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Media Policy in Israel: The New Structure of Public Broadcasting

Yaron Katz

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The research examines the combination of public and commercial broadcasting in Israel, where a unique mixed model with commercial broadcasting under public supervision has been developed. Israel's media policy is examined here as a case study for a country that is constantly debating the need to protect local culture in a competitive, highly advanced and global media market. Whereas media policy had traditionally been based on the European public broadcasting model, the commercial environment today is different in many ways from the traditional broadcasting sector, as new technologies and global culture are dominating. The mixed model, which was adopted in Europe after the transition to competitive and commercial media, also applies to Israel to date while representing a compromised structure of public, commercial, and new media broadcasting. The paper describes the current incarnation of European-style public service television in Israel, focusing specifically on the often-problematic integration of commercial broadcasting into a state-operated broadcasting system built on the premise of "public good". In doing so, it raises some fundamental questions about the continued viability of public television in Israel and suggests that new policy objectives, commercialization, competition, and new technology have become more important than government involvement in the market.

Keywords: public broadcasting, Israel, Europe, mixed model, commercialization

Introduction

Israeli media has undergone a complete transformation in its media policy and structure (Gilboa, 2008). Still, the most problematic section in this evaluation is government involvement in the market, as a central characteristic of Israeli broadcast media is the development under public supervision. Although this policy has been modified to match changes in global communications, it remains inclusive and influential on all branches of the broadcast media (Katz, 2009). This structure still stands today, since all broadcasting stations, both public and commercial, are under public supervision.

Media policy in Israel should be examined based on the European experience, although, as argued by Freedman (2006), a focus on the policy-making process is needed to examine local issues at a time of considerable change in the global media environment. The question how to organize public broadcasting in the rapidly changing broadcasting landscape is an issue common to all countries, and examining the local policy-making process raises the question of how the relation between public broadcasters and the government can be best organized. As in other countries, the government has been directly involved in establishing new policy, although what makes Israel different is that the government is still the most influential player in both

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public and commercial broadcasting. Bardoel and D'Haenens (2008) claimed that since the “dualization” of broadcasting, the traditionally preferred partner of European public broadcasting services—the government—has taken a more distant and critical stance towards public broadcasting, both at a European and a national level, as a result of more market-oriented policies. In contrast, in Israel, two decades after private broadcasting and commercial television began, the broadcast media still awaited the breakthrough to independence. In the current situation, broadcasting is not truly private, not truly commercial, and not truly independent. The government remains fully involved in all aspects of broadcasting, through the appointment of public councils, determining annual budgets and providing the franchise system. This policy also applies to commercial television, as the government and the public council determine the terms of the franchises, including the amount of local production, type of programming, schedule and the total investment according to the proposed programming.

The media system can be described as the actual set of the mass media in a given national society (McQuail, 2000), and indeed the development of the broadcast media can be seen as a symptom to the development of the Israeli society. Although Israel has a well-established democracy, there exists a wide gap between the leading role of the country in advanced technology and its policy for the broadcast media. On the one hand, Israel is considered an advanced high-tech country. It was referred to by Bill Gates as the “second Silicon Valley”; It is ranked second only to the U.S. in the number of companies listed in the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation (NASDAQ); And it dedicates 4.8% of its budget to support high-tech—more than any other country, according to former Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert. The sitting Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, predicts that by the end of the decade Israel could become one of the 10 leading economies in the world, competing directly with the economies of Britain and France¹. In contrast, the development of the broadcast media is constantly lagging behind that of European countries. Soffer (2008) found that politicians delayed introducing television into the Israeli public sphere for as long as possible, as the long-lasting debate over television touched on issues of state identity, culture, and security. For more than 20 years, the public broadcasting channel monopolized television broadcasting and it was only in the early 1990s that commercial television and cable services were introduced, thereby abandoning the monopoly status of the public broadcasting service. It was not until the start of the 21st century that a national satellite service and a second commercial television channel had started, and this stalemate continued to date. A partial digital terrestrial service starts recently and is scheduled to be fully operational with 18 channels in 2013, and the government is planning a switchover to a licensing system in the commercial television market, to be implemented sometime between 2013 and 2015.

The development of the Israeli broadcast media can be seen as a part of a mixed model that allows new media and commercial services while protecting the main principles of public broadcasting. This dual system has been implemented according to the structure that dominated European broadcasting for many years (Katz, 2009), known as the mixed model (McQuail, 1995). Flew (2006) explained that the dual broadcasting system has become more relevant worldwide since governmental commitment to countervailing power in the media policy sphere provides an important space for the exercise of activism in the broadcast policy sphere. The mixed model in Israel can be seen as a compromised structure, where despite the adoption of new services, public broadcasting remains influential, in order to promise high quality of programs. The transition to market

¹ In an interview in *Makor Reashon* (a weekly journal in Israel), June 15, 2007, p. 10.

policies is balanced with the continuation of public supervision, as the government establishes the legal framework to allow private commercial broadcasting and new media to operate while supervising that these obligations are fulfilled (Doron, 2001).

The research examines changes in media policy in Israel following the impact of cultural perceptions and technological developments. It concentrates on changes in Israel's broadcast media as a way to evaluate the policy of protecting and encouraging local production. In doing so, the research attempts to explore the counter-relationship between culture and new media while concentrating on the perceived changes in communications culture as a subject that identifies more culturally vulnerable countries, such as Israel. Although the passage from local issues to commercial dominance is gradual, it is possible to distinguish a policy of local culture encouragement, which includes a demand for a given minimum of local programs and limitation of commercialization and influence of the global communications culture.

The research examines the main principles under which public broadcasting had been established in Israel, based on the model implemented in Europe, and raises questions about the integration of public and commercial broadcasting. It deals with the mixed model by comparing European and Israeli media policy and evaluating the prospects for this model in Israel. In doing so, the research examines the new structure of public broadcasting in light of the challenges ahead, with the plans of the government to initiate further changes in the broadcasting market. As the essay observes, continuous internal re-figurations are common in the contemporary multi-channel landscape in Europe as well as in Israel. The changes the essay addresses represent transformational challenge to the Israeli model of public television, drastically altering television policy and its accompanying sets of ideologies, philosophies, and approaches to television's relationship with the state—and the state's public articulation of television's role in the life and culture of its citizenry.

This changing course of media policy and the globalization process offer several research questions, which would be answered by the data put forward in this research:

- (1) What has been the role of policy changes in Europe in establishing a new policy in Israel?
- (2) Does the process of change in media policies demonstrate that commercial considerations have prevailed over public service perceptions?
- (3) Could it be concluded that despite the differences between countries, reflecting different policy styles with special characteristics, media policy can be analyzed as a global process common to Europe and Israel?

The Public Broadcasting Model

The public broadcasting model dominated European broadcasting until the 1980s, as monopolistic broadcasting bodies were under political supervision with complete control on every topic of broadcasting. The supervising councils were chosen by the government to appropriately represent the interests of the general public and provide equal service and diversity in transmissions to the public. They had to guarantee non-dependence on political or commercial forces and maintain quality public broadcasting. The political representation in the supervising bodies matched the system of powers that had been established in the legislative houses in the every country—to properly represent the national division of political influence of the range of groups in the population (McQuail, 1995).

This structure was distinctive so long as public authorities controlled broadcasting and the development of private broadcasting channels was generally restricted through limiting regulatory regime (McQuail, De-Mateo, & Tapper, 1993). The traditional method of regulating the broadcasting sector was government ownership or

licensed monopolies. Regulatory measures were designed to ensure diversity, fairness, and minority interests that only public service organizations operated by public authorities and not subject to commercial considerations could guarantee. Broadcasting was aimed at serving the public good and was independent of economic and political interests. Although there were many variations according to national priorities and traditions, the generally accepted version of public service broadcasting was one that tried in the public interest to advance the quality of service and deplored the notion of diversity and a national political or cultural interest (Brants & Siune, 1994).

The “old structure” of broadcasting was restricted to limited channels and programming choice and enforced requirements for educational and cultural programming (Katz, 2000). This concept defined broadcasting as a common valued resource that a democratic government should organize the collective welfare of its citizens to ensure that they were properly informed and educated as well as entertained (Siune & McQuail, 1993). According to this structure, the role of public broadcasting was to educate, enlighten, and help making better citizens, as well as to entertain. It was legally obligated to represent the interest of all parts of society, including minorities, and provide a universal service—however, be non-commercial, so that the idea of public service broadcasting would not be dependent on commercial consideration (Katz, 2005).

The development of the broadcast media in Israel followed the trail of European broadcasting. With the beginning of television broadcasting, the public broadcasting model became dominant, based on the European experience. The goal was to serve the good of the public and be independent of political or commercial influence, with emphasis on educational and local culture programs. To achieve these goals, the public broadcasting organization (the Broadcasting Authority) was obliged to promise representation of all groups of the population that required giving true expression to a range of opinions, tastes, interests, traditions, preferences, beliefs, and local subcultures—including different regional representation, minorities, and languages. (Katz, 1971, p. 250)

The reasons for establishing public broadcasting were based on technological, political, social, and cultural considerations (Azrahi, Ben-Shachar, & Valal, 1997; Libes, 1998; Weiman, 1998). Technologically, public broadcasting developed as a means to control the national frequencies, which were considered limited public resource. Politically, because of the great influence of television, there was a need for political supervision of broadcasting so that it would be of educational and cultural nature (rather than leave the responsibility in private hands—that would represent commercial goals that were not for the good of the public). Socially, Israel is small in both area and population, and the limited competition and commercial potential prevented transferring the control of public broadcasting to the hands of commercial entrepreneurs. And culturally, television was an important element in the process of social unity, as part of a demographic structure that encouraged immigrant absorption, which affected all groups of population (Israel has been considered as a country of immigrants, and the public television service was an important means in creating an immigrants’ society) (Gil, 1986; Caspi & Limor, 1992).

The structure of the broadcast media was based on the four main principles of the European public broadcasting model:

(1) Monopoly—Public broadcasting was a monopoly that occupied a politically sensitive position and responded to the typical concerns of the elite and the political system. The Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Law was legislated in 1965, promising the public authority monopolistic control over radio and television. This monopoly was broken only in the early 1990s, with the start of cable transmissions and a commercial broadcasting service;

(2) Cultural programming—Requirement for programming that represented diverse tastes, interests and subcultures, and different regions and minority languages. The transmission of public and educational programming was an important mission of the public broadcasting service, which had the duty to strengthen the connections between the Jewish traditions and encourage Hebrew culture;

(3) Public financing—The method of finance was license fees, and broadcasting was non-commercial in nature, designed to shield program making from the need to make profit. The main financial source of public broadcasting in Israel was license fees (in addition to radio advertising and limited non-commercial advertising on television);

(4) Public accountability—Supervision was achieved through regulatory bodies that were responsible to maintain universal service, diversity, editorial independence, social responsibility, and cultural transmissions. IBA was established in the likeness of the BBC, directed by a directive council representing the cultural and educational segments in society, and had to be independent of the government, thus representing the public good and not political interests (McQuail, 1995; Caspi, 1996; Caspi & Limor, 1992; Ayalon, 1994).

In examining the changes in media policy in Israel, it is evident that the public service structure still stands today, as all broadcasting stations, both public and commercial, are under public supervision. These include new outlets—commercial broadcasting stations supported by advertising and new technology of cable and satellite which are financed through subscription fees. With the addition of new services, the traditional structure was changed into a mixed model, combining public and commercial broadcasting under the same public principles.

The Mixed Model

With the introduction of commercial broadcasting and cable services in Europe, the public broadcasting system became under pressure (Etzioni-Halevi, 1987). Common to all countries was that traditional public service broadcasting became under scrutiny with questions being raised about the viability of continued public funding (Harrison & Wessels, 2005). The revised public broadcasting model, which became known as the mixed model, permitted limited competition and limited amount of entertainment programming to be transmitted within the strict structure of cultural content of broadcasting organizations. Limited advertising was also permitted, although it was regulated so that public broadcasting organizations could maintain their non-commercial nature (McQuail, 1995). The new policy can be considered as a mixed structure of broadcasting, which includes greater reliance on market forces and greater belief in economic growth (Dyson & Humphreys, 1997).

New policies were initiated through the adoption of new technologies and national plans. Technological renovations start to dominate, since in multi-channel media there is no restriction in the number of channels, and thus the limitations of the off-air system could not address policy anymore. Deregulation policies were adopted, with the result that the transition from public and monopolistic media to an advanced system included competition between technologies and a variety of television stations (Katz, 2005).

European broadcasting systems developed within a “mixed structure”, which included three main principles: mixed sources of revenue (advertising and license fees); mixed goals (some determined by governments and politicians, some determined by professionals, some by interest groups and some by the audience); and diverse supports within each society (the political elite, the cultural elite, public authorities, the press, and the audience). A typical feature of the new structure was that despite the changed nature of public

broadcasting, the main goals had not changed, and even the limited commercialization permitted was restricted to public control. Although the original objectives of public broadcasting had been redefined and the means to accomplish these objectives had been revised—the basic arrangements of the broadcasting media remained unchanged. According to McQuail (1995), the revised structure had a mixed system of public service, accountable to the people through Parliament and private enterprise. The broadcasting authorities worked according to the terms and conditions set by the Parliament but had editorial and managerial independence. Legislation on broadcasting was often the result of a lengthy period of extra-parliamentary activity, as well as parliamentary discussion and decision. A distinctive character of this structure was that the will of the Parliament and other public authorities had been most crucial to the development of broadcasting.

The change of direction meant that media policy combined the old structure of broadcasting and new media policy objectives based on a mixed structure of public and commercial goals. When private stations were first licensed, it was generally understood that like the public channel they too should reflect the diversity of public opinion and serve public interest through the transmission of local production (Cuilenburg & Slaa, 1993). This trend reflected the transfer of influence from cultural objectives, dominated by social and political forces, to economic determinism, dominated by market interests (Vedel & Dutton, 1990).

The structure of public broadcasting services changed since the availability of new media left traditional public organizations exposed to competition for audience and revenues. The sinking revenues, from advertising or the license fees, and the rising cost of program material in the marketplace, forced public channels to initiate structural reforms to reduce the financial pressure and continue the obligation to serve the public good (Katz, 2000). The state of public stations became difficult with the loss of viewers, identity, and political support, and resulted in the collapse of the public service nature of media policies and triumph of commercial perceptions. As a result, the license fee, a classic public service mode of funding, has been questioned, with growing interest in extending the scope of commercial forms of finance (Katz, 2005).

The exploitation of cable and satellite left traditional public broadcasting organizations vulnerable and gave new media better opportunities in the marketplace by exposing broadcasting outlets to a harsher competition for audience and revenues. The development of new media created a global trend of technological advancement and orientation of free market. This process demonstrates that the development of new media and advanced technologies has become guided by global media policy, despite local differences between countries (Murdock, 2005; Harrison & Wessels, 2005).

