students highlighted that private life should not be shared. To give an example, students did not find it right to share pictures from home.

Students said that they are against racist or sexist attitudes or other kind of attitudes or radical posts that would bother others 13.33% argued that negative events, ideas, photos should not be shared.

“What should not be shared... I mean, you should not pour out the negativity you lived during the day. I mean, you argue with someone or you see something, you shouldn't immediately carry that to social media. I think a negative thing happens, they see something somewhere ‘This happened here- it was so disturbing!’... These kind of things should not be shared, negative things...” (TRS5, Male)

When asked how they react when they see a bothering post, participants said they report, block, delete, or comment.

On the other hand, students suggested that it is okay for people to share useful information, news, happy moments positive posts, posts that would show to others a new perspective, and aesthetic posts.

One participant stated that the content shared on social media is a tool to satisfy one's curiosity giving the example that s/he misses his/her hometown and it's possible to see it every day on social media through people's posts and live videos.

4.3.2. Content in Rome

One thing that bothers the participants in Rome is how their friends use social media to prove to the world their life is perfect or people who advertise themselves or show off and those seemingly in search of attention (12.5%). The extreme sharing of daily things such as; the food they eat or when they go somewhere is also stated as something that should not be done (25%). Also the excessive sharing of photos of the same kind are considered to be bothersome (12.5%). One participant explained the reason for this as:

“This is a part of capitalistic economies. So, social- the lack of social linking is translated into a reaction to find something to link to and Facebook is somehow a response. So, this is why maybe- people post ‘I just had a milkshake’. It makes me furious but still their business.”(ITS17, Male)

The fact that social media is checked by employers is another point mentioned to be important in deciding what some participants share. There are also other sensitive matter mentioned by students. One participant argued that photos of children should not be so publicly shared due to the danger of sexual harassment. Another participant mentioned that s/he didn’t find the sharing of photos of people who were dead correct. Another bothering attitude mentioned by 20.83% of the participants was the sharing of people that share without having knowledge or fake information.

“Just for example, my Turkish friends have an opinion of Mustafa Kemal which is completely justified and as a consequence it is normal. I could not agree completely because I am Italian, I have another history. But I know that it is kind of really really important for you so I accept what you are writing about it. Or your love for this skilled person. I cannot struggle with you about it but I just struggle with people from my country, with my culture, who want to share an opinion without having knowledge. That’s the point.” (ITS3, Female)

The sharing of private life, sexual, explicit content or nudity, violent content, or political views fanatically supporting one viewpoint are also disapproved, as well as racist, sexist posts or posts that would offend others because of their religion or culture. A participant talked about a Libyan friend they had who posted pictures of guns which bothered him/her. Facebook was said to be used by politicians to increase hatred.

One participant said he was bothered by the posts that were done due to mass manipulation because he argued that it was not sincere.

“And yeah I think but the thing is the problem is not that people share inappropriate things but it’s that they don’t share important things. If you want to have people putting a flag into their profile picture you have to manipulate them all together but it does not really come from the heart it is mass manipulation. And that’s the bad thing. Because important things only come up on facebook on social media come up only when a lot of people talk about it.”
(ITS4, Male)

When asked how they react when they see a bothering post, they comment or write their opinion but they would prefer not to do anything. The reason for not reacting is due to the thought that everyone wants to be right and in the end, they try to be convinced by others who oppose to their reaction, which can be disturbing. Another participant stated they report or send a private message.

4.3.4. Process of Sharing in Istanbul

The process of sharing is actually seen as a habitual activity, a daily routine. People adapt to every new platform that starts through a process of automation. It is not really something that you think about. Nevertheless, based on participants’ answers, there are still certain aspects which are considered before sharing something. To give an example, more than half of the students advocated that they would ask their friends before sharing a photo with them in it, or something related to them (66.66%). Participants also check if the photo they took looks good and aesthetic. One participant mentioned that she puts emoticons or icons on people’s faces that don’t want to be seen but still shares the photo. Another participant said s/he checks if the news are reliable before sharing. However, the thinking process before sharing is thought to be shorter now.

Concerning the motivation and reasons for sharing, students implied that they only share ‘important/happy days’ or on important occasions, to show to others what they are up to and to get rid of their stress. Participants also advocated that they would share the things approved and accepted by society, more. 13.33% of participants highlighted that they try not to share anything that might be seen as racist or as cultural discrimination.

Social media is also seen as a ground to increase popularity and to create a social status. Two participants argued that they see social media as an area where they can write things as they like. Other participants said they see it as a place to inform people of what they experienced and use this experience as a way to ease others life

and to let them benefit (26.66%). Sharing on social media is also seen as a tool to prove to others that you care about them (13.33%) and to keep up to date with them and to feel a part of normality as this is what everybody does these days. One student argued; not doing what others are doing, basically not sharing would cause one to feel externalized which could cause unease. Overall it can be said as stated by one participant, since humans are social beings, they continue their sociality just in a new arena.

One participant stated that people should be free to share whatever they like, if they want to share something they should, however s/he does not mean anything that includes violence or insult, s/he means within the humanistic limits.

4.3.5. Process of Sharing in Rome

The motivation behind sharing is seen as a common one by 54.16% of participants; which is to show other people something. Other reasons were listed as showing to others that they were beautiful in a photo, to feel normal, to have fun, to make their opinion heard. Yet, it was also mentioned by a participant that they try not to share everything as they try to live the moment.