The restructuring of broadcasting systems resulted in the addition of private commercial stations and new technologies (Brants & Siune, 1994). Governments across Europe determined that public broadcasting corporations were no longer to be the sole providers of television programming but they had to make room for private broadcasting. This change of media policy emphasized the rise of political parties committed to privatization and deregulation policies and established a new social, political, and economic structure for media policy. Under this structure, the entry of new media and telecommunications interest groups can be seen as a major influence on policy. In response to these pressures, deregulation policies have been implemented by a variety of governments, but the extent of deregulation was also shaped by the amount of counter pressure of local forces—with the most prominent being public organizations and broadcasters (Katz, 2005).

As in Europe, Israel adopted the mixed model, creating a mix of public broadcasting and a free market approach (Lachman-Meser, 1997). Despite the will of the government to keep the power of public broadcasting in its hands, the addition of commercial and multi-channel services was a result of the changes in the political

and public atmosphere. The development of new media demonstrated the transition from public to commercial broadcasting and from local policy to a multi-channel structure, and created major changes in the broadcasting policy (Schejter, 2003).

The mixed structure of combining commercial broadcasting under public supervision developed in Israel because cultural aspects consolidated in every broadcast means, based on regulatory preferences for cultural and informational programs. This policy is implemented through supervising bodies, whose job is to ensure that local productions be transmitted in addition to commercial programming (Noam, 2001). According to this structure, despite the continuing of public supervision in all broadcast means, the characteristics of supervision changed following the transition to commercial broadcasting. Public policies have been influenced by a clear tendency of the transition to commercial policies based on competition. Like in Europe, Israel also awakened the public broadcasting model that characterized the country for many years, with the breakup of the monopoly, the transition to private ownership, and the expansion of commercial channels. The monopolistic television changed to a multi-channel system, with commercial television and cable and satellite broadcasting. The new structure offers a combined approach, where next to each other there are privately financed cultural and commercial programming and publicly financed government broadcasts.

As part of the mixed model and limited commercialization, the television advertising market expanded mildly following the addition of a second general commercial channel (Channel 10) and designated channels transmitted through cable and satellite—an Israeli channel in Russian, an Israeli music channel and an Arabic channel. As part of the mixed structure, the limited advertising market is needed to maintain the requirements for original production. The opposition to further expansion of commercial advertising maintains that the television advertising market cannot expand any further than its current dimension because new channels would not be able to transmit the required amount of local programming which are more expensive, and survive in the competition.

According to this structure, there are only two national channels and three special-interest channels that are permitted to carry commercial advertising. The compromised structure has remained almost unchanged, despite technological changes, based mainly on a commonly-agreed principle that there is a status-quo between the three branches of the broadcast media—public broadcasting is financed through the license fees; The commercial services have a monopolized status over commercial advertising; And cable and satellite are financed through subscription fees. This structure is voiced every time a change in policy, as the need for additional financing comes from sources other than advertising, namely license and subscription fees. This structural division is in great respect as a result of the set conflict and the need to upgrade the range of broadcasting via adding commercial channels and the need to maintain the public character of broadcasting.

The mixed requirements for public and commercial content can be best demonstrated in that with the exception of commercial regulations, the role of the supervisor is copied almost completely from the Broadcasting Authority Law. The franchises for the commercial channels are based mainly on demands for public programming. They are required to fulfill some of the obligations that the main public channel has failed to provide, and thus cannot be considered as purely commercial channels. The franchises include specific sections of original production, representing issues like local culture, local science and history, different segments of the population, peripheral areas and Jewish heritage. They place an emphasis on programs involved with culture, literature, art, Israeli music, and social programs. Requirements of content are for local production, drama programming, news and programming in Arabic and Russian. Supervision on broadcasting

programs has been established on all channels, especially the national commercial channels. The Second Channel Law obligates high proportion of original production, and the Third Channel Law, which allowed the establishment of an additional commercial television channel, obligated even higher proportion (although this obligation was not imposed on Channel 10, because it had been unsuccessful and could only survive as long as these regulations had not been enforced)².

The duty of maintaining local culture enforces the principle of “quality programming” on the new map of the broadcast media. The original version of ITV (British Channel 3) was used in the Second Channel Law and later, the Third Channel Law: the channels are activated by private companies and above them public supervision. It is interesting in that respect those requirements for local production show a consistent pattern of increase. The original franchise for Channel 2 required 33% local production; This proportion was raised to 40% in the franchise for Channel 10, and has now increased to 50% in the new franchise for the Channel 2³.

The law sees Channels 2 and 10 as public television stations, when practically the main difference between them and Channel 1 (the all-public network) is through the financing of the transmissions (commercial and non-commercial advertisements) (Noam, 2001). The combination between public and commercial broadcasting appears in the goals set by law and in the franchises, which provide the character and content of the channels (Doron, 2001). Accordingly, the Second Authority for Television and Radio sees every one of these channels as commercial, since the establishment, action and execution of broadcasts as financed by the commercial operators, and along with this, it is meticulous about the quality of broadcast, as a response to the needs of unique groups of the population and in relation to the public considerations⁴.

The mixed structure is also evident in that although the national television channels—both public and commercial—are under public supervision, they differ in the means of finance. The public broadcasting service (IBA) is a state-run medium that by nature is non-commercial, while the services operated by the Second Television and Radio Authority are commercial. In practice, however, the mixed model has been subject to pressures for further commercialization, with the result these definitions are not consistent. The public broadcasting service is funded partly by commercial and non-commercial advertising and commercial services are dependent on public service requirements and restrictions.

The state of broadcasting in Israel can be compared to that in Europe in that broadcasting has been within national jurisdiction. Although broadcasting policy has become exposed to the influence of EU policy-making (Harcourt, 2005), the EU regulatory framework does not deal with “the heart and soul” of television regulation, namely public service broadcasting (or “positive” programming) (Michalis (2007). Thus, despite the greater role played by the EU, broadcasting policy in Europe has remained deeply embroiled in domestic politics (D’Arma, 2009). In Israel too, it was the government that had to establish the legal framework to allow private

² Channel 10, started in February 2002, had almost collapsed in the first year of its operation, losing more about 50 million dollars. The main difficulties were the high proportion of local production which required versing the limited ratings of the channel. Following regulatory initiatives, the obligations were eased and the channel managed to continue its operations, although it provided no real competition to Channel 2. See for example: “The Pressure on the Regulator Does Succeed”, in *Globs*, This Evening Section, April 1, 2003.

³ These rules have also been applied to the renewed franchise of Channel 2, starting from November 2005. The rules in the first franchise included a demand for at least one third of the broadcasting time devoted to local and original production, and in Channel 10 franchise a limit of 40% was imposed (before it was changed by the regulators). The current franchise for Channel 2 requires 50% (since the channel includes only two operators, instead of three in the previous structure, the amount of original programming is much higher).

⁴ According to the Head of Israeli Television, in an interview in Yedioth Aharonot. See *The Journal of the Public Officer*, Yedioth Aharonot, Seven Days Section, pp. 30-34, April 29, 2005.

commercial broadcasting and new media developments.

In examining the role of the government in Israel, it is clear that the adoption of the mixed model is based on the same structural changes as European media. Although countries differed in the extent of the public supervision, they all represented a strong commitment by governments to exploring cultural objectives by determining the nature of the development of broadcasting outlets. Variances in the current positioning and structures of public broadcasting services derive from specific national contexts (social, political, and economic) and differences in cultural traditions (Debrett, 2009). In Israel too, the extent of deregulation was shaped by the counter pressure of local forces—with the most prominent public organizations and broadcasters. The mixed model can be seen as a compromised structure. On the one hand, the restructuring of the broadcasting system resulted in the addition of private commercial stations and new technologies, as the government determined that public broadcasting was no longer to be the sole providers of television programming but they had to make room for private broadcasting. On the other hand, the transition to market policies is balanced with the continuation of public supervision, as the government establishes the legal framework to allow private commercial broadcasting and new media to operate and the public councils supervise that these obligations to be fulfilled.

The similarities to Europe are also in the cultural aspects of the broadcasting policy, as the mixed model increased the formal and cultural diversity of programming beyond what the commercial sector alone can offer and in ways that allows for specified minority interests to be served (Dunleavy, 2008). In Israel too, when private stations were licensed, it was decided that like the public channel, they should reflect the diversity of public opinion and include high proportion of local production, and supervisory institutions were set up to guarantee the coexistence of public and private broadcasting. Based on the policy adopted in Europe, these institutions have to provide that the private channels comply with the conditions of the licensing agreements. Different from Europe however, all new media services defined as local channels are obligated in different quotas of original production, although in a low quota in comparison to national channels⁵.

The New Mixed Model

The mixed model has been undergoing tremendous changes everywhere due to commercial competition and new media technologies. The main difficulties in implementing the model in Europe were in the tensions of broadcasters with liberalizers with regard to public broadcasting services (Harcourt, 2005). As a result, European broadcasting has experienced a period of continuous changes, associated with changes in communication policy as well as a series of technological developments. But as explained by Papathanassopoulos (2005), while each and every country dealt with the issues and the pressures for change in different ways, what united European policies was the sense that these issues were common to all. The common aspects of the new broadcast policy can be seen in that despite differing political philosophies, there has been a general trend to deregulation and reduction of direct controls, as market forces remain the primary determinant of primary directions (Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield, & Greco, 2004).

⁵ All local channels (which are defined as Israeli channels and transmitted on cable and satellite) are also obligated to transmit local programming. The 2001 Telecommunications Law sets the rules for commercial advertising in foreign channels. Any channel with more than 25% of the ads dedicated to the Israeli public is designated as a channel that is aimed primarily at Israel and cannot be commercial. The Cable and Broadcasting Council set additional strict rules on the transmission of foreign channels that include programs aimed at the Israeli public. They examined mainly two Russian channels which appeal to the large Russian population in Israel: RTV International and ORT International, and restricted their operations.

Thus, despite differing political philosophies in Europe, there has been a general trend to deregulation and reduction of direct controls, and the new policies resulted in the collapse of early perceptions and the triumph of commercialization and new media (Alexander et al., 2004). This has not been different in Israel, which faces the same challenges in establishing a new mixed model. Initially, the exploitation of commercial media left public broadcasting vulnerable and started competition for audience and revenues. Since then the media market has undergone far-reaching and profound changes with the emergence of technological innovations and deregulatory policies, as the new policy combines the old structure of broadcasting and new media policy objectives based on a mixed structure of public and commercial goals. As in other countries, the addition of commercial and multi-channel services was a result of the changes in the political and public atmosphere, as the development of new media demonstrated the transition from public to commercial broadcasting and from local policy to a multi-channel structure, and created major changes in the broadcasting policy.

The adoption of a new policy in Europe resulted in the relative decline of public service broadcasting and the rise of commercial forms of broadcasting (Meier, 2003). While social responsibility and accountability are still ambitious notions, commercial channels have primarily been preoccupied gaining themselves a position in the market (Barcel & Haenens, 2004). This has also been the case for Israel, where the public channel, Channel 1, lost its supremacy as the main channel in Israel. For as long as it had monopoly over television programming, mainly news, it enjoyed 80%-90% average ratings, and with the introduction of Channel 2 dropped initially to around 20% and later less than 10% in average. Channel 2 replaced Channel 1 as the main channel for information and entertainment. It became the most popular channel, initially with ratings around 40%-50%, and in recent years dropped to annual average around 15%, according to the Ratings Committee. Still, its leading status has not changed, and the channel is considered as the central channel of Israel. Key events receive high ratings and the limitations of the advertising market make advertising on Channel 2 very lucrative. Since late 2011, many programs receive high ratings of more than 30%. None of the other channels, including Channel 10 and the public channel, is able to compete with its public and cultural dominance.

The future of public service broadcasting has been debated over the last 25 years around the world, generally in anticipation of its demise (Murdock, 2005). Governments and regulators are under pressure to justify their policies for public services, as the future of the typical European dual system of broadcasting seems to hang in the balance (Jakubovice, 2004). Debrett (2009) explained that although they continued to attract very high levels of public trust, public broadcasting services were facing opposition from commercial broadcasters and new media and on-line services. As a result, public service broadcasting has to legitimize its existence, both in terms of positive and explicit political and cultural purposes, and as a compensation for the market failure of private partners, threatening the traditional European concept of Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)—as a universal and comprehensive service, reflecting Europe's cultural diversity, and independent from both the state and the market (Bardoel & D'Haenens, 2008).

In a complex and changing communication environment, the mixed model is being subject to increasing scrutiny (Harrison & Wessels, 2005). While the old public broadcasting principles are shifting, they continue to validate public service institutions as the best positioned to deliver independent news and current affairs content, to contribute cultural and programming diversity, and to service national conversations about identity. Still, after three decades of dual broadcasting in Europe, public broadcasters are at the heart of public attention (Bardoel & D'Haenens, 2008), as their basic problems are the commercialization and digitization of the broadcast sector and an overall unfavorable political climate with governments seeming less willing to provide

adequate financial conditions (Murdock, 2001).

The mixed model is under threat in Israel too, as its structure is in a constant process of change. The local communications revolution comprises of a gradual passage from limited public broadcasting to competitive commercial broadcasting, coupled with the adoption of new media services and advanced technology (Schejter, 2003). This transformation can be seen as a three-stage process. It started with the transfer from the single channel television reality to a multi-channel system—the start of cable television and the establishment of a commercial television channel. It continued with the commencement of direct satellite broadcasts and the establishment of an additional national commercial channel, designated channels financed by advertising and non-commercial private channels broadcasted via cable and satellite. In terms of technology, the growth of new media in the third stage has been enormous. Despite the late start of cable services, they have developed swiftly, providing advanced services of multi-channel digital programming and interactive applications. The launch of a satellite service was also late in comparison with other advanced countries, although it provides competition to cable and is also well-advanced with a fully digital service and interactive applications. The new mixed model is due to advance to a more competitive structure—with licenses to commercial channels, a Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) system and two additional IPTV multi-channel services⁶.

In examining this development course, it is evident that Israel has followed the direction of the mixed model that developed in Europe in terms of the impact of new technology. The mixed model faces new challenges today, as the transition to digital TV can be compared to other historical changeovers in television (Castaneda, 2007). Debrett (2009) explained that on-demand media content represents a considerable challenge for national media—both commercial and public service—particularly for policies intended to protect national culture, although public service media generally enjoys some advantages in this regard, being publicly funded. Thus, as digital media technologies and platforms bring new problems, offering new ways and multiple channels for delivering public service programming, public service broadcasters enter new territory with regard to their audience, content and status in the marketplace, invoking more exacting requirements for governance and accountability.