“I want to ...I post a photo of a cat because I love cats and I want to be approved by those who see my photo. Because many likes for me is not really important but I know in this case that I am approved by many friends or society in general.”(ITS22, Female)

33.33% of students suggested that they prefer the freedom of speaking and writing what people want, and others have the freedom to delete this or ignore it. 37.5% of participants made the point more clear by stating that people are conscious and are themselves selective of what they share. Another participant said s/he is a supporter of opinion pluralism and said it is more a concept related issue and what we say is inappropriate today was appropriate some years ago and visa versa. Social media is therefore thought to be creating its own etiquette:

“Somehow it created I think it is also linked also to the public you are referring to. Facebook develops a netiquette as much as a society develops etiquette, the only problem is- facebook is a very cosmopolitan society with people from many different cultures so a netiquette is constantly evolving, sometimes it faces people that can't tolerate other's opinions or are very sensitive to certain topics and so on. It is just I think a more complicated matter than etiquette is within a society. I think it develops its own physiology. So it is just a matter of the system you are referring to.” (ITS17, Male)

“I think that everyone could share what they want and if they want to share their life what they ate for breakfast. They could do it. I don't have any problem.”(ITS24, Female)

When asked about the motivation behind sharing, students answered that they think it is a good way to spread culture. 25% of students answered in favour of the same argument and stated that they share what they think will benefit other people such as useful information or an important article.

“Because of my passions. I think that the art in general sure the internet can be a good way to spread culture because if I go to a museum and if I write on the internet there is a special offer probably someone will say I will try and it is good for me to know these things.” (ITS2, Male)

“I think social media is for sharing cultures. It is a fantastic thing. I was watching Snapchat for Ramadan a month ago. And I didn't know what a lot of people do during Ramadan and I saw all these videos of them and I learned something about that. I think it is a fantastic feature. The culture of sharing I like it unless it is too much, excessive.” (ITS19, Male)

Another motivation mentioned was ‘to show’ to others what they did or how they are living (25%) and even sometimes to secretly give a message to someone. Also to keep in touch with far friends.

“Because I for example drawings- I like to have on facebook, I like to have other drawings from other people so I do share mine hoping that they'll do the same. Or it could be whatever, it could be a drawing or song...” (ITS4, Male)

12.5% of the participants stated that they would generally ask their friend before posting something about or with them.

“Oh! A picture with my friends and I ask them... they ask me not to share and I decide because I know that they are gonna get mad for that.” (ITS4, Male)

One participant argued that people need to make sure what they are sharing is true because there are people who share carelessly. For one of the participants it was also important to consider whether s/he would be judged by others if they shared what they plan to share and if they think there will be bad judgement then they prefer not to share.

4.3.6. Perception of ‘Sharing’ in Istanbul

Regarding the understanding of sharing, what is meant when referred to ‘sharing’, 66.66% of students believe that this understanding has changed.

20% of the students mentioned that now we share with the world, so it reaches a larger scale of an audience. However, one mentioned that though we share faster and

with many others, what we share has become more self-centered. Another participant elaborated on this by saying that it is more like showing to others rather than sharing with them. It was also argued that what's shared makes us learn so much more about others that otherwise we would not have learned from anywhere else and in detail. These can also be used to make an analysis of people.

40% of the students argued that sharing is not solely for showing to people, we are actually creating our own archive there. This idea was reinforced by the comments that social media lets one see how much they have changed in time, as it is like writing your own history. Otherwise what was lived is lost in time and so it appeases the fear of being forgotten.

Another perception of sharing is that it is a tool used nowadays to prove to others how good you are by creating the impression that you are doing certain things. We are also more inclined to think of sharing as sharing our daily life as social media enables to do so. Another negative perception stated by one participant was that social media made sharing more superficial and short. This new perception was reinforced by another participant who said that now the usage of word 'sharing' automatically brings to mind social media.

When explaining how our perception of 'sharing' has changed, a participant proposed that the sharing of time with people has changed. People do not spare time to go see someone face-to-face when they can do this quickly on WhatsApp or Instagram.

4.3.7. Perception of 'Sharing' in Rome

The understanding of 'sharing', has changed according to all of the participants. Now sharing is seen as more a collective action rather than a personal act and people are seen as less critical of what they share. One participant argued people ought to be more careful and take consciousness of what they are sharing as it reaches a bigger world and a wider audience. Another criticism was that people live more on social media so they want to share more.

“Many people I know post everyday, it is too much for me. I do not post every second minute of my life. Because they don't understand that social media is not the real life. It is the virtual life.” (ITS22, Female)

“As always, these things have brought positive and negative aspects. It means that you can gain info in real time so you are always connected with the whole world and with all the informations and events- this is great because in the past it was not like this.”(ITS3, Female)

12.5% students mentioned it is like a database, a diary that one can look back to see their personal history. Photos were described as souvenirs by one of the participants.

“Two motivations-first of all because I want to share it on the public and secondly I want to keep these on my wall so I can always go there and look again – like a database.”(ITS3, Female)

Participants argued that sharing has evolved into ‘showing’ and it has also evolved into a more ego-centric kind of sharing.