The process that took place in public broadcasting Europe is underway in Israel. With the growth in the number of commercial channels it was difficult to justify the continuation of public broadcasting whose audience was diminishing. It became necessary for commercial advertising to finance public broadcasting, which lost their nature and identity and began to be influenced by financial power groups including advertisers and the advertising industry. The same changes are taking place in Israel today, although the policy of protecting local culture through the imposition of local programming still dominates the nature of the broadcasting system. The dominance of multi-channel culture arouses local opposition and obligates the creation of defense mechanisms over local cultures. The claims voiced are targeted at defending local culture from dominance by multi-channel culture and enable local broadcasts to compete with the commercial broadcasting environment. However this policy has provoked much criticism, as being all but a commercial policy, since the commercial franchises are considered as a “beauty context”, based on the requirement for local programming. Although the mixed structure still dominates, as all broadcasting outlets are under public supervision, the adoption of new media policy resulted in relative decline of public service broadcasting and rise of commercial forms of broadcasting. The resulting structure represents a shift in the nature of public

⁶ *Ynet*, March 21, 2012.

broadcasting, as the idea of free market as a substitute for public supervision has been gradually adopted. But the commitment to a balanced range of programming did not change, although private operators were given the freedom to exploit new media developments, broadcasting is still within national jurisdiction.

In examining the prospects for the mixed model, it is evident that Israeli broadcasting policy has followed global changes, although the new structure has also been established under the impact of local interest groups. The discord between public broadcasting service principles and technological advancement has had a particularly important role to play in the development of the mixed model. Whereas the addition of commercial services brought competition into the market, the division of the regulatory system still works according to the public broadcasting model, as public supervision is divided into public broadcasting, the commercial system, and multi-channel services. According to this structure, the Broadcasting Authority is a public-governmental body and the Second Authority for Television and Radio is a public body supervising commercial broadcasts. The third wing is cable and satellite, which are supervised by the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Council.

A governmental committee has recommended that the two latter councils be joined together, to operate under one supervising body for commercial broadcasting, and another committee has recommended that all branches of public supervision, including the Ministry of Communications, be terminated, and a central committee, which would be non-political, be established to supervise and direct the entire media and telecommunications sectors. According to the proposal, this would be the National Communications Authority, based on structure of federal communications agencies around the world. Though the government has approved the proposal, political and cultural disagreements on the structure and goals of the central committee have so far delayed Knesset's approval of its establishment⁷.

The inability of the government to establish a comprehensive and consecutive policy can be compared to the challenge for media policy-makers in Europe to deal with monopolies during periods of rapid technological change (Doyle, 2002). The debate over the structure of the broadcast media in Israel relates mainly to the character of supervision and the creation of further competition between technologies and commercial channels. The character of supervision is related to the lack of decision regarding the future structure of the media and its public or commercial policy. A topic found in the center of this public debate was the government's decision to switch from the franchising system to one in which licenses are given on a threshold condition. These are based on the principle of open-skies policy, although in reality licenses were to be given only to national commercial channels and according to the conditions that Channel 10 is obligated under. But following the unsuccessful early start of this channel⁸ there was a suspicion that this rule will not allow additional commercial channels, and the government decided to issue a franchise for the second period of Channel 2, thereby to delay the transition to licensing system.

The debate over the structure of commercial television allows understanding the different policies

⁷ The main issues in debate are: the limits of authority and goals of the authority; the extent of its independence and the counter relations with the government, Knesset and other authorities; the counter relations with the service providers under its authority; its involvement and control of frequencies; whether one agency be responsible for both infrastructure and transmissions, or different agencies would take the responsibility for these subjects; should it be responsible for mail services; the internal structure of the new authority and the role of the Ministry of Communications (or should it be cancelled).

⁸ Channel 10 started in February 2002 had almost collapsed in the first year of its operation, losing more about 50 million dollars. The main difficulties were the high proportion of local production required verses the limited ratings of the channel. Following regulatory initiatives, the obligations were eased and the channel managed to continue its operations, although it provides no real competition to Channel 2. See for example: "The Pressure on the Regulator Does Succeed", in *Globs*, This Evening Section, April 1, 2003.

advocated by different governments and at times even by the same government. Firstly, the government led by Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-1999) decided that the franchise for the second commercial channel (Channel 10) would be decided according to financial bid (70%) and programming representing Israeli culture (30%). While proceedings were under way the government headed by Ehud Barak (1999-2001) changed the criteria in favor of programming (70%) reducing the rate of the financial aid (30%). The government that followed, headed by Ariel Sharon (2001-2003), decided to switch from the franchising system to one in which licenses are given on a threshold condition. The request for threshold conditions had to be in relation to the strict conditions that Channel 10 is obligated under. But following the unsuccessful early start of this channel the second Sharon government (2003-2006) decided to issue a franchise for the second period of Channel 2, thereby to delay the transition to licensing system. The government already approved this major policy change, before canceling the decision and returning back to the franchising system. The present government, appointed in 2009, changed the policy once again, returning to the licensing system, scheduled to start in 2013. However, this transition is not certain, and the two franchisees of Channel 2 could hold on to their franchise until 2015. Alternatively, if they decide to switch to a license, thereby operating two independent channels (one for each of the franchise holders, in addition to Channel 10), they would have the benefit of operating a news company until 2018⁹.

Additional competition should be started also in 2013 with new multi-channel services. The Knesset approved to enlarge the current DDT service to 18 channels, with the inclusion of all public channels, providing additional competition to cable and satellite¹⁰, and the Minister of Communications announced that two licenses would be awarded to IPTV multi-channel services in the new national Internet service that should be operated¹¹.

Meanwhile, there are problems with the license of Channel 10. Its franchise is valid until the end of 2012, and the license is stalled because the channel wishes to pay its \$13 million franchise fees in programming, although this requires an amendment to the law. Only the government, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Communications can help the channel to receive the license, although thus far they have refused to do so¹². The government prepares for a situation that Channel 10 will not operate under the licensing system and the two operators of Channel 2 will not seek a license until 2015, and will allow to break up the news company of Channel 2 into two companies operated by each of the franchisees¹³.

Conclusions

In examining changes in public broadcasting in Israel, it is evident that despite the overall process of change based on the global experience, the unique aspects of the Israeli society and political system have also played a major role, providing a compromise between opposing interests. This structure can be compared to the typical European broadcasting systems which developed within a “mixed structure”, and included mixed sources of revenue (advertising and license fees), mixed goals (some determined by governments and politicians, some determined by professionals, some by interest groups and some by the audience), and diverse supports within each society: the political elite, the cultural elite, public authorities, the press, and the audience.

⁹ *Globs*, March 21, 2012.

¹⁰ *Ynet*, March 21, 2012.

¹¹ According to the Minister of Communications, Moshe Kaclon, *Globs*, May 15, 2012. A few days after the announcement, one of the leading cellular companies—Partner, announced that it intends to launch such service.

¹² *Maariv Business Section*, April 3, 2012.

¹³ *Globs*, March 20, 2012.

The mixed structure of combining commercial broadcasting under public supervision was developed in Europe because cultural aspects consolidated in every broadcast means, based on regulatory preferences for cultural and informational programs. This policy has been implemented through supervising bodies whose jobs are to ensure local productions. The mixed model is widely supported in Israel, and can be described as a perfect solution to a mix of public interest demands. Firstly, the requirement for further pluralism and a wide variety of channels can be answered through commercial programs. Secondly, technological development is met through multi-channel services and programming. Thirdly, deregulation policies have been adopted, as the transition from public and monopolistic media to an advanced system includes competition between technologies and a variety of television and radio stations. The compromised structure has remained almost unchanged, despite technological changes, based mainly on a commonly agreed-upon principle that there is a status quo between the three branches of the broadcast media.

European and Israeli broadcasting have experienced a period of continuous changes in the last three decades, resulting in a new structure of the mixed model. The common aspects of the new broadcast policies can be seen in a general trend to deregulation and reduction of direct controls, as market forces have become the primary determinant of primary directions. The resulting structure represents a shift in the nature of public broadcasting and new media technology. The change of direction means a combination of the old structure of broadcasting and a new policy based on a mixed structure of public and commercial goals. Although the mixed model faces new challenges today, as new media and digital TV offer new opportunities, the main principles of this structure still dominate media policies. The main course of change is that the public service phase of media policy is being replaced by what McQuail (2000) called a “new paradigm of media policy emerging in Western European countries since the 1980s”. It is more oriented to economic goals than to social and political welfare. This ideological change is expressed in what Murdock and Goilding (1999) called “marketization”, i.e., privatization, liberalization, and corporatization. According to Trapple (2011), the process of privatization of television Europe has resulted in an increase in media companies and groups and in the emergence of digital services. To compare the European transition to the new structure of media policy in Israel, it is evident that the adoption of a new media in Israel resulted in a relative decline of public service broadcasting and a rise of commercial forms of broadcasting and new media. Israel still debates what Benerjee and Senevratne (2006) considered as one of the key challenges for media policy around the world—how to find a balance between commercial viability and the public interest. The model adopted in Israel is where cultural programming is embedded in private channels that operate in the free market model. However, as Moppiddi (2007) concluded, such model creates more problems than it solves.

It can be concluded, based on the development course of media policy in Europe and Israel that changes in media policy can be analyzed as a global process. Although Israeli policy has developed in a different time table and was influenced by different political considerations, it is evident that the changing course of media policy has followed the European trail, as part of a global process. The role of policy changes in Europe establishing a new policy in Israel was decisive, demonstrating that global impact and new technology are superior to political supervision. Another important conclusion is that despite the will of local interest groups to continue with the old structure of broadcasting, commercial considerations have prevailed over public service perceptions, as happened earlier in Europe. It seems the new direction of Israeli media is clear, as new policy objectives, commercialization, competition, and new technology have become more important than government involvement in the market.

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Disadvantaged Filipino Students of a State University : A Case for an Intervention Program

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This study aims to ascertain the profile of disadvantaged Filipino students of Bohol Island State University (BISU) with the end view of preparing program intervention to help them. A questionnaire from Synergeia Foundation for disadvantaged students was used to determine the kind of educational intervention that they needed. The respondents disclosed that they can be assisted by granting them scholarship, discounted tuition fees, special access to Internet café of the university, special training on English communication and few disadvantaged students from the College of Teacher Education wanted abolition of the de-loading policy exclusively implemented by this college. During the focus group discussion, it was found out that they wanted somebody to bring their voice to appropriate agency that can help their financial problem in school. After investigating the data gathered, the researcher was able to figure out that BISU had many disadvantaged students who experienced a lot of problems in their homes and the University. These students need programs to help overcome English communication problems. Providing them additional computer units can also help them gain access to the Internet. The University also needs to develop a network institution that can provide scholarship and financial support to the students.

Keywords: disadvantaged students, program intervention, Synergeia Foundation

Introduction

The youth is the hope of the fatherland as what Dr. Jose Rizal, the Filipino national hero said. Youths are the leaders of tomorrow and as such, a nation depends on the ability of the youths to be mentally and physically prepared for them to become a trustworthy and reliable leader of the nation.

To prepare these youths for such a big role of becoming a good leader, education is necessary. Relevant education is a fundamental element for the youth to lead the country to progress. It is the key that opens doors to a range of possibilities for advancement (Vega, Prieto, & Carreon, 2006).

Filipinos believed that education will determine the future of the country. This jives with the thought that education makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave (Bougham, 2009).

For this reason, Filipino parents try their best to send their children to school. For children whose parents cannot afford to send their children to school, these students find ways like working while studying just to get college education.

However, statistics shows that in school year of 2003-2004, only seven out of 10 enrolled in Grade one reached Grade six but one did not graduate. Of the remaining six, one was not able to reach fourth year high

school and only four were able to graduate.

In addition to this, Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, who was the Chairman of Senate Committee on Education, Culture, and Sports in his speech delivered during his visit at Bohol Island State University (BISU) or Central Visayas State College of Agriculture, Forestry and Technology (CVSCAFT) Tagbilaran City Campus on September 12, 2008, revealed that out of 100 pupils enrolled in Grade one only 14 would finish a college degree.

This prevailing situation just proved that there are unfavorable circumstances that hinder them from finishing college degrees. Students experienced several adverse conditions that deprived them from attaining this goal of finishing their studies. Some students despite of various problems are able to study in college but experienced several difficulties while studying. These students are considered as disadvantaged students.

On the other hand, since BISU is the only state university in the province of Bohol which offers affordable tuition fees, it is expected that there are poor but deserving students enrolled in this institution.

Hence, this study is conducted. The output of this study will serve as a sound basis for the proposed program intervention for disadvantaged youths.

Literature Background

According to the human rights of the youth, the youth has the right to education. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be accessible to all on the basis of merit.

The youth constitute the rich reservoir of productive manpower, a very promising human capital, and has a vital role in shaping the country's destiny, and as such, the youth need proper education. The human capital theory stressed the significance of education and training for all individual, a human capital, as the key to participation in the new global economy (Fitzsimons, 1997).

Education is deemed necessary in promoting equality of opportunity and enabling an individual to acquire intellectual work skills for productive activities. It is also an effective measure in correcting the social, economic, political, and cultural inequities that cause mass discontent.

Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

The government lends support to the promotion of the welfare of the youth. Free elementary and secondary education is offered. State colleges and universities were established to accommodate poor but deserving students. Article 14, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution (1987) stated that: "The state shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all".

But even if education is already accessible to all as stated in this Article 14 of the Philippine Constitution, there are many factors that prevent students from getting that education and the main factor is financial constraints of the family. The data of the National Statistical Coordination Board shows that 27.6 million Filipinos were living below poverty line in 2006 (Retrieved from <http://www.BusinessMirror.com.ph>).

Section 3 of Article 14 stipulates that the state shall establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students

in both public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged. Such provision is an answer to the needs of the disadvantaged youths whose parents cannot afford to send their children to good colleges and universities.

To further support the programs of the government for the underprivileged, Section 4 of the same article provides that the state shall encourage non-formal, formal and indigeneous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

In Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see chart 1), it states that the physiological needs should be satisfied first, before the next higher needs will be addressed. If the parents are jobless, it simply means that the basic needs are not yet satisfied, so it is hard for them to reach the next higher needs, therefore getting college education is very hard for these students.

The Philippine government, universities, individuals, organizations, and corporations provide scholarship programs to students from low income families. According to 2006 data of the Commission on Higher Education, CHED has provided financial assistance to 41,712 students broken down as 15,190 students in the scholarship programs, 25,733 in the grant in-aid program and 789 in the student loan program (Retrieved from <http://www.gse buffalo.edu/org/inth>).

The University of the Philippines has the Specialized Tuition Fee Assistance Program (STFAP) more popularly known as Iskolar Ng Bayan Program which was implemented in first semester of 1989-1990, a major reform which was designed to democratize undergraduate student admission. This is called the radical departure from the old fee and scholarship structure of University of the Philippines (UP), resulting in tremendous benefits for low-income and disadvantaged students (Retrieved from <http://official web.upm.edu.ph/stfap.php>).