“We share... because sharing is maybe it is not the right term sometimes, it is more like ‘showing’. It is more like showing yourself, showing your pictures on Instagram or whatever. It is not really sharing something with someone and making something with others- that’s sharing”(ITS4, Male)

“We want others to know about our life, our moment. This implies we want to be understood by others. We want others to accept us. If you think the issue of likes and followers. We want to leave a mark of what we are doing, we want to be special.” (ITS12, Female)

Another analogy made by one of the students about Snapchat was that it is like ‘self pornography’. (ITS17, Male)

“Snapchat, I saw it but the fact with social media for me I think snapchat embodies it pretty well is a kind of trend towards self-pornography which is very wide spread in our society that tends toward nothing because basically they are completely there is a lack of any creative content, even you think with Snapchat people make videos but they have predefined patterns to do them so it is nothing that make me think.. ‘Oh ... let’s try this!?’ I tried of course otherwise I wouldn’t have an opinion. But still it seems a bit naive to me in some way. I don’t use it, It started to spread in Italy. ”(ITS17, Male)

Sharing is still seen as a tool to show that you care. However, the difference is that the caring is not for all the people you share with but actually with a smaller group that in your head you think will see and care too.

Social media is also defined as the place that created the ‘opportunity’ of sharing. It offered people the ground to share. Sharing on the other hand is the using the opportunity to show you are ‘normal’. A participant said that they can’t remember how it was before social media because they grew up with it.

The value of communication or sharing is thought to be diminishing by 33.33% of participants because it is seen now as an act done like a machine, an act of

mechanization which feels more superficial. Another point that was criticized was the fact that people now give importance to an information by checking if it is widely shared on social media instead of looking at its source.

“Before the information the good information was the one who belonged to high sources, now the good information is the one shared a lot so it changed the parameter. The more shared the more important it becomes, it not the source that is important. It is a massification of information. The quality criteria are changing from source to the mass.” (ITS21, Male)

4.3.8. Discussion of findings of RQ3: How is sharing on social media and how are its implications on sharing in real life described by university students in Istanbul and in Rome?

The third research question of this study related to sharing habits was divided into three in itself: content, process and perception. These subthemes were determined according to the answers of students in the semi-structured interviews. The three sub-themes of the sharing theme are discussed in detail below.

Considering the first sub-theme of ‘Content’, from the Istanbul case, it was found that students believe the content of what’s shared on social media is up to whoever decides to use it and explained further by the statement that since social media platforms have their own limits, everyone already can’t share everything. Nevertheless, some of the content which is shared was also mentioned as disturbing by some of the participants. The content which bothered the participants were those which were; political, sexual, violent, showing food, disagreeable to Turkish culture or disrespectful. Content about private life and the excessive sharing of content were other points that some participants found disturbing. Participants advocated that the sharing on social media is for the self-satisfaction of one’s-self and a tool for the construction of a social-status.

In Rome also, sharing of political, sexual, violent and disrespectful content is criticized by the participants. Moreover, participants mentioned the need to be more sensitive when sharing photos of one’s private life, children or of dead people. Content which is excessively shared, shared without questioning or shared because of mass manipulation was found to be other common complaints among participants in Rome.

Concerning the second sub-theme of ‘Process of sharing’, in Istanbul, sharing on social media is considered a daily, habitual activity. Though having become an automatic act, when sharing, participants mentioned some considerations. These are asking for permission from those who are involved in what is being shared. Participants also make sure that what they share represents them well and that their image or self looks good. What’s more, the reliability of the content is also mostly questioned before sharing. Considering why they share, the participants mentioned motivational factors such as; sharing the happiness, spreading culture or information, to keep others updated about their life, relieving from stress and for feeling normal.

In the second case of Rome, participants also had similar considerations for sharing; getting permission, avoiding content that would bring criticism, checking for the correctness of what will be shared. The motivational factors such as spreading culture or information, to have fun, showing to others their life and besides these participants used social media for being heard by means of sharing their opinion on something and giving indirect messages to someone by means of choosing what is shared accordingly.

The last sub-theme is ‘Perception.’ The findings of the interviews of participants proved that there were both positive and negative attitudes towards how people perceive sharing today. The positive thoughts were in line with the perception of a global world today which is faster and brings together a big number of people which enables a wider audience for the users of social media. In both cases of the study, the archive function of social media was a positive attribute. It was found that participants use social media to keep their personal history. As a negative comment, according to the results of participants in both cases sharing now means ‘showing’ and is superficial.

Concerning the differences, in the first case of the study, from the results it can be said that it is easier to learn about people or to analyze people through social media which is a positive thought. For the negative part, sharing is considered to be more self-centered and a tool to prove oneself to others.

In the second case of the study, besides the common attitudes, a different view point found from the results of the case of Rome was that sharing is considered a tool to

show care. Contary to this positive approach, sharing with social media is regarded as less critical and more an act of mechanization.

4.4. Results and Discussion of Daily Life Theme

As part of the research, another inquiry was to see how the daily lives of students are with social media. Just as any other media, social media also has both positive and negative effects on the lives of its users.

4.4.1. Daily Life in Istanbul

Those who are not so active on social media said it does not affect them so much. Some participants also argued that there were some positive contributions of social media to their daily life. Participants mentioned that it is now possible to see a place shared on social media and to decide on whether to go there or not, serving as a reference.