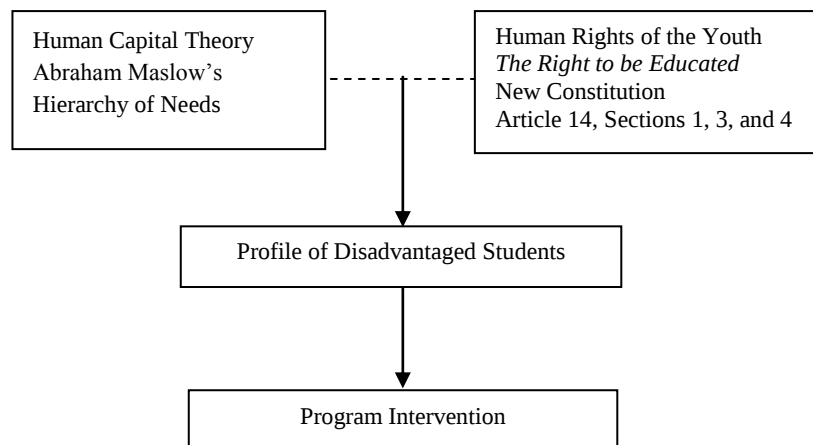


Chart 1. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs

On the other hand, BISU has Synergeia Foundation, a non-government foundation who offers an intervention in order to help disadvantaged youths who are enrolled in BISU. It has a project called Pathways to Higher Education. This project is a global initiative which aims to promote greater access to higher education for excluded population. It targets tertiary educational institutions to enhance their ability to support students through baccalaureate degrees.

Pathways to higher education have three goals. The first is, to work with institutions to formulate policies and programs that will equalize access for disadvantaged students. The second aim is to build on-going support

for change in policies, processes, resources, and programs to gain access to and bring about success of the disadvantaged students in their tertiary education. The third aim is to foster volunteerism in providing avenues for marginalized students to gain access to higher education.

The said foundation is believed to be one of the many ways for BISU to provide the underprivileged with the wide possibilities to help them gain access to college education, paving the way to a much brighter future in terms of employability and economic stability.

With high hopes, the school is positive that there will be more opportunities for the disadvantaged youths that may be initiated by both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to ascertain the profile of the Filipino disadvantaged youths who are enrolled in the first year college level of BISU as basis for Synergeia Foundation program intervention.

Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of —?

(a) provincial residence; (b) gender; (c) birth order in the family; (d) number of brothers or sisters who completed college and who are still studying in college; (e) primary occupation of parents; (f) talents; (g) favorite books; (h) Internet usage; and (i) persons who supported them both in school work and in their problems.

(2) What classification or form of disadvantages do they consider as their disadvantages?

(3) What solutions do the disadvantaged students suggest on how the school can help alleviate their concerns?

(4) What program interventions could be developed by the administration to help the disadvantaged students?

Significance of the Study

This study is beneficial to the followings:

(1) Disadvantaged youths. This study will enable them to get the needed support to overcome the challenges of being disadvantaged students;

(2) BISU administrators. The findings of the study will help the administrators of BISU to formulate policies and implement programs that will assist the disadvantaged students to finish their studies;

(3) Support organizations. Result of this study will provide disadvantaged youths the avenues for them to gain access to higher education;

(4) The teachers. The findings of the study will help them understand and stretch their patience to alleviate the harsh realities and situations experienced by the disadvantaged students;

(5) The researchers and other future researchers. The findings of the study will help them realize that they too can offer solutions to existing problems of the marginalized youths, so that as mentors of the young, they can inspire them to do their best so they can attain success in their academic endeavors.

Research Methodology

In conducting the study, the researcher made use of descriptive survey method because it represents the facts concerning the respondents. This is supplemented by questionnaire, focus group discussion, and

unstructured interview.

Research Environment and Participants

The study was conducted at BISU. This state university has six campuses strategically located in the different parts of the province of Bohol. These six campuses are the Main Campus in Tagbilaran City, Bilar Campus in Bilar, Candijay Campus in Cogtong Candijay, Clarin Campus of Poblacion, Clarin, Calape Campus of Calape, and Balilihan Campus in Balilihan, all in the province of Bohol.

The participants were the 390 first year college students of BISU for the second semester, academic year of 2009-2010. The researcher made sure that each program of every campus was represented. Purposive sampling was used.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire from Synergeia Foundation was used to gather the data for the study. All questions of the questionnaire were stated in simple terms so that the respondents could easily and accurately answer. They were asked to check only the items which were applicable to them.

Research Procedure

A permission to conduct a study was asked from the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) President II of BISU. Upon approval, it was sent to the College Directors of the six campuses of BISU who then gave the signal to the researcher to conduct the study in their respective campus.

The questionnaires were given to the Deans of Research and Development of the six campuses who helped the researcher in distributing them to the respondents. The data obtained were tabulated, computed, analyzed, and interpreted as the basis for conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Statistical Treatment

To get the percentage of the respondents' responses, simple percentage was used.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 shows that a total of 390 respondents are given each a copy of the questionnaire for them to answer. These respondents were from the six campuses of BISU, 390 or 100% of the questionnaires were all retrieved.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

BISU campus	No. of respondents	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires retrieved	Percentage
Main Tagbilaran	163	163	163	100
Bilar campus	57	57	57	100
Candijay	81	81	81	100
Calape	24	24	24	100
Clarin	26	26	26	100
Balilihan	39	39	39	100
Total	390	390	390	100

Table 2 manifests the provincial residence of the respondents. It shows that 381 or 97.69% of 390 respondents are provincial residents of Bohol.

Table 3 shows that 195 or 50% out of 390 respondents are middle children in terms of their birth order in

the family. There are 113 or 28.97% eldest and 81 or 20.76% youngest. In terms of gender, 238 or 61.03% are female and 152 or 38.97% are male.

Table 2

Provincial Residence of the Respondents

Provincial residence of respondents	Main campus	Bilar campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarin campus	Balilihan campus	Total	Percentage
Bohol	160	57	24	79	26	35	381	97.69
Agusan del Sur	2						2	0.51
Cebu				1		2	3	0.77
Surigao	1					1	2	0.51
Davao				1		1	2	0.51
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100

Table 3

Respondents' Birth Order in the Family and Respondents' Gender

	Main campus	Bilar campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarin campus	Balilihan campus	Total	Percentage
Respondents' birth order								
Eldest	51	15	7	20	6	14	113	28.97
Middle child	84	27	12	40	14	19	196	50.26
Youngest	28	15	5	21	6	6	81	20.77
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100
Gender of respondents								
Male	73	16	8	27	8	20	152	38.97
Female	90	41	16	54	18	19	238	61.03
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100

According to Alfred Adler, an Austrian psychiatrist, birth order influences personality. He said birth order can leave an indelible impression on an individual style of life, which is one's habitual way of dealing with the task of friendship, love, and work.

The Middle Child Syndrome characterized middle children as not over-achievers but typically go with school as well as a career (DeBroff, 2012).

Since half of the respondents were somewhere in the middle in their birth order, it has the tendencies of the Middle Child Syndrome which usually influences their school experiences as well as their career although they may be considered as loners.

Table 4 presents that 249 or 63.85% of the respondents had no brothers or sisters who completed university/college education and 243 or 62.30% have no brothers or sisters who were studying in college. However, 79 or 20.24% had one brother or sister who finished college and 102 or 26.15% had one brother or sister who was studying in college/university. Since Table 3 revealed that majority of respondents were somewhere in the middle in their birth order, it can be deduced that Filipino families can not afford to send all their children to get tertiary education.

Table 5 shows that 135 or 34.62% of the fathers were farmers, 65 or 16.66% had no answer which can mean that they had no job. Thirty-six or 9.23% of the respondents said that their fathers are government

employees.

Table 4

Number of Brothers/Sisters Who Completed University/College Education and Who Are Still Studying in College

	Tagbilaran city campus	Bilar campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarin campus	Balilihan campus	Total	Percentage
Number of brothers/sisters who completed college								
1	23	14	6	16	6	14	79	20.24
2	16	5	3	3	1	4	32	8.21
3	7	4	0	6	1		18	4.62
4	5	1	0	4	1		11	2.82
5	0	0	1	0	0		1	0.26
None	112	33	14	52	17	21	249	63.85
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100
Number of brothers/sisters who are still studying in college								
1	40	12	7	18	7	18	102	26.15
2	11	10	2	10	0	9	42	10.77
3	2	0	0	0	0		2	0.51
4	1	0	0	0	0		1	0.26
None	109	35	15	53	19	12	243	62.31
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100

Table 5

Primary Occupation of the Father

Primary occupation of the father	Main (163)	Bilar (57)	Calape (24)	Candijay (81)	Clarin (26)	Balilihan (39)	Total	Percentage
Farmer	38	25	8	25	14	25	135	34.62
≠Driver	20	3	1	5	4	1	34	8.72
Government employee	16	7	0	6	0	7	36	9.23
Carpenter	14	5	3	4	1	1	28	7.18
Fisherman	8	1	3	12	2	1	27	6.92
Businessman	4	1	0	6	0		11	2.82
No answer	36	9	4	13	2	1	65	16.66
None	8	2	3	2	1	1	17	4.36
Others	19	4	2	8	2	2	37	9.49
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100

Note. N = 390

The father, as the head of the family is supposed to have a good job to support the family. But it is sad to note that the fathers of the respondents had meager income which could hardly support all the needs of the family. The family code of the Philippines provides that it is the duty of the father to support the family even if the mother is gainfully employed, so it is the fathers' major role to be the bread winner.

Table 6 reflects the occupation of the fathers of the respondents under "others". Seven or 18.42% of the 38 students claimed that their fathers are Overseas Filipino workers and construction workers, while four or 10.53% of the respondents said their fathers are teachers.

Table 7 indicates the primary occupations of the mothers. It reveals that 246 or 63.08% of the mothers are

housewives and 44 or 11.28% had no answer which can be interpreted as being jobless. Eighteen or 4.62% claimed that their mothers are teachers.

Table 6

Occupation of the Fathers Under "Others"

Occupation of the father	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage
Overseas Filipino workers (OFW)	3	1	0	2	0	1	7	18.42
Construction worker	4	0	1	0	0	2	7	18.42
Teacher	2	1	0	1	0		4	10.53
Laborer	0	1	0	2	0		3	7.89
Vendor	3	0	0	0	0		3	7.89
Salesman	3	0	0	0	0		3	7.89
Barangay officials	0	0	0	1	2		3	7.89
Plumber	2	0	0	1	0		3	7.89
Security guard	1	1	1	0	0		3	7.89
Policeman	1	0	0	1	0		2	5.26
Total	19	4	2	8	2	3	38	100

Note. $N = 38$

Table 7

Principal Occupation of the Mother

Principal occupation of the mother	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage
Housewife	94	39	13	49	24	27	246	63.08
Teacher	7	3	3	5	0		18	4.62
Government employee	8	5		1	0	5	20	5.13
Vendor	5	1	0	2	0		8	2.05
Clerk/Sec.	6	3	1	1	1		12	3.07
Dressmaker	6	1	1	2	0		10	2.56
Businesswoman	5	1	0	4	0	5	15	3.85
No answer	22	2	5	15	0		44	11.28
None	4	0	0	0	0		4	1.02
Others	6	2	0	2	1	2	13	3.33
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100.0

Note. $N = 390$

Mothers are supposed to help the fathers earn a living. Data show that mothers are plain housewives; hence, it can be deduced that most families of the respondents are dependent only on the meager income of the fathers. This means they financially challenged.

Table 8 manifests the occupations of the mothers of the respondents under "others". It shows that the top three occupations revealed are being storekeepers, overseas Filipino workers/domestic helpers, and midwife. Three or 23.08% of the mothers of the respondents are OFW or domestic helpers and the same number and percentage also applies to mothers who are storekeepers. The data show that few of the respondents left by their mothers so they can work abroad. It also shows that mothers are willing to sacrifice in order to help the family earn a living. Most studies show that absence of mothers in the home can usually make children emotionally disturbed.

Table 9 exposes that seven respondents claim that their fathers are working abroad as carpenter, machine operators, and drivers in Saudi Arabia while three of them attested that their mothers are working as domestic helpers in Singapore, caregiver in Dubai and Nurse in Saudi Arabia. It can be concluded that these students were left with the care of their fathers, grandparents or even the yayas in which may led to the possibilities that their children are getting emotionally disadvantaged although they were financially secured. Ormrod (2003) identified parenting as one of the environmental factors which affect children's development. In this case where parents were leaving their children, children's development is greatly affected.

Table 8

Occupation of the Mothers Under "Others"

Occupation of the mother	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage
OFW/Domestic helper	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	23.08
Midwife	2	0	0	0	0		2	15.38
Storekeeper	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	23.08
Brgy officials	0	0	0	1	0		1	7.69
Cook	0	0	0	1	0		1	7.69
Farmer	0	0	0	0	1		1	7.69
Nurse	1	0	0	0	0		1	7.69
Nursing aid	0	1	0	0	0		1	7.69
Total	6	2	0	2	1	2	13	100

Note. N = 13

Table 9

Parents Working Abroad (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage
Yes	5	2	0	2	0	1	10	2.56
No	158	55	24	79	26	38	380	97.44
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100
Country and the occupation of parents working abroad								
Father								
Carpenter Saudi		1					1	10
Machine operator Saudi	3					1	4	40
Driver Saudi				2	0		2	20
Mother								
Domestic helper Singapore		1				0	1	10
Nurse Saudi	1						1	10
Caregiver Dubai	1						1	10
Total	5	2	0	2	0	1	10	100

Table 10 shows that 199 out of 390 respondents consider dancing as their important talents. It also shows that 184 of the respondents consider singing an important talent and 58 of them are into cooking. It shows that the first three important talents of the respondents are dancing, singing, and cooking. The data further show that the respondents are gifted with talents despite the fact that they are disadvantaged. Talents are to be nurtured so that the respondents can develop their self-confidence. This can also boost their morale.

Table 11 reveals the favorite books of the respondents. It shows that 231 or 59.23% of the respondents had no answers. It can be attributed that these students are not fond of reading. This practice will redound to their difficulty in speaking English. Very few claimed that they read story books, magazines, *Reader's Digest* and *Bible*. It can be deduced that students have not yet realized the importance of reading books. They have not yet realized that reading can which enhance their understanding and analysis and can also widen their imagination. Reading books can also improve their English proficiency.