“... On others’ profiles we can see the places they have been to and decide if we’ll go there or not. I mean, at a certain time a café becomes very popular between friends and we find out about this on social media, it is something we normally wouldn’t know. We can also go there one day because what they share becomes a reference for us.” (TRS3, Male)

Another positive aspect of social media is that it enables people to shop from those that sell on social media. One other participant argued that social media enables us to see the aspects of life that would otherwise pass by unnoticed. One participant explained this as;

“...These are nice, these should be shared. The other day, a girl friend of mine had shared on Twitter the story of a grandpa who was a Korean War martyr that she saw at İncirli metrobus station. I really liked it. There are things people do not pay attention to everyday, things that we pass by without noticing.” (TRS4, Male)

One participant stated that it increased the communication between them and their friends (13.33%). Also, you can see what that person is experiencing or if it is a special, happy or sad day and hence talk to them accordingly.

Social media is claimed by some of the participants to have given them something to do in their free time or the times when they can’t really do much such as waiting for a bus or commuting to school (13.33%). One participant also mentioned that social

media such as Twitter is the first place they look at when they hear something has happened.

One participant claimed that maybe s/he can be seen as political on social media because s/he shares more political posts than in real life.

Students believe that their daily life is different since they are using social media. 20% of the participants reinforced this idea by pointing to the way they spend their free time and how instead of relaxing that is where they waste their free time. Similarly 40% of participants complained of wasting too much time on it.

Students also argue that it affected their lessons or their concentration on lessons. (13.33%) One student supported this idea by saying s/he could listen to lessons better before. Another student implied that s/he stopped using social media after realizing it affected his/her lessons. Another drawback mentioned by one participant was that it can be an escape from the things that one has to do. Another student claimed that their eyesight got worse.

“...For example, if there was no social media, I would listen to the lessons better. But having my phone in my hand blocks me from things. In my free time, even when resting, I am always checking somethings with my phone in my hand. I made my eyesight get worse. There are these...” (TRS1, Female)

One complaint made by 20% of the participants was that using social media became a habit and even more it became a need. The fact that you are expected to answer others' and always be present and alert is considered another bothering issue. Another participant reinforced this idea by saying that we take one more photo just to share on Facebook or Instagram. It was argued that following a conversation is more difficult because they constantly check social media because they claim to be travelling the world at that time on social media thought they may seem like they are in one place.

“It becomes a part of your habits, you feel a need. I for example only use WhatsApp but if I don't check for one two hours, maybe when I am in class, I immediately check after class. I look if anyone has written to me.” (TRS2, Female)

Jealousy was stated as one of the negative impacts of social media on daily life. (13.33%)

“I was bored actually- of following people constantly...And also another thing, a new habit of following people is born and I read in the news that for some people it triggers jealousy.”

It is also argued to have generated interest in other's lives and a constant curiosity about what has happened.

One participant expressed discomfort with the fact that social media combined different groups of people one interacts with, in one place:

“I think every person in every platform with every group or person, has a different kind of communication. I think social media is something that twists this and is therefore something that should be psychologically examined. I mean, for example when I am talking to my teacher or someone I respect a lot I choose my words and the topics carefully whereas I can talk slang with a friend I am close with. Or when I am choosing the topic I am restricting myself less etc.”

4.4.2. Daily Life in Rome

Social media is seen as positive as it eases the communication about work or studies via university groups, whatsapp groups and basically eased life (16.66%).

“Yeah, I think it made communication faster and easier. So we can just ... I will give you an example; in my university some information is published only by the secretaries only at a certain time so if you want to know if you passed an exam or not you have to come here, look on the door of the secretaries and see if the paper has been posted on there. You cannot find this kind of information online. But you can find somebody that is here and ask them for a picture and they will post it on this group and we are 300 in this group and we can read it. Saving time. That can be really useful especially for people that are not there.”
(ITS1, Female)

It was also stated by 25% of participants that it is easier to find places to eat or hang out or events they can attend thanks to their social media pages and the list of events in that area and also easier to contact someone. Another positive aspect is being able to find information quickly and from a wider variety

“But we are lucky because we can gain information so quickly, so easily. That's the point.”(ITS3, Female)

It was also stated that the use of the smart phone changed. Another participant mentioned effects were that text messages are less used and less calls are done. The habits that we adopted with the new media are also changing quickly. What we see normal is replaced by a new easier usage in a very short period of time. One participant stated that it was easier to interact with the opposite sex, the participant was male.

Though wasting time on it is generally mentioned as a bad effect, the fact that it helps fill in those dead moments where you can't do anything while you are waiting for a bus or using public transport is seen as a positive attribute. (8.33%) Also that it provides one with the knowledge of events and programs is considered another positive attribute to daily life and is considered to make people more social.

“Yes, when I have breakfast if I am alone I look at some new, something on social media. To fill the gaps in my free time.” (ITS24, Female)

One participant said it didn't affect their daily life so much.

“My life with social media is same that I remember, it is the same. The time I spend to do shopping I spend on Facebook but it is not the same hour for example I don't spend the same hour on Facebook or Instagram to go on my Facebook profile I still prefer to go to cinema or do things I can't do on the internet.” (ITS22, Female)

On the other hand, it bothers 33.33% of the participants that social media has taken so much of their everyday, especially from their time that they can use to relax or take a break. The fact that you don't really know who saw what you shared was mentioned as negative. Its negative effect on younger generations was also mentioned by one participant.

“Oh yes – for example, I think it happens everyone in the world now. When I was young I used to spend a lot of hours playing in the garden, park just in the open air, looking for games. I received my first mobile phone at the age of 14 just because I need it my family decided. Today I just looking around and I see young people kids playing with I phones and computers. I am the generation that grew up with Harry Potter, in the old version of Microsoft. I felt like you know in the sci-fi movie. Today everything has changed and it is so sad it is not good at all.” (ITS3, Female)

It is seen that people are more engaged with what their life looks like on social media than how it actually is. (12.5%)

“I don't know. They might be doing it because they're building an image of themselves on the social media. It is like being two different people, one in reality and one in social media. That's the point. They are making virtual life more real than the real life, it is kind of sad in my opinion- it is like having two different lives. And actually it seems that virtual life the life on social media has become more important than real because everything is about the likes – how many likes I have and how many comments and everything you are doing is to take the picture to post it on Facebook.” (ITS3, Female)

Going somewhere without your phone or having to stay off social media is mentioned to be seen as if being left without an arm. (8.33%)

The normality of today is seen as having to be on social media. If you are not on social media then you are not normal.

“Our generation is the generation of the SM, this is the normality, if you are out of SM, you are not normal. Your real life is the social media. Many people do it all the time, for being normal. Because you need to do. The environment where you stay directs you about what you do to be normal. If you lived in a little village and the only meeting is face to face, you can leave facebook easily.” (ITS9, Male)

Social media can increase problems between people as stated by one of the participants;

“If I stop and think I can explain, maybe for example if you have a problem with a friend, mostly the problem grows on whatsapp. If you write all day with whatsapp if you don't use emoticons, the wrong understanding is easy. Maybe the people prefer writing on SM, explaining on SM than in reality.” (ITS9, Male)

The face to face communication between people seems to have been reduced. Taking photos has turned from an important act done on special occasions to a regular daily act.

4.4.3. Discussion of Findings of RQ4: In what ways, has social media affected the lives of university students in Istanbul and in Rome?

The findings of the research question regarding daily life can also be divided into two categories as positive and negative.

From the data collected, there were three positive contributions to daily life which were common in both cases; enhanced communication, making people more social by easing the access to places and events, and finally bringing life to those dead moments when one has nothing to do such as when waiting for the bus. The distinctive positive points found in the results of the findings in Istanbul were that social media is a new scope for online shopping, and the first source of news.

Regarding the negative side, the mostly seen complaint in the two cases was that too much time is wasted on social media and especially much of their free time. Another common negative impression was that social media has created an indispensable place in our lives and life without it would be like a life without an organ. The last common negative viewpoint was the fact that on social media the audience is ambiguous and contexts are combined which makes it challenging for the users. The

findings are in line with boyd's argument of the 'collapsed context' on social media (2014).

The different results from the first case indicated that participants in Istanbul emphasized on points such as its negative effects on school, health, the expectation to be present at all times, and the rise of jealousy and curiosity. In the second case of Rome, the complaints were about its negative effects on communication and the younger generations.

4.5. Results and Discussion of Privacy Theme

The last theme of the findings is privacy. Different social media platforms provide their users with different privacy settings and everyone is free to decide on how they would like to keep their account whether private or public. The findings show the reasons behind the choice to make social media public or private.

4.5.1. Privacy in Istanbul

93.33% students stated that they keep most of their accounts private. The reasons for why they keep it private varies. One of the reasons why they keep it private is because they don't want people they don't know to see what they share. (53.33%) Some participants choose to leave one social media public and another private. Four participants said their Twitter is not private because they want everyone to see the thoughts they share and what they share on Twitter is not so important. (26.66%)

“Only Twitter is public that is because I want others to see my opinion. Others are private.”(TRS4, Male)

“On Twitter it is public. I used to use Facebook before, there I only let my friends see the reason was because there were my photos. I guess because I did not share so important things on Twitter I did not feel the need to make it private.”(TRS6, Female)

Another participant stated that their social media is public to give message to their ex-lover that they continue their life. Another participant leaves Instagram public as s/he is interested in photography and wants people to see their photos and one participant leaves Facebook public since s/he doesn't share so much there.

“Now my Instagram is public that is because as I said there are just photos so I don't think others should not see it. Everybody can see them. Photographers accounts are also public like this. There are many things I don't accept on Snapchat because it is totally your private life. That's what you are doing that

moment. Where you are, what you are doing. That's more private. I am careful about that .''(TRS12, Female)

According to participants, some of the things which they argued should not be shared publicly were private life and how people are at their own home.

4.5.2. Privacy in Rome

66.66% of the students stated that they keep their accounts private. One reason was because they share it with only friends or people they know (25%) and they are not looking to show themselves for meeting new people. One participant wasn't sure if it was private or not.

“I tend to keep my photos and my posts visible only to friends or I think the photos and also be seen by friends of friends if they are tagged. But I don't think anything else is public on my account. I use it only for ocmunicationg with people I already know so I manot interested In other people on the internet seeing my photos.” (ITS1, Female)

“I think it is public. Once I tried to close it but it is not possible. Because you can close but you cant stop it is crazy It is not something easy to close. You are chained for life.” (ITS9, Male)

“I believe it is public, I think so because I have nothing to hide.” (ITS23, Male)

29.16% of the participants answered that their account is mostly public because they think what they share is not something to be ashamed of, that they don't have any problems with privacy and some of them complained of not being able to make it private. One participant mentioned having some platforms private and some public. One participant argued that those who want to get your information or photos can find a way to get them therefore s/he doesn't see any point in setting the privacy settings. The same pariticipant thinks social media is a ground for hyper-liberalization of individuality because you put your own limits and you can make your life completely public if you like.

4.5.3. Discussion of Findings of RQ5: What are the opinions of university students upon privacy on social media in Istanbul and in Rome?