Table 10

Important Talents of the Respondents (Multiple Responses)

Important talent	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Rank
Dancing	57	40	19	52	11	20	199	1
Singing	58	43	21	38	10	14	184	2
Cooking	11	6	4	27	2	8	58	3
Basketball	13	6	2	15	3		39	4
Drawing	14	4	5	7	2	2	34	5
Acting	8	5	2	10	2	1	28	6.5
Writing Poem	9	4	3	4	2	6	28	6.5
Playing musical instruments	12	6	1	1	1		21	8
Volleyball	5	3	2	3	3		16	9
No answer	0	7	3	0	2		12	10
Badminton	3	3	1	2	0		9	11
Billiard	3	2	1	2	0		8	12.5
Designing	3	2	3	0	0		8	12.5
Swimming	1	0	0	3	0		4	14

Table 11

Favorite Books of the Respondents (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
No answer	113	35	13	46	21	3	231	59.23	
Story book	16	2	11	4	1	26	60	15.38	1
Reader's digest	1	6	1	9	0	2	19	4.87	3.5
Bible	6	8	2	1	0	2	19	4.87	3.5
Magazines	0	4	0	7	0	26	37	9.48	2
Health & home	1	5	0	2	2		10	2.56	6
Novels	1	5	0	3	0	2	1	2.82	5
Purpose driven life	3	1	0	3	0		7	1.79	7.5
Encyclopedia	2	1	0	0	2	2	7	1.79	7.5
Pocket book	0	4	0	0	0		4	1.02	9
Total	163	57	24	81	26		351	100	

Table 12 manifests the degree of Internet usage of the respondents in which "a little" ranks first in connection with school work. The Internet access of the respondents was from Internet cafés as reflected by the responses of 206 or 52.82%. This implies that respondents are not yet aware that Internet is the window to the world. They do not know that Internet enables students to gain quick and in-depth information. It also helps in devising creative projects and reports thus making school tasks less tedious or taxing (Thelen, 2007).

Table 13 shows that 209 or 53.58% of the respondents rely on their friends for help in their school work. One hundred and five or 42.30% of them say that they rely on their mothers and 102 or 26.15% rely on their teachers. It further shows that the top three with whom the respondents rely on for help are their friends, mothers, or any members of the family and teachers. This supports Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural cognitive development which emphasizes the importance of an adult in the promotion of cognitive growth among children. This assumption implies that students can perform more challenging tasks when assisted by competent individuals like friends, mothers, or any members of the family, teachers or any dependable adults in school or at home.

Table 12

Degree of Internet Usage in Connection With School Work and Internet Access of the Respondents

Degree of Internet usage	Main campus	Bilar campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarín campus	Balilihan campus	Total	Percentage	Rank
Very much	12	3	1	2	0	10	28	7.17	4
Much	45	26	5	3	13	16	108	27.69	2
A little	97	26	18	52	13	13	219	56.16	1
No answer	9	2	0	24	0	0	35	8.97	3
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100	
Internet access									
At home	8	1	2	0	0	1	11	2.82	3
In school	62	19	15	4	22	15	122	35.12	2
Internet café	84	35	7	53	4	23	206	52.82	1
Total	163	57	24	81	26	39	390	100	

Note. N = 390

Table 13

Persons Who Helped the Respondents With Respect to School Work

	Main Campus (163)	Bilar campus (57)	Calape campus (24)	Candijay campus (81)	Clarín campus (26)	Balilihan-campus (39)	Total (390)	Percentage	Rank
Friend	98	41	12	57	12	16	209	53.59	1
Mother or member of the family	69	26	13	33	14	10	165	42.30	2
Teacher	39	17	9	21	4	12	102	26.15	3
Other Classmates	10	3					13	3.33	5
Guardians	1			1		1	2	0.51	8
GF/BF	2					1	3	0.77	6.5
Myself					3		3	0.77	6.5
None	15	8	2	0	2		27	6.92	4

Note. N = 390

Table 14 manifests the people whom the respondents share their problems with. The top three were friends, mothers or member of the family, and teachers. This revealed that respondents were already aware of the importance of sharing their problems with other people. If students keep their problems within themselves, it can cause tremendous pain and these can keep them away from loving others. Problems can mostly be solved

through talking and connecting to another human being in a loving way.

Table 14

Persons Who the Respondents Share Their Problems With

	Main campus (163)	Bilar campus (57)	Calape campus (24)	Candi-jay campus (81)	Clarín Campus (26)	Bali-lihan campus (39)	Total (390)	Rank
Friend	116	46	13	63	16	12	266	1
Mother or member of the family	94	33	14	35	20	14	210	2
Teacher	5	3	2	8	0	4	22	3
Others' GF/BF	5	1		1			7	6
Seminarian			1	2			3	7
God		2					2	8
Classmates		2				9	11	4.5
Auntie			1				1	10
Guardians				1			1	10
Godmother					1		1	10
None	8	1	0	0	2		11	4.5

Note. N = 390

Table 15 reveals the forms of disadvantages experienced by the respondents. As shown in Table 5, 381 or 29.42% are economically disadvantaged youths. Economically disadvantaged youths are those coming from lower-income backgrounds or they are sometimes called the “disadvantaged poor”. This result supports the findings that many Filipinos are living below poverty line. The results show that the number one problem of the youths in BISU is economic instability.

Table 15

Classifications/Forms of Disadvantages of the Respondents

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candi jay	Clarín	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Economic	148	45	30	88	26	44	381	29.42	1
Cultural	109	60	24	70	23	33	319	23.86	2
Environmental	77	44	30	62	33	18	264	20.39	3
Social	95	41	13	48	15	12	224	17.30	4
Physical	39	24	6	28	11	9	117	9.03	5
Total	468	214	103	296	108	106	1295	100.00	

It can be gleaned that students are aware of the unfavorable circumstances that might hinder them from finishing their studies, in this case, family support or encouragement is very much needed for the students to overcome problems and hardship. Ormrod (2003) said resilient students who develop positive characteristics and coping skills can overcome adverse circumstances in life and can still succeed.

The economic disadvantages experienced by the respondents as Table 16 shows are low income parents. Two hundred and nineteen or 57.46% of them experience economic problems while 162 or 42.52% of them consider lack of resources to complete school projects. This problem deprives them of concentrating on their studies thus leading to academic failure.

Culturally disadvantaged students are the students who lack intellectual capabilities in terms of language proficiency or those who do not have sufficient foundation in speaking, reading, writing, and solving skills.

These are the students who lack the necessary tools to gain success in education in any discipline. Table 17 shows that 168 or 52.66% of the respondents experience problems in handling mathematics subject. It also shows that 151 or 47.34% of them have experienced difficulties in speaking English. Table 17 also manifests cultural disadvantages such as handling mathematics which ranked number one and the second is speaking English. This result supports the findings of the previous question which was about the respondents' favorite book, where it was revealed that more than half of the respondents do not really have any favorite book.

Table 16

Economic Form of Disadvantaged of Students (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarín	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Low income parents	86	25	16	50	15	27	219	57.48	1
Lack of resources to complete school projects	62	20	14	38	11	17	162	42.52	2
Total	148	45	30	88	26	44	381		

Table 17

Cultural/Intellectual Form of Disadvantages of Students (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarín	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Handling mathematics	49	26	16	47	10	20	168	52.66	1
Speaking English	60	34	8	23	13	13	151	47.34	2
Total	109	60	24	70	23	33	319	100.00	

The study of Cope (2006) on underprivileged youth shows that their difficulties are caused by two sources: namely, a language deficiency that creates a gap among the teachers and students because written texts should be well communicated by using standard or correct. It had been observed that most are used to communicating in non-standard English. The second cause is the involvement gap which means the gradual distancing between what the students' perceptions and the realities taking place in school. In the case of BISU students, some of them have not been used to speaking English, they find it hard to communicate by using the language.

Table 18 shows the environment-related disadvantages experienced by the respondents. It reveals that 75 or 28.40% of them consider teachers who are indifferent as one environment disadvantage, 39 or 14.77% of them also consider traumatic experiences as another form of disadvantage. Environmentally disadvantaged students are those students whose environment inhibits them from obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities required to enroll and graduate from a school. Teachers play very important roles in the learning process. If they fail to create a good classroom environment, then the students' learning will be relatively poor, or the worst is that they are not going to learn at all. The table further manifests that the leading causes of environmental disadvantages are having indifferent teachers, going through traumatic experiences, and being into unfavorable home environment.

Table 19 shows the social disadvantages the respondents experienced. It reveals that 115 or 51.34% of the respondents consider their inability to participate in co-curricular activities as one social disadvantage. It also shows that 109 or 48.66% of the respondents have experienced inability to socialize or deal with others well. Social disadvantages mean the person lacks the opportunity to interact with other people or participate in

activities where they can associate with people.

Table 18

Environmental Form of Disadvantages of Respondents (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Indifferent teachers	21	10	6	20	8	10	75	28.40	1
Traumatic experience	14	5	6	9	4	1	39	14.77	2
Unfavorable home environment	9	10	4	7	7	1	38	14.39	3
Broken family	12	6	5	8	3	3	37	14.02	4
Sexual discrimination	8	7	5	6	2	1	29	10.98	5.5
Indifferent Family members	7	2	3	9	6	2	29	10.98	5.5
Religious affiliation	6	4	1	3	3	x	17	6.44	7
Total	77	44	30	62	33	18	264		

Table 19

Social Disadvantages of Respondents (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Inability to participate in co-curricular activities	46	22	5	25	10	7	115	51.34	1
Inability to socialize with others	49	19	8	23	5	5	109	48.66	2
Total	95	41	13	48	15	12	224		

Table 20 shows the physical disadvantages that the respondents have experienced. Eighty two or 70.09% of the respondents consider health-related problems as number one physical disadvantage. It also shows that 35 or 29.91% of them consider fatigue as the second cause of physical disadvantage. Physical disadvantage could mean the physical discomfort felt by people. The data further show that due to economic problems, much work to do at home may cause them to get tired in reporting and doing school works. If this happens they can not give their full attention to the lessons.

Table 21 exposes other forms/ways which may have caused the respondents to feel disadvantaged. Three hundred and sixty-six or 93.84% answered no which could mean that they cannot think of any other forms of disadvantages, however, 33 or 8.46% claim that other disadvantages may include shyness lack of self-confidence, 26 or 6.67% consider lack of money to pay their tuition fees as another form of disadvantage. Eighteen or 4.62% say that their being afraid to share ideas is also another disadvantage. This may also mean that students who experience these disadvantages may be at risk or those who may likely have the capacity to acquire less competitive capabilities. It is therefore more effective when there is coordination in the efforts among teachers, the community, and the parents in order to promote students' learning and development (Ormrod, 2003).

Table 22 exposes the solutions or interventions suggested by the respondents in order to alleviate the different forms of disadvantages they have experienced. It shows that 207 or 53.07% suggest that there should be more scholarship grants available. It also shows that 149 or 38.20% of them suggest that tuition fee discounts can be another solution. Eighteen or 4.61% also suggest that there should be special privileges which can be offered to deserving students. There are still other ways by which interventions can be taken or implemented so that the problems of being disadvantaged will be minimized.

Table 20

Physical Disadvantages of Respondents (Multiple Responses)

	Main	Bilar	Calape	Candijay	Clarin	Balilihan	Total	Percentage	Rank
Health-related problems	27	19	3	19	9	5	82	70.09	1
Fatigue due to much work at home	12	5	3	9	2	4	35	29.91	2
Total	39	24	6	28	11	9	117		

Table 21

Other Forms/Ways Which Caused the Respondents Feel Disadvantaged (Multiple Responses)

	Main campus	Main campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarin campus	Balilihan campus	Total or %	Rank
No answer	37	267	16	43	6		366 93.84	1
Shy and no self-confidence	12	1			1	19	33 8.46	2
Low mental ability	3					6	9 2.31	7
Afraid to share ideas	3					15	18 4.62	4
Insecurities in life	3					13	16 4.10	5
Destructive criticism					2	10	12 3.08	6
Unequal attention from parents	1					3	4 1.03	8
Commuting to school everyday	1						1 0.26	9
Lack of money for tuition fees			1			24	26 6.67	3

Table 22

Solutions Proposed by the Respondents as a Help for Them (Multiple Responses)

	Main campus	Bilar campus	Calape campus	Candijay campus	Clarin campus	Balilihan campus	Total	Percentage	Rank
Scholarship grant	80	21	15	45	15	31	207	53.07	1
Discounted tuition fees	65	20	12	20	10	22	149	38.20	2
Abolish the deloading policy	3	1	1	1	1		7	1.79	5
Special privilege	1	1		2	2	12	18	4.61	3
Financial assistance for small business	1	1		1	2	7	12	3.07	4
To be hired as tutor	2		2			1	5	1.28	6

Findings

Almost all the respondents were from Bohol, majority were female and somewhere in the middle as to their birth order in the family.

Majority of them had no brothers/sisters who finished college or are studying in college. Since the respondents were somewhere in the middle, it is expected that they should have elder brothers/sisters who had finished or studied college, so it implies that their families cannot afford to send all their children to school.

Many respondents claimed their fathers were farmers while their mothers were housewives, this shows that families of respondents were financially hard-up or challenged.

There were very few respondents who asserted that their parents were working abroad. This implies that the children were left behind to their fathers or mothers or even to their nannys. This connotes that even if these respondents were financially-secured, they were also emotionally-disadvantaged.

The respondents had three important talents: dancing, singing, and cooking. This signifies that if the respondents use these talents wisely these can help them develop self-confidence and boost their morale.

Few declared that their favorite books were story book, magazines, *Reader's Digest*, and *Bible*. This infers that students were not yet aware of the importance of reading books. They did not know yet that reading can enhance their understanding and analysis, widen their imagination, and develop their English proficiency.

The respondents' usage of the Internet was only "a little" in relation to their school work and they usually use the Internet in the Internet café. This suggests that the respondents had not yet realized that the Internet can give them quick and in-depth information and that project making will be less tedious with the help of Internet.

The respondents were supported by their friends, mothers or any member of the family and their teachers both in school work and in their personal problems. This means that respondents were not left by their own in doing school work and in handling their problems but they were supported by competent individuals.

In the classification of disadvantages, economic disadvantages rank number one in the responses, followed by cultural, environmental, social and physical which is last in the rank.

Regardless of the form or classification of the disadvantages, low income of parents, difficulty in handling mathematics, lack of resources to complete school projects, inability to speak English and the inability to participate in co-curricular activities were considered as the top five forms of disadvantages. This implies that respondents were already aware that these are the unfavorable circumstances that might deprive them from finishing their studies. In this case, the respondents need support for them to overcome these problems.

Very few respondents replied that their shyness and lack self-confidence, low mental ability and afraid or fear to share their ideas were the other ways which caused them to feel disadvantaged. It can be noted that students at this level are students at risk or those who have high probability of failing to acquire minimum academic skills (Hardre & Reeve, 2003). So to promote students' learning and development, it is more effective that there is coordination of efforts among teachers, community, and parents (Ormrod, 2003).

Half of the respondents suggested that scholarship grant would be made available. Some suggest tuition fee discounts and very few also suggest deloading policy in teacher education department be abolished. It can be understood that the respondents really are in need for help so that they can finish their studies.