In the first case of the study, from the results it can be said that, participants prefer to keep their social media private. However, the preference may change for different platforms depending on what they share and why.

In the second case of the study, the findings show that privacy is also preferred in Rome however, users are more comfortable with making their social media or some of the information on their social media public.

5. RECOMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research have important implications to understand the changes in the social life and daily life of university students which is a group that holds an important place in society. The research was limited in several ways as the data could not be collected at the same time, and the language used for the interviews in Italy was English, a language other than the participant's native language. In a further research, using the mother tongue of the participants could make the results richer. Nevertheless, the results of the current study showed similarities in both cases. As the field of the research is constantly changing, the same research with improvements could be done to see what the differences are in the future. The dynamic field of social media is prone to change any minute. Companies owning the social media platforms may decide on even huge changes which may bring a total new approach to social media. Therefore, due to this dynamic aspect which makes the field always fresh but at the same time very difficult, it is necessary to keep on doing new and further research. The research that is done should not be looked upon as inadequate when the social media platforms or habits of people change in the future, as this study sheds a light on the current state of social media in university students' lives.

Also, taking each of the subthemes and doing more research could help to better analyze the matter as the scope for this research was very big. Also the research could be repeated with different cases to see if the results vary. Another contribution could be to look at different age groups or focus groups to analyze how their social life is changing.

6. CONCLUSION

As individual members of society, people engage in meaningful interactions in a variety of social contexts within their society and their world. Every social context has its own norms, rules and culture. Individuals create networks within these contexts and maintain a social life as part of their daily life. The developments in technology and media has transformed this socialization and made social media an indispensable part of everyday life in a global world.

An important aspect of the global world of today is the acceleration of the pace of life. The easy access to internet, and the spreading of social networks has made it easier to adapt to a new way of living and getting in touch with the world. Connection is the core of this new world and the speeding up of communication has impacts on daily life as well. As the most active users of the new medias, young people, university students from two different contexts were examined in this study to be able to understand their perspectives on such changes in social and daily life. This study set out to explain social life of university students from a comparative perspective.

Concerning the general social media usage of university students, this research showed that in both cases certain platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Youtube are more popular while others are less preferred because they are thought to be more difficult. The reasons for using social media are for contacts, communication, pleasure, sharing, information and keeping memories. Students make use of platforms according to their needs. They prefer platforms where they can have more audience and relations with people they know. There is not a major difference between the two cases except for the fact that in Istanbul, participants use different platforms more than in Rome.

Another core aspect of social life that was examined in the study is relationships. Participants continue their relationship with family on their social media however, this relationship creates uneasiness and the collapsing of multiple contexts makes it difficult to juggle with different social norms and rules on one platform which

eventually makes participants experience a feeling of surveillance. Therefore, WhatsApp as a more private platform is preferred for family relations. On the contrary, it also has positive sides as the far relatives and the elder relatives of family keep contact more easily. The one difference between the two cases is that in Italy participants are more comfortable with family on their social media, yet even for them parents are thought to use it as a source of surveillance which limit their freedom. The communication feels to be more limited on certain platforms, it is seen only as an exchange of visuals and likes.

When it comes to friending or friends on social media, participants prefer to have people they know on their social media, having people they don't know is considered to be worrisome for those platforms where they share more private content. On the other hand, when starting a friendship, social media eases the process especially for those who are shy. It is thought that friendships on social media are superficial and less serious, which can be interpreted as one effect of non-face-to-face communication. The study has shown that social media is considered a news source about friends, without having to contact each other, friends are kept updated about the new, changes and event in each others' lives.

An important finding in the study showed that, out of all the relationships that the participants were asked about, romantic relationships were thought to be the ones being affected the most from social media. Some negative effects mentioned were; jealousy, cheating, too much exposure. The fact that couples are exposed more and open their relationship to the public brings certain comments and comparisons which could result in disagreements in the relationship. There was only one good effect of social media in romantic relationships mentioned which was that couples would need to be more honest as social media everything done is easier to follow and find on social media. Though a good majority of students stated they would not use social media to meet someone, social media is seen as a tool to get information about someone they will or would like to meet. Social media acts like a cv for such relationships, showing the necessary information about someone, their past and even more such as their list of friends and family. It was also found in the study that generally participants chose not to share their romantic relationship unless it was serious. The reason is mainly because the 'exposure' element makes users vulnerable when a relationship has problems or when it ends.

As last, for their formal contacts, it was found that students are okay with adding their formal contacts on social media as social media is a part of every business today. Seeing their formal contacts on social media lets them see the personal life of their contact which is something they would not normally know. However, e-mail remains as the favoured form of communication.

Another aspect of social life addressed in connection with social media was the issue of sharing. It can be said that sharing is seen as a habitual, automatic, collective action. For many participants, though shared with a wider audience in appearance, the intentional audience, the one which is actually addressed is small and sometimes it is only one person. Sometimes a sharing is done just to give a message to one person indirectly. Furthermore, it is argued by the majority of participants that everyone is free to share but platforms have rules, and social media is the new public square and is developing its own rules.

From the findings, it was concluded that the disapproved content is similar in both cases. More importantly, it can be said that sharing on social media is not without any consideration, users still ask certain questions before sharing; such as checking for quality or pose or the correctness.