During the Focus Group Discussion, the students want somebody to bring their voice to appropriate agency that can help them solve their financial problems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

After investigating the data gathered, the researcher was able to arrive at the following conclusions: BISU had many youths who are economically, culturally, environmentally, socially, and physically disadvantaged. They experienced lots of problems at home and in school. Disadvantaged youths need different programs to help overcome the challenges they have experienced. Solutions which disadvantaged students suggested on how the school can help alleviate their concerns are all doable.

From the conclusions cited, the following recommendations are drawn. It is therefore recommended that:

- (1) Remedial classes should be offered or organized to improve the students' level of competencies in English and Mathematics;
- (2) BISU should develop network institutions or establish linkages to gain access to scholarships and other financial support to students;
- (3) The institution should develop other forms of support system such as personality enhancement,

dialogues, develop a peer group support system, influencing faculty members to be cognizant of the needs of the disadvantaged students and respond to them, and develop a special window for counseling for disadvantaged students;

(4) The institution should formulate policies and practices that will consider the needs of disadvantaged students.

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From Online “Liking” to Offline “Acting”: Young Citizens, Social Memory, and Social Media

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Social memory is considered very important for the future development of a nation. It is very important that young citizens perceive the past social actions in an accurate manner that will allow them to develop as citizens and to create forms of contributing to the development of a new democracy. The remembrance of past actions is not important for the past, but important for the present or future actions. The main objective of this article is to answer to the following questions: how are social memory and social media related and what do they mean for the students/future citizens? How can the teachers use social media in order to shape young students as active citizens that will create a new democracy?

Keywords: Internet, social media, social memory, citizens, democracy

Introduction

The domain of memory studies is in a process of becoming an interdisciplinary research endeavour combining a diverse range of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, communication, anthropology, cultural studies, history, and so on (Olick, 2008; Sutton, 2009). It was not until the 1980s that memory took a prominent role in academic, political, and public life (Assmann, 2002, p. 400). In more abstract terms, the increasing interest in social memory is not only connected with the deconstruction of the grand narratives of national identity but also historiography's mission to uncover a “true” memory (Megill, 1998; Klein, 2000). New technologies allow global audiences to access the television news and current affairs coverage, offering a new democratic access to information. The current digital technology has caused many changes in all areas of life. The development of technology, internet, fax machines, and satellites creates “the image of the globe as a single place, the generative frame of unity within which diversity can take place” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 3). If formally this designs and requires a model of personality, Featherstone's statement may be perceived as an aggression against personal identity. Memory is one of the elements that construct a nation's identity. Social memory becomes crucial for the survival of a nation in a globalized world. The memory is not simply a neutral repository of information language which also has a decisive role in organizing and reorganizing the social memory. Incorrect social memory is a key ingredient in creating and perpetuating destructive conflicts between individuals, between the members of a social group, such as non-government organizations (NGOs), between the members of a nation or even nations themselves. Very little is currently known about the impact that social media may have on young's people social memory and social behavior.

In Romania the death of the Communist Regime was followed by a still unfinished process of transition to

what everyone hopes to be a democracy. Democracy is based on informed citizens who can express their views and participate in collective debates. Without informed citizens, there is no democracy. Therefore, the first condition of a healthy democracy should be the freedom of expression and free access to information. The importance of informed and well-informed electorate is essential to rationally and effectively use of information in decision making. Since social memory is easy to manipulate, each individual cares about future individuals and can communicate with the next generation. The Communist regime has killed the freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of communication. Undoubtedly after 1989 it began a relentless desire to show everything as it is, to reveal the horrors of Communism and to urge citizens to fight for freedom and democracy. This article will focus on the following questions: how are social memory and social media related and what do they mean for the students/future citizens? Do social media contribute by activating social memory to the making-up of young citizens? How can the teachers use social media in order to shape young students as active citizens? The article finds its point of departure into the conceptualization of memory and social memory, social media and the young people interaction. The article intends to reveal a fundamental shift in the field of the unused potential of social media as a medium of preserving social memory. Because of the immense possibilities of data storage provided by the Internet, the contemporary society can be on the verge of forgetting “how to forget” or even on the verge of destroying memory (Assmann, 2006; Bell & Gemmell, 2009; Mayer-Schonberger, 2009). The following article argues that the contemporary society is somehow forgetting more than remembering, as it is in order to remembering more by forgetting more (Esposito, 2008).

Background

Social memory is based on messages inherited from the past and on physical evidence such as archives, monuments, libraries, museums—a sequence of imperfectly informative public signals of past behavior. We all live under the influence of social memory. We use the social memory because we do not want to repeat the errors from the past. These memories are transmitted from generation to generation and the society offers new occasions of remembrance, such as national holidays, parades, and so on. Throughout every social interaction, our minds develop a model with which we are able to understand the other people around us. We use this information to quickly infer potentially useful stereotypes, to determine what type of personality we must put forward and most importantly, to add to our memory, our mental understanding of both the individual and how this individual relates to previous mental models we have been utilizing.

We believe that it is more difficult to develop these mental models during online interaction. Given that most of the debates on social issues are taking place on the Internet, we are trying to find out how does the Internet activate the social memory. Social memory is very important for the future development of a nation. It is very important that young citizens perceive the past social actions in an accurate manner that will allow them to develop as citizens and to create new forms of contributing to the development of a new democracy.

For the development of this article it is important to clarify the concept of social memory and its impact on the young citizens. Therefore the article critically reviews the concepts of memory relevant for the social sciences such as collective, cultural, and social memory. Memory defines our temporal size of our psychic organization, its integration on the three segments of the temporal horizon—past, present, and future. Memory is happening in a social context. The study of social and cultural memory is not a new thing and it has its roots in the well-known works of Maurice Halbwachs. Former student of Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs was one of the first to analyze and conceptualize memory as a social phenomenon in a systematic academic manner.

Memory is considered as the knowledge of the past. It does not represent conservation of images, but reconstruction of images. In his understanding, the society is the one that provides people means of thinking. This is actually the first instance of the term "social memory" as memory of the society, which provides individuals with the language and the categories of thought. The society helps us target the significance of the things we remember. One thing is more easily brought into memory if there is a linguistic term appropriate to it. On the other hand, the term "social memory" also has a second instance, namely the collective memory, the recollection of human groups for which the events of the past have special significance. In Halbwachs' view of the concept of collective memory, he discusses the formation of group memory shared by its members. Memory involves language which is a social product and remembering involves placing the individual into a concrete context (group, class, community), i.e., a social framework. Individual memory is also social as remembering involves language and language is a social product. Remembering is a collective practice of reconstructing the past based on the present social framework that groups provide and it is usually shared by the members themselves. In other words, the past is never quite the same for everyone since "the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 40).

The social frameworks are considered to have an important key role as they are the means through which a group accomplishes an image of the past in a way that is compatible with the dominant views of the very same group. For instance, language, which is the most fundamental framework, does not only allow us to talk about certain memories but also enable us to remember in the first place framed by what can or cannot be expressed with the words that are at one individual's disposal. The language one uses is not up for one to invent but is inherited from the group one is born into, such as family, or from the group one is forced to join (e.g., military or professional), or chooses to become a member of (e.g., political party) (Halbwachs, 1992). As a consequence, the connection between collective memory and identity becomes clear. Memory is repeated, remembering means perpetuating a sense of identity (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 47). The social framework is selective as a group tends to remember mostly what fits or rather what the group considers important to fit the framework; that is, to get rid of everything that might separate the members from one another. In today's terminology, the group is the one who decides what is remembered and what is forgotten and the members of the group share the opinion of the majority.

The individual's memory and the collective memory are interwoven and even though it is the individual that remembers. Therefore, taking this into consideration Halbwachs rejects the separation of the individual as the locus of memory from the collective (Connerton, 1990, p. 36). Halbwachs, however, does not succeed in incorporating material carries of memory in a systematic way (Assmann, 1995). Analyzing the scholars that studied social memory paradigms we find three types of memory: collective memory, cultural memory, and communicative memory. For Halbwachs, who proposes the concept of collective memory, as the one lived in everyday life and experience and therefore he considers that collective memory remains relatively stable for a maximum of three generations, as it is the case when, for instance, three generations, grandparents, parents, and children live in the same house or have the same jobs. Collective memory, as conceptualized by Halbwachs, is in fact a social-psychological phenomenon based on the lives and deaths of individuals. The discovery of memory as a field of study is relevant to many areas of research but especially to the humanities and to culture, to media and communication studies and it is usually ascribed to two scholars, Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann.

Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann (1988) introduced a new terminology into the field of memory studies.

Wishing to minimize confusion with Halbwachs' concept of collective memory, they introduced two new concepts: cultural memory and communicative memory. In their approach, they refer to Halbwachs' collective memory as communicative memory in order to stress the non-institutional nature of everyday interaction and memory, which is an interaction not cultivated by specialists, not formalized that can be mostly found in spoken language and bodily gestures (Connerton, 1990). Cultural memory, on the other hand, is viewed by Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann as being distanced from everyday life and maintained through cultural formations (for instance, texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (such as recitation, practice, observance), it is considered a store of knowledge from which cohesive identities emerge (Assmann, 1995). They defined cultural memory as a form of memory that survives its human carriers which is based on external media (communication and memory technologies) as well as on institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums (Assmann, 1999). Generally, the memory is the basis for distinguishing ourselves, our family, our generation, our nation, our culture, and our religion from the others. The social memories are transmitted from generation to generation and the society is the one that brings them into attention by national holidays, military parades, memorials, museums, statues, street names, institutions and so on. A society cannot function with a collective memory that is not correlated with the present and the history. Taking this into consideration the concept of social memory is extremely important for the development of the individual and the society. Carrying further the work regarding cultural memory, Aleida Assmann (2008) distinguished between an active and passive cultural memory, i.e., the canon and the archive. Assmann considers that while the canon preserves the past as present, the archive is the one that preserves the past as past. Social memory allows the past to survive.

In contemporary research the study of memory as a social phenomenon faces two major problems:

(1) The popularity of memory in academic disciplines and public discourse has led to a field of study that, at least until now, addresses basically all walks of life. Unfortunately, a primary focus on case studies and specific events has led to a research field without an organized memory of its own. The field, as such, lacks gravitational centers in terms of conceptual work and theoretical frameworks (Roediger & Wertsch, 2008);

(2) The observation of the relationship between individuals and groups, collectives, societies as the “carriers” of social or collective memory. The fundamental contradiction here revolves around the question of whether conceptualizations of a collective memory are to be seen as a simple simile or as an analogy to individual or psychological memory processes.

Olick and Robbins (1998) proposed the use of “social memory studies” as an umbrella term for research observing collective memory as a social phenomenon *sui generis*. Their proposal is an attempt to consolidate various research efforts by distinguishing them as the “study of social memory” from the “social study of memory”—a distinction which is not always clearly drawn by the collective memory studies. This distinction basically follows the notion shared by many other researchers that social, collective, or cultural memory is neither a metaphor nor an extension of individual memories and, hence, must not be trapped into what Jan Assmann (2002, p. 401) called “collective mystifications”, that is the error of thinking of a society as of a collective body with a collective consciousness and, therefore, a collective memory.

The emergence of social memory and organized practice of remembering and forgetting are related to many developments in communication (Dijk, 2007). In fact, it can even be seen as a co-evolutionary relationship in terms of innovation and diffusion, all that meaning that the differentiation and diffusion of the new media is related to the differentiation and diffusion of social forgetting. Therefore, memory, as a social phenomenon, has

always been mediated and, since modern times, is being mediated (Esposito, 2008; Perra, 2010).

The new communication medium, basically, often separates the direct and mutual observation of the communicative participants. Opposed to the traditional face-to-face talking, the utterance is de-contextualized and therefore needs to be re-contextualized by the receiver in order to be understood. Hence, the written word gains a context-independent existence. Social media also makes use of written or spoken words. The Internet is playing today a noteworthy role in the lives of the youth attracting them to engage with social or political discussions. These leisure activities on social network sites seek to impact and retain young people in different activities designed either to manipulate and influence their opinions regarding a certain issue, or to contribute to their social growth into future independent citizens. Social network sites bring hybrid memory traces, which are considered semi-private or quasi-private, contributing to the construction of “social network memory” (Dijck, 2007; Kreps, 2010). Also, social network sites can be very useful for constructing social memory if we use them carefully to reveal the truths of the past, using them only to reveal the actions without trying to influence people’s opinions or to tell them what they should think about the past events. Mechanically reported, social memory is individual. Even if as we all possess memory, the societies also have memory, namely social memory, the scholars have not discovered yet how to make the transition from the individual to the social memory.

Main Focus of the Article

As stated above for the present article we consider social memory as elaborated in the theory of social systems, which is based on a strict distinction between mental systems based on thought processes and social systems based on communication. We identify four paradigms in order to describe the emergence of a social memory in relation to innovations in media and record keeping: memory of things, places of musing, institutionalized memory, and information habitat.

Social network sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, Twitter, have attracted millions of users since their introduction. Many of their users have integrated these social network sites into their daily practices. The social network sites are diverse, some of them support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks while others help strangers get in touch based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Social network sites are “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Although the use of the Internet and of social network sites is very high all around the world, a study realized by Internet routing emulation system (IRES) in 2012 reveals that in Romania only 52% from the Romanian people are using the Internet and only 36% from the Romanian Internet users have an active account on social network sites. The most popular social network site is Facebook, 73.4%, followed by Hi5, 17.5%. Therefore the percentage of Romanian people that own a Facebook account is very low, only 7.5%, in comparison with the other European countries.

When it comes to describing the phenomenon of social network sites, the scholars usually use two terms: “social network site” and “social networking sites”, which are usually used interchangeably. After joining such a social network site, the users are promoted to identify one another in the system, to identify their friends, relatives or colleges with whom they can have a public or private talk. These kind of online relationships are different from site to site. The popular terms used by the social network sites are “Friends”, “Contacts”, or

“Fans”. Beyond profiles, friends, comments, private messages, email, or instant messages, the social network sites have different features. Some have photo-sharing and video-sharing, other are able to provide blogging technology. The increasing usage of social media is additionally supported by the young people.

The first social network site was SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997. It was the first site which combined the feature of having a profile and friends list, compared to Classmates.com that allowed people to connect with high school or college classmates but the users could not create profiles or have friends lists. In 2000 SixDegrees service closed. During 1997-2001, another social network sites developed, such as Asian Avenue, BlackPlanet, MiGente, LiveJournal, Cyworld (1999), LunarStorm (2000), all of them followed by Ryze.com (2001), Tribe.net, LinkedIn, Friendster. From 2003 onward, many new social network sites were launched but not all of them survived. MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004) are still in use. Today Facebook is the most popular social network site, with more than 175 million active users. Therefore we can state that in order to exist today people and events have to embrace social media. Teachers should embrace social media in order to connect and to better communicate with their students. The advantages of using social media in teaching are: they provide a low-cost platform which can provide a great tool for presenting to the young people the important events of the society without trying to influence their opinions; They allow teachers to engage rapidly and simultaneously in dialogues, and therefore to reach the young generations faster in the same transparent and direct way they expect everyone in their lives; They give teachers an opportunity to learn from instant information and unvarnished feedback; They provide teachers with new tools and show them what today’s students’ interests are. Therefore social network sites could help the teachers reevaluate the entire teaching system and make it pleasant and interesting for today’s students.