Sharing on social media is criticized to be self-centered, superficial and evolving more into 'showing'. Although criticized by many, the showing on social media is one of the most important motivations behind sharing. One common answer to the reason of sharing was that sharing is seen as a tool to spread culture and information. From the results, it can be discussed that not all that's shared is serious. Some of what's shared is only to have fun. Nevertheless, sharing on social media is very much favored for its archive function.

Reflecting on their daily life, participants considered enhanced communication, access to events and people, online shopping opportunities, quick news source, killing time when one has nothing to do as positive attributes of social media platforms. On the contrary, losing so much time and spending from their free time, social media turning into addiction, and the compilation of different contexts were considered as negative. This result confirms the findings of boyd (2014) and her 'context collapse' concept.

With regard to privacy, for participants in both cases, privacy still keeps its importance and the preferences could change according to the platform.

From the results it was seen that there was no significant difference between the two cases. The only significant difference was that the participants in Rome seem to be more comfortable with privacy settings. All in all, the study demonstrated that, in the global world that university students are living in, despite being participants from different parts of the world, living a life which is social-media bound, the process they experienced in their social life is similar.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Profiles of the Participants for Case 1 - Istanbul

# Of Participant	Age	Gender	University	Date
1.	21	F	Boğaziçi University-Industrial Engineering	02/03/2017
2.	21	F	Boğaziçi University-History	02/03/2017
3.	25	M	Boğaziçi University- Science Teaching	02/03/2017
4.	23	F	Beykent University- Machine Engineering	05/03/2017
5.	20	M	Marmara University- International Trade	06/03/2017
6.	28	F	Yıldız Technical University- Philosophy Masters	12/03/2017
7.	28	M	Yıldız Technical University- Humanities and Social Sciences Masters	04/03/2017
8.	22	M	FSMV University – Civil Engineering	06/03/2017
9.	24	F	FSMV University- Biomedical Engineering	06/03/2017
10.	28	M	Boğaziçi University- English	10/03/2017

Language Teaching Masters						
11.	22	F	FSMV	University	-	12/03/2017
			Architecture			
12.	20	F	Yıldız Technical University-			07/03/2017
			International Relations			
13.	25	M	Boğaziçi University			02/03/2017
14.	27	F	Bahçeşehir University-English			19/03/2017
			Language Teaching			
15.	20	M	FSMV University–	Civil		30/03/2017
			Aviation and Cabin Services			

Appendix 2: Profiles of the Participants for Case 2 - Rome

# Of Participant	Age	Gender	University	Date
1.	26	F	Sapienza-Medicine	05/05/2016
2.	26	M	Sapienza-Economics	06/05/2016
3.	25	F	Sapienza - Archeology	19/05/2016
4.	25	M	Sapienza - Architecture	23/05/2016
5.	22	F	Tor Vergata - Engineering	30/05/2016
6.	23	M	Tor Vergata - Engineering	18/05/2016
7.	26	M	Tor Vergata- Engineering, Master	28/04/2016

8.	23	M	Tor Vergata- Architecture	28/04/2016
9.	24	M	Roma Tre – Human Resources, Master	25/05/2016
10.	24	M	Roma Tre- Political Science	12/05/2016
11.	20	M	Roma Tre- Languages	12/05/2016
12.	23	F	Roma Tre-Translation and Interpreting -Masters	06/06/2016
13.	21	F	Link Campus-Political Science	08/06/2016
14.	23	M	Link Campus – Political Science- Master	07/06/2016
15.	25	M	Sapienza - Architecture	23/05/2016
16.	23	F	Link Campus- Political Science	08/05/2016
17.	23	M	Luiss- Global Studies – Masters Student	30/06/2016
18.	26	F	Luiss- Political Science- Masters student	30/06/2017
19.	20	M	Luiss-Political Science	30/06/2016
20.	22	F	Luiss- International Relations	30/06/2016
21.	22	F	Lumsa- Psychology	12/07/2016
22.	23	F	Lumsa- Psychology	15/06/2016

23.	24	M	Lumsa- Psychology	15/06/2016
24.	20	F	Lumsa- Psychology	14/06/2016
25.	27	F	Sapienza-Medicine	05/05/2016
26.	23	F	Sapienza-Medicine	05/05/2016
27.	24	F	Sapienza- Humanities,Master	06/05/2016
28.	20	M	Roma Tre- Philosophy	12/05/2016
29.	20	F	Roma Tre- Languages	12/05/2016
30.	21	F	Roma Tre- Languages	12/05/2016
31.	25	M	Sapienza - Architecture	23/05/2016
32.	21	M	Sapienza - Architecture	23/05/2016
33.	26	M	Roma Tre- Law	23/05/2016
34.	28	M	Sapienza – Anthropology,Master	23/05/2016
35.	21	F	Tor Vergata- Arts	30/05/2016
36.	21	M	Sapienza - Intercultural Communication	30/05/2016
37.	24	M	Sapienza-Civil Engineering and Transport Systems- Master	26/06/2016
38.	23	M	Sapienza-Civil, Enviromental and Building Engineering,Master	26/06/2016

39.	25	M	Sapienza -Transport Systems Engineering	26/05/2016
40.	22	M	Link Campus -Political Science	14/06/2016
41.	22	M	Link Campus –Political Science-Master	07/06/2016
42.	23	F	Link Campus – Political Science- Master	07/06/2016
43.	25	M	Lumsa-Human Science	14/06/2016
44.	24	F	Lumsa-Clinical Psychology	14/06/2016
45.	21	M	Lumsa - Psychology	14/06/2016
46.	21	M	Lumsa-Psychology	14/06/2016
47.	23	F	Luiss – International Relations	30/06/2016
48.	22	F	Luiss – Political Science Masters Student	30/06/2016
49.	20	M	Luiss- Economics and Management	30/06/2016
50.	24	M	Sapienza – Physics	12/07/2016

Appendix 3: Interview Topics and Questions (English)

1. Information about the student's social media usage

- Which social media websites / applications do you prefer? (facebook / twitter / snapchat / periscope / whatsapp / instagram / youtube)
- How much time do you spend on social media?
- For what reasons do you use the social media?