Social Memory and Social Media

Media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. Young people are daily besieged with a variety of information from many different sources and it has been claimed that young people are media literate. The media should inform democratic decisions by helping “citizens learn about the world, debate their responses to it and reach informed decisions about what course of action to adopt” (Dahlgren, 1999, p. 15). Television turns everything into an ongoing show. Television and the Internet have come to play a crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion, connecting the world with individuals and reproducing the self-image of a society. Some scholars claim that the result of this situation is that young people’s level of interest in problems regarding politics or society is getting lower (Heath & Park, 1997, p. 6). However, this apparently does not apply to all young people during an election campaign. With the development of social network sites that enable interactive talking, Romania’s young people still get involved in the political process but not through the traditional channels. The political or civic engagement involves a process of decision making. Through social network sites news circulate faster and young people become interested in decision making and therefore they get involved in different causes. There are of course a number of factors that can influence or prevent young people from involving in decision-making process, such as rationality (in terms of ability to reason), irrationality (in terms of conscious and unconscious drives), knowledge, and information processing. Interacting with other young people on social network sites demonstrates to be useful and sometimes leads to enthusiasm and responsibility. Such is the case of the recent Romanian popular protests which took place in January 2012 and were started on Facebook. Many people were protesting on Facebook rather than on the streets. People were connecting on Facebook in order to mobilize as much people as possible to protest against

Traian Băsescu, the current Romanian president. It was maybe for the first time in the Romanian history when a huge amount of people used social network sites in order to protest and to engage other people to embrace the same cause.

Social Media and the Development of Young Citizens

Only people are able to remember something that is related to the experiences of the past, for example, an ancient war, or a social injustice in which they did not participate. These memories are transmitted from generation to generation and the society is the one that offers the opportunity of bringing them into attention by national holidays, military parades, memorials, museums, statues, street names, institutions and so on. A society cannot function with a collective memory that is not correlated with the present and the history. Therefore the people must participate to the present knowing the history. Civic knowledge is considered as one of the main civic competences by scholars. The literature review suggests that knowledge is the necessary foundation of civic participation. Civic knowledge consists of fundamental ideas and information that young people must know and use. According to Patrick, it includes principles of democratic theory, operations of democratic governance, and behaviors of democratic citizenship (Patrick, 2003). Torney-Purta et al. (2001) maintained that young people involved in education for democracy need to know what citizenship is, how it is acquired or lost in various political systems, what rights, responsibilities, and duties are entailed by it, and how it is connected to the institutions of their nation-state. In order to have a healthy democracy young people must first know their own rights and responsibilities in order to be able to make the right requests and to understand their status in society. Alqatam et al. (2002) related civic knowledge with civic participation as they noted that "To live in a democratic society, young people need to know their rights, duties and responsibilities as well as the requirements of democracy in terms of effective participation in national issues" (p. 4).

Social science researchers have found a strong relationship between knowledge of democratic principles, processes, and institutions and the propensity to participate in political life, orientation to political tolerance and political interest, and competence in cognitive and participatory skills of democratic citizenship, such as the capacities to analyze public issues and to cooperate with others in a group project (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Galston, 2001). Accordingly, the young people taking part in a study by Powney, Lowden, and Hall (2000) highlight the importance of the possession of knowledge of the notions of citizenship and democracy and view it as a prerequisite to performing efficiently in a democratic society. The findings of their study show that learning citizenship is best achieved only if it is based on acquiring knowledge, living in a democratic community and developing skills for participation in decision-making processes.

Young people, therefore, need to have some knowledge of political, social, economic, and cultural issues in order to become good citizens. Here school should meet with social responsibility because these issues must interact with the teaching and learning activities, designed to promote knowledge and understanding (Patrick, 2003) of citizenship and democracy. Furthermore, young people need to have opportunities for learning factual and conceptual knowledge across a broad range of subjects and curriculum areas. This understanding, based upon the knowledge of the main concepts, is relevant to living as active and informed citizens and will help young people to provide an appropriate solid and valuable foundation for developing capability for citizenship and for living in a democratic society.

In short, today's citizens seem to require factual and conceptual knowledge from a wide range of domains in order to arrive at thoughtful, informed decisions about the important matters from their lives and societies.

According to social science scholars, future young citizens are generally expected to be reasonably knowledgeable about concepts such as government, politics, rights, responsibilities, community issues, the diversity of identities, and the need for mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding (Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Lehmann, 2001; Parker, 2003; Osler, 2003). Of course this implies that "education for citizenship which engages with learners' own experiences of society enabled them to make direct use of information and knowledge provided" (Osler & Starkey, 1999, p. 201). Therefore, Romania needs to realize that democratic societies are obliged to promote and to provide the essential elements of citizenship education for the young people.

Some studies on citizenship education have revealed deficiencies in teachers' approach for civic preparedness. This problem can also be found in the well-established democracies, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Recently, however, critics of citizenship education have noted that the components of citizenship are simply not taught in American schools or European schools. Young Americans as well as young Europeans lack civic or democratic knowledge, attitudes, and skills that leading civic educators believe they should have in order to become responsible citizens of a constitutional democracy (Koliba, 2000; Patrick, 2003; Miller, 2004). Lawton and Gardner (2000) indicated several reasons for the failure of citizenship education:

- (1) Citizenship education was a low status subject in schools but was dangerous: teachers could be accused of bias or even indoctrination of young people and that is the reason why they usually give up;
- (2) There was a lack of good resources and teachers who were competent to deal with difficult and complex issues;
- (3) There was a lack of a clear definition of what political, social education, or citizenship education meant and what teachers could do or not. (p. 11)

Most Romanian high school students appear to lack detailed knowledge and understanding of institutions, principles, and processes of government. Galston (2003) blamed schools for failing to transmit civic knowledge to students. Even after 21 years of democracy and after the accession to the European Union, Romania is still experiencing major gaps in young people's knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and processes, therefore many young Romanians are not prepared to fully participate in the democracy now and when they become adults. Furthermore, civic activities and accreditation of citizenship activities are not easy as the appropriate systems are not in place. Most schools include the intention to teach citizenship in their mission statements but there is no evidence that it is taught systematically. Romanian as well as other European teachers, politicians, voluntary bodies, NGOs and others have expressed concerns about the society in general and young people preparation for citizenship in particular. These concerns include low levels of participation by young people in local and national elections, everywhere in Europe, also include a social exclusion leading to anti-social and criminal behavior (Baily, 2000), a lack of development thinking skills preventing young people from engaging effectively in rational public discourse (Davis, 2000) and the lack of a feeling of affiliation, of national identity.

Teachers, Social Media, and the Making-Up of the New Citizen

In Romania the interest in education and in raising the status of citizenship education is still very low. Besides being related to the transition towards democracy and the new political context of Romania after the Romanian Revolution from 1989, stems, in part, young citizens need the required civic skills and values to be prepared to participate in a democratic society (Almanai, Eid, Mahmood, Khamdan, & Sidigi, 2003; Eid, 2004). The issue of citizenship education has therefore come to the fore recently in Romania as it also has in other

post-communist countries. However, academic studies dealing with citizenship education in Romania are few, almost inexistent. These few studies show that there is a total absence of comprehensive coverage of citizenship teaching in terms of knowledge, skills, and values in most Romanian social study or history textbooks in general and in the traditional citizenship education textbook in particular. Thus, the lack of concern for citizenship education, especially in Romanian social study textbooks, leads to the inadequate preparation of students to participate in a democracy. Although, the values that are most frequently discussed are patriotism, compassion, justice, self-reliance, respect, and courage.

As we know, schools have an important role to play in shaping the lives and the way of thinking of young people. The Romanian democracy needs young people, young perspectives. In December 2011, the Romanian Research Institute IRES has realized the study *Social Memory and the Romanian Revolution*. According to this study, 45% of the Romanian people regret the Communist Regime, only 28% of the people believe that they would have had a worse living standard if the Communists were still leading and 17% think that with or without the Revolution they would have been the same. The study also reveals majors gaps in understanding the Romanian Revolution and the decline of the Communist regime between the young people who did not live in those times or events and the people who participated in the events. Not having images or memories from the past makes it difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the present. Because of this, policymakers are concerned not only to rewrite history, but also to reorganize social memory. That happened in Romania after the installation of the Communist Regime. The Communist rulers constructed to some extent a false history, they succeeded a violation of the collective memory. The second strategy to destroy the social memory was more intense and was to influence more profoundly the Romanian's social memory. The Communist Regime decided to change the names of the streets, cities, towns with names of Communist rulers. Therefore, in Romania there is a need for young people to understand their rights, responsibilities, history, and laws more clearly (Lawton, Gaims, & Garder, 2000), there is a need to combat racist attitudes and behavior, to combat the young people's indifference towards society and democracy, and a major need to foster international awareness (Osler & Starkey, 1996).

Solutions and Recommendations

The social memories are transmitted from generation to generation and the society is the one that brings them into attention. Not having images or memories from the past makes it difficult for citizens to obtain an accurate picture of the present events. The media has a great responsibility in conserving people's memories about past events. Media has a great deal of impact on influencing young people and enabling them to acquire information. The importance of informed young people and well-informed electorate is a turning point to rationally and effectively use information in decision making. What gives the media power, what legitimizes it as a basic social institution is the credibility. The school should protect young people from the negative influences of the media by developing their critical thinking skills “media involvement is vital for increasing awareness of youth issues in the community” (Abdulla, 2006, p. 8). Schools and other socializing agents should seek to promote a concept of citizenship that is thoughtful, responsible, and active, in the sense of enabling young people to act and participate in various communities. The absence of a coherent vision of the world leads to credibility and the easy acceptance of other peoples' ideas, which leads to the subculture. Media is the one that has an enormous influence on the audience and holds a great responsibility for the education of the people and also for the expansion and evolution of democracy in post-communist countries. Therefore media should

contribute to the civic education of the young citizens, because "democracy needs protection through active, informed and widespread participation" (Breslin & Dufour, 2006, p. 93). One solution could be the awareness campaigns on the danger that lack of civic and social education exerts not only on young people and children, but also on the entire society. Also, teachers could give young people a sense of hope, an experience of community, and a belief in their own personal effectiveness in society. Therefore it is a major challenge for the Romanian teachers to devise and implement new policies in order to improve citizenship education in schools by using media and social media.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

At the turn of the millennium, social media represent an important growing sector of modern economies. Moreover, this industry sector is undergoing a massive metamorphosis and a profound change everyday. In summary, the 21st century media is becoming increasingly interactive, ubiquitous, and digital. Furthermore the future of the media appears to be specifically oriented towards the establishment of social networks. The research work described above and included in this article contributes to an on-going dialogue about the importance of social memory and social network sites, both for practitioners and researchers. Social memory is very important not for the past but for the future of societies. It is also very important that the mechanism by which groups, from families to nations and even the whole of mankind, conserve the events that have marked the past. Just as important is that the study of social memory should be carried out with modern instruments (concepts, theories), made available by current research, which makes memory not be regarded as a singular phenomenon and forces researchers not to neglect the psychological dimensions of the phenomenon. The vast and uncharted aspects still remain to be explored. Although the situation is rapidly changing everyday, scholars still have a limited understanding regarding the construction of social memory through social network sites. Such questions will require large-scale quantitative and qualitative further research. The author hopes that the work described in this article will help build a foundation for future investigation of the issues raised here and other important issues concerning the controversial relationship between social media and young people's social memory.

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New Media and Pornography: How the Internet Has Modified the Sex Business

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This paper deals with the transformation that new technologies, in particular the Internet, have brought about in interpersonal relationships, especially in gender relationships and those between adults and children, between people that live in countries where technology is widespread and accessible, countries where technology is not so wide spread, and countries where technology is used among other things to economically exploit extremely weak bodies, who are easily blackmailed, often unlawfully used, and traded to consumers who are found thousands miles away. The use of new technologies, in particular that of the Internet, not only discriminates between who can afford to use it and who cannot, the difference of gender, level of education, possibility of access, etc., as the debate on the *digital divide*, has clearly brought to light (Sartori, 2006), but can become an instrument of exploitation and violence towards the weakest group, for those that through poverty and ignorance are most easily blackmailed. In this context, it is relevant to acknowledge the difficulty of the media to arouse the public interest which is faced with so many sources and the new technology itself being one of the reasons and paradoxes which consequently reduce the news from being something new. The capacity of resistance to news even that is atrocious, which we have become used to because of the system of the media, the distance which the technological instrument puts between us, and the place where the action takes place all help to cushion the blow and make the violence virtual. The abuse of power, power brutally practised, often makes us forget that behind the virtual reality in a space and time not always clearly defined, an act of real violence is actuated.

Keywords: new media, pornography, interpersonal relationships, sexual markets, body exploitation

Technology and Interpersonal Relationships

Technological products are social products, and technology is made for social use. "... Technology not only has a specific function but also a particular way in which the functions are incorporated within the technology itself..." (Bennato, 2002, p. 31).

Within the constant interaction between technology and society, it is interesting to reflect on the processes and social changes that new technology has stimulated on a social level, and how, in its turn, social behaviour influences the development of technology and economically supports research. Few innovations have been as profoundly influencing on the process of diffusion and democratization of information as the widespread use of the Internet, provoking both positive and negative social effects.

The Internet constitutes a very powerful instrument for acquiring information, which tends to confuse the rapport between experts and consumers when it comes to the control of information, since the information has

become merchandize in a market where the consumers have an increasingly active role. The sick, for example, find the minute information on the web about their illness and use this knowledge when speaking with doctors, no longer accepting a totally dependent relationship. The same applies to the rapport between parent and paediatrician, parent and teacher etc.. The presence of expert information on-line is changing and will continue to profoundly alter the relationship between producer and consumer, between client and professional and their role as professional over the next few years.

Information has become a global business, which, for the first time in the history of mankind, knows no time-space bonds and allows the real time circulation of texts, images, and sounds to reach every corner of the planet, simultaneously connecting many people who do not know each other, but who share specific and particular interests. No other technological instrument has known how to give answers and do research in such a rapid and effective way, creating new communicative communities of people who recognize each other through the interests they commonly share and who interact with each other without giving any details about their personal identity to the point where they can show fantasy images of themselves completely divorced from reality. The people connected through the web can pretend to be of a certain age, sex, to be of a profession different from their real one, playing between reality and virtual reality, between imagination and real life in a totally new way (Turkle, 1995).

One just needs to think about the success of You Tube or of Virtual World to understand the speed and relevance of the changes of behaviour of people over the last few years. It is worth, however, underlining the fact that the diffusion of new technology, and in particular the Internet, is not socially uniform but layered by gender, level of education, and work conditions.