2. Information about Relationships

Family

- Do you have family members added on your social media accounts?
- Is there any difference between your relationship to them on social media and in real life?
- Do you think having family members on social media affects what you do?

Friendship

- Do you have any considerations when adding people on your social media accounts? Do you have friends from different cultures or countries?
- Was there anything that a friend from another culture shared which you thought was inappropriate or odd? What was your approach to it?
- Do you have any considerations when sharing things about or with your friends?
- Is there a difference between your communication with friends on social media and in real life?

Romantic

- Do you / would you share online the info that you have a romantic relationship?
- People who have a romantic relationship, also sometimes meet others online. How do you approach this situation?
- Do you think social media has changed couples communication with or attitudes towards each other?

Formal

- Do you have any formal contacts on your social media accounts (i.e. professors, old teachers etc.)?

- Do you communicate using social media? Is there anything you pay attention to when talking to them?

3. Thoughts about Privacy

- Are your social media accounts private? For what reasons do you keep them public or private?
- Are there things you think people should not make public on social media?

4. Sharing

- What do you consider okay or appropriate to share online?
- What motivates you to share things on your social media accounts?
- When you want to share something online, is there anything you take into consideration?
- In your opinion, has social media changed our understanding of sharing (online or in real life)? How?

5. Social Media and Daily Life

- Do you criticize any kind of portrayal of daily life online?
- Are there certain things that changed in your daily life due to social media? (i.e. habits, attitudes etc.)

Further comments

Do you have anything further you would like to add?

Appendix 4: Mülakat Konuları & Soruları (Türkçe)

Mülakat Konuları & Soruları

1. Öğrencinin Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ile Alakalı Genel Sorular

- Hangi sosyal medya platformlarını kullanıyorsunuz? (Facebook / Twitter / Snapchat / Periscope / Whatsapp / Instagram / Youtube)
- Her gün sosyal medyayı takip etmek için ne kadar zaman ayırıyorsunuz?
- Sosyal medyayı neler için / hangi amaçlarla kullanıyorsunuz?

2. İlişkiler

Aile

- Sosyal medya hesaplarınıza aile bireylerini / akrabalarınızı ekliyorsunuz musunuz?
- Aile /akrabalarınızla sosyal medyadaki ve gerçek hayattaki ilişkiniz arasında bir fark var mı?
- Ailenizden birilerinin / akrabalarınızın takipçiniz ya da arkadaşınız olması yaptıklarınızı etkiliyor mu?

Arkadaşlıklar

- Sosyal medya hesaplarınıza kişileri eklerken / takip edenlere onay verirken neleri göz önünde bulundurursunuz?
- Şimdiye kadar takip ettiğiniz kişilerin paylaşımlarında sizi rahatsız eden bir şey oldu mu?
- Arkadaşlarınızla ya da arkadaşlarınız hakkında bir şey paylaşacağınızda dikkat ettiğiniz hususlar var mı?
- Arkadaşlarınızla sosyal medyadaki ve gerçek hayattaki ilişkiniz arasında bir fark var mı?

Romantik

- Romantik ilişkinizi sosyal medyada paylaşıyor musunuz?
- Sosyal medya yeni birileriyle tanışmak, görüşmek için kullanabiliyor, böyle ilişkiler konusunda düşünceniz nedir?
- Sizce sosyal medyanın çiftlerin arasındaki ilişki ve iletişim üzerinde etkileri var mıdır?

Resmi

- Sosyal medya hesaplarınıza resmi ilişkiniz olan kişileri ekler misiniz? (Üniversite hocaları vb.)

- Sosyal medyayı resmi ilişkiniz olan kişilerle iletişim için kullanır mısınız? İletişimde dikkat ettiğiniz hususlar nelerdir?

3. Mahremiyet

- Sosyal medya hesaplarınız herkese açık mı? Bu seçiminizdeki sebepler nelerdir?
- Sizce sosyal medyada kamuya açık olarak paylaşılmaması gereken şeyler nelerdir?

4. Paylaşım

- Sizce sosyal medyada paylaşılabilir şeyler nelerdir? Sosyal medyada kesinlikle paylaşılmaması gereken şeyler var mıdır?
- Sosyal medyada paylaşım yapmanızın sebepleri nelerdir?
- Sosyal medyada paylaşım yapmadan önce düşündüğünüz şeyler var mı?
- Sizce sosyal medya ‘paylaşım’ kavramını anlayış biçimimizi değiştirdi mi? Evet ise nasıl?

5. Sosyal Medya ve Günlük Hayat

- Sosyal medyada günlük hayattan neler paylaşılabilir, neler paylaşılmamalı?
- Sosyal medya kullanımınızdan sonra günlük hayatınızda değişiklikler oldu mu? (Örn. Alışkanlıklar, tutum vb..)

İlave yorum

Eklemek istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?

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