A young male with middle to high level of education, with a good knowledge of English, having the necessary technical components at home, in a large city in the central northern part of Italy, with a full time job... This is the portrait of those who accesses the Internet in our country... An appropriate description whenever we speak of another European or North American country, adding only the reference of ethnic group. The *World Wide Web* has also been defined as the *World White Web* because it is used by a crushing majority of whites. (Sartori, 2006, p. 82)

The fact that the Internet is so extensive and ever present, at least in the developed world, has brought about an enormous rise in the circulation of every type of information, above all since the second half of the 1990s with widespread easy and cheap connection to the net. The huge circulation of pornographic material on the web began precisely during these years and, according to many scholars of the Internet, this diffusion has constituted and constitutes in its time an important stimulus for the development and the proliferation of ever more sophisticated and expensive technologies. The sharing and exchanging of *files* of images, music, and films, which mark the exchanges *peer to peer*, becomes an important channel of exchange and sale of pornographic material, of the construction of virtual communities of people who share the same tastes, aesthetics, and consumer goods.

Internet and the Sex Business

In the essay titled "Pornography Drives Technology", P. Johnson (1996), of the New York Law School, talked about the fact that throughout the history of the media, from the recording of voice, to photography, books, video, cable television, and call centres, pornography has played an active role in paving the way to encouraging experimentation with new media technologies and their diffusion. Pornography has developed along with technology from the direct show in front of the public to the photograph, where the

expressed and infinitely replicable images can easily circulate to pornographic magazines, films, telephone pornography, and on-line representations where those connected can put forward their own requests.

There is no doubt that the sex business is both an economic phenomenon and a success and that this business has been truly revolutionized with the advent of the Internet.

The experts of media consumerism maintain that on-line pornography is the main category where money exchanges hand on the web, reaching a turnover of 400 million American dollars in 2000 (Bushin, 2000). Web technology has supplied the sex industry with new instruments to exploit, sell, and commercialize products and people (above all, but not only, women and children) with an ever growing number of consumers.

The main pornographic magazines were among the first to have an electronic version. *Playboy*, which immediately had enormous success, came out with its on-line version in 1994 and aimed at a younger public than that read the paper magazine. The public web users are male, western, and white. The earnings from the on-line edition reached two million dollars in 1997. The first edition of *Penthouse on Line* (April, 1996) registered the highest number of entries onto a web site.

The following tables illustrate with great clarity the circulation of pornographic material in the western world (see Table 1) and the success of circulation *on-line* (see Table 2).

Internet pornography statistics become outdated very quickly, especially in the Internet environment where numbers change daily. These statistics have been derived from a number of different reputable sources including Google, WordTracker, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), MSNBC, National Research Council (NRC), and Alexa research.

Table 1

Pornography Industry Statistics

Size of the industry	\$57.0 billion worldwide—\$12.0 billion US
Adult videos	\$20.0 billion
Escort services	\$11.0 billion
Magazines	\$ 7.5 billion
Sex clubs	\$ 5.0 billion
Phone sex	\$ 4.5 billion
Cable and pay per view	\$ 2.5 billion
Internet	\$ 2.5 billion
CD-Rom	\$ 1.5 billion
Novelties	\$ 1.0 billion
Other	\$ 1.5 billion
Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball, and basketball franchises.	
US porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of American Broadcasting Company (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and National Broadcasting Company (NBC) (6.2 billion).	
Child pornography generates \$3 billion annually.	

As one can see, pornographic market has all important dimensions constituting one of the most relevant economical sectors, above all, if you bear in mind that this data obviously does not take into account the submerged part of this consumerism, which is certainly a very considerable part. Looking at the data, it is apparent that how much pornographic material is being consumed and that the enormous turnover makes it one of the most important and surest sources of investment and profit in the world (The Economist, 1998) and of the greatest social and cultural relevance, seeing that it is a very much larger sphere with regards to turnover

and circulation than that of the most widespread popular sports in the western world. In this sense, it can be defined as mass consumerism.

If we then look at Table 2, which refers to consumerism on the Internet, you will note that in not so many years, roughly a decade, pornography and the *sex business on-line* have shown a very considerable capacity of penetration and circulation: One quarter of the search requests on search engines is in the sector of pornography, and pornographic sites constitute 12% of the sites at present on the web. Besides that, the Internet has given a strong boost to the consumption of paedo-pornographic material, making the search and sharing of these files easier, anonymous, and “safe”.

Table 2

Internet Porn Statistics

Pornographic websites	4.2 million (12% of total websites)
Pornographic pages	372 million
Daily pornographic search engine requests	68 million (25% of total search engine requests)
Daily pornographic emails	2.5 billion (8% of total emails)
Average daily pornographic emails/user	4.5 per Internet user
Monthly pornographic downloads (peer-to-peer)	1.5 billion (35% of all downloads)
Daily Gnutella “child pornography” requests	116 thousand
Websites offering illegal child pornography	100 thousand
Sexual solicitations of youth made in chat rooms	89%
Youths who received sexual solicitation	20%
Worldwide visitors to pornographic web sites	72 million annually

When speaking about pornography, one of the fundamental problems, what we come up against is that of finding a clear definition, as the materials defined as pornographic can be very diverse and of different characters. There is soft porn, where the fine lines of erotic representation are extremely uncertain and cloudy, and there is hard porn or that which is illegal such as paedophilia. What is pornographic and what is, for example, artistic or erotic art is not always clear or evident. The fine line between erotic and pornographic is often very subjective. One could define pornography as what is perceived as obscene. However, it is well known that what is considered obscene varies from one person to the next, from culture to culture, and from historical period to historical period (McDonald, 2001).

Greek etymology defines the word as to write about something that is sold, in particular the prostitute. So the word itself contains the idea of representing or writing about something that is sold and something that well marks the sex business of contemporary society, which is often little evident in the current term pornographic, where what it appears to be prevalent is more the iconographic presentation rather than the economic turnover it produces. The fact that the economic element is kept in the background with what is meant by pornography today hides the element of power and control that is instead intrinsic to money as a form of exchange and which has remained with the meaning of the word prostitution. It was precise that the Greek meaning of the word pornography referring to the sale of the body, which was taken up by some scholars of the beginning of feminism (Dworkin, 1979, 1988; MacKinnon, 1992; MacKinnon & Dworking, 1997), who bring to light the aspect of control, humiliation and violence against women in pornographic material. Material, according to the authors, would strengthen a chauvinistic vision that considers women as objects of male’s desire. More recent feminist analysis keeps its distance from this negative vision of pornography maintaining

that the production and consumerism of pornography are to be considered the free choice of the individual and as such are not necessarily the object of exploitation and of control: Choosing to work in this sector should not therefore be stigmatized as it constitutes the free choice of women and men (McNair 1996). This contrast between different conceptions and valuations can also be found on the debate about prostitution, between those who see paid sex as a form of merchandise, of control and violence over another, and those who demand that sex work has the same legality as other jobs and professions (Leonini, 2004).

Without getting into a debate which would take up much more space and the need to go into much greater depth, one can, however, observe that the question of the fine line that exists between privacy and public morality, between the rights of the individual and social obligations has become the object of deep conflict in contemporary society. The core themes linked to sexuality in scandalistic terms were put forward by the media, and they propose and increase the uncertainty that characterizes ethical questions, above all the rapport between the personal and public sphere, between a private space being ever more violated and an ever more contested public morality (Mc Donald, 2001).

Virtual Interaction

The computer is used more and more to extend the physical presence of people: Video conferences, communication through the computer, dominions shared by many users, etc.. The new technology of *file sharing* produces new *peer-to-peer* communities for the sharing of material, in which pornography is divided by sheer volume and circulation, the users are at the same time consumers and salespeople, and the ambivalence and the fine lines that divide public and private are constantly confused (Phillips, 2005). *Netsex/cybersex* circulates rapidly. "Many people that have *netsex* say they are surprised at how it can be emotionally and physically powerful... demonstrating the truth of the saying that 90% of sex is in the mind" (Turkle, 1995, p. 21). The virtual communities give the possibility to create experiences, relationships, and identities, and to experiment in spaces that are exclusively built from the interaction with technology, consequently modifying interpersonal relationships and those with technological products. What is human and what is technological? "Are we living life on the screen or life in the screen?" (Turkle, p. 21). How indeterminate and confused are the dividing lines of the individual and technology?

With virtual reality we live in a culture of simulation, learning to consider as normal the representations of the world as if it were the real world, and at the same time taking part both in a virtual community made up of people who communicate with each other exclusively through a computer network, and with a community of real life people with skin and bones, and the fine differences between these experiences often become confused, the dividing line becomes very cloudy. The media worlds built through the computer weaken the distinction between reality and fantasy, allowing the creation of incredibly imaginary worlds where simulation takes the place of reality. One needs only to think of the success of *Second Life* with 5,126,014 residents in the virtual world in March 2007 and of Virtual Life and You Tube to cite only the most well-known and visited sites.

One of the great advantages of the Internet, for what concerns the sex business, is the fact that it guarantees the anonymity of those who frequently visit the pornographic sites, allowing them to consult the web from home, without the embarrassment of buying in shops and public places where one risks meeting somebody one knows and loses face, and anonymity all in one go since public morality of contemporary western society, with few rare exceptions, judges negatively and stigmatizes this type of consumerism.

The Internet allows us to log on with extreme ease and cheaply to various types of pornographic material

which has certainly influenced the increase of this type of consumerism in recent years. An increase, according to some scholars (Paul, 2004, 2005), would have been characterized by the predomination of hard-core material compared to the easily available soft-core on television or broadcast on local channels or on cable television and other media for free. This tendency can also be found in cinema pornography which, at least from the mid-1990s favoured a powerful and domineering iconography of violence, mainly organized around explicit mechanisms of subordination of women by men (Adamo, 2004, pp. 190-191).

The discussion over traditional roles and the division of gender in many social environments in western society (from work to education, roles in the family, leisure time etc.) seem to have provoked a desire to act with violence, at least symbolically, due to the sensation of inadequacy that men feel when confronting women (Giddens, 1992; Leonini, 1999). And a large part of this desire for physical predomination of men over women can be found in pornographic material of the last few years circulated throughout the web (Hughes, 2000). As Codeluppi (2007, p. 44) revealed "In western society there is a progressive substitution of specific pleasure with a condition of generalized excitement which seems limitless", instead of looking for a relationship with another. Relationships pass through negotiation and continual renegotiation through roles, tasks, ways of spending free time and work time, and education of children etc., in search of immediate satisfaction of a need/desire, without committing oneself to a relationship with another.

In this context, the diffusion of the new media has brought to us a vast production of virtual products which, in the case of pornographic consumerism, has had success both in the direction of "*virtual sex*" and in that of "*interactive sex*". An example of *virtual sex* can be found in the numerous electronic games with an erotic/sexual background where the protagonists become more and more sexually characterized and more erotic in a popular global culture in which erotic features constitute a fundamental characteristic for the attraction of the product. The virtual sexual experience is perceived by the consumer as pure entertainment devoid of any social relevance, a pastime like any other. The images can be those built by the virtual game or those that are real taken from real life in some unrecognisable places and therefore irrelevant, in an indefinite time and so unimportant, and where one consequently does not feel responsible. These are the characteristics of media consumerism that we see benefiting from products coming off the screen of our computer. They are perceived distant from the places and sometimes from the time of action, and therefore producing an emotional and ethical distance from what is seen and what is participated, and a feeling of strangeness and of personal irresponsibility.

Virtual participation, in the case of pornographic material, can create excitement, attraction, but does not stimulate a sense of individual responsibility when it comes to violence where it is possible to participate in front of the screen in your own computer. For example, pornographic material where minors are involved or where one participates in scenes of sexually explicit violence on real people (Kempadoo, 2005).

This sense of not taking responsibility should not surprise when we know that not even real life clients of street prostitution (Leonini, 1999) make a point of enquiring who they are asking a certain service from: where they come from, what their name is, how old they are, if they do this job because they are forced to or because they are doing it at their own free will, what counts is the satisfaction of their own desires, the realization of their own dream, of the erotic fantasies that have brought them to choosing that person rather than another, through the mediation of money.

Interactive sex *on-line* is more explicit and more direct than *virtual sex* because it allows the person to interact and control a performance that happens in real time, but in virtual space, and to make requests that

satisfy the fantasy, the tastes and desires of the person on-line. What is received on the screen of one's own computer is a representation, a performance in real time, constructed with closed circuit television in a studio often located in a place where there are no controls on the production of this type of film, strictly following what has been requested and at a very reasonable price. The success of this form of interactive sex is well illustrated in *Virtual Dreams*, the predecessor of these services, that declared monthly profits at around a million dollars in 2004 (Retrieved from <http://www.wikimedia.com>). The advertising of *Virtual Dreams* when it began business in 1995 using the technology of video conferencing was the following:

Virtual Dreams uses state of the art technology to bring to you the most beautiful women in the world. With our software and your computer, you can interact in real time and alone with the girl of your dreams. Ask what you desire, and expect nothing other than to be satisfied. (Virtual Connections, 1995, p. 28)

This type of *on-line* service allows a person to actively participate with requests on what is seen, to choose the actors/actresses, to decide if there must be a representation of one or more people, and what type of action should take place. The user can make requests which are immediately satisfied by the person working; "The scene maker/director" quietly sat home or at an Internet point of his or her choice, and can build a scene that follows their fantasy. The virtual interaction lets them choose the actors, roaming around the information highways without compromising themselves to a direct search, letting them ask for particular services, without showing their own identity and therefore feeling much freer in their requests, every fantasy can be satisfied maintaining absolute secrecy of identity provided that the service is paid for in relation to the length of the connection and to the number of actors involved in the scene.

These virtual link ups place the problem of the rapport between reality and virtual reality at the forefront of an extremely complex and problematic rapport where simulation and representation substitute reality, where what is real is the time of the link up and the necessary money to put all this into effect.

The problem of the rapport between reality and virtual reality also appears in different situations. It is within this problematic situation that one needs to understand the behaviour of those who film their own transgressions and decide to put them on-line. As some news items have recently shown, for example, the phenomenon of filming bullying in schools and putting it on the web, group rape put on-line, or simply erotic scenes sent by mobile to acquaintances and friends, taking the transgressions that have been committed and circulating them on the virtual highways, seems to be an important element of the experiment itself, which gains relevance only if captured in an image which is then shared on-line to be recognized as having taken place. To show oneself means to exist, to introduce the images of one's actions into the virtual world constitutes an assertion of one's existence and, at the same time of one's self-image, through a type of process of the actor not taking responsibility, it is as if reality had been transformed into pretence, life into simulation, and, simultaneously, the pretence into reality, the simulation into action. The relationship between pretence and reality is resolved by virtual reality, and one forgets that the images often come from real situations suffered and acted by real people. In the case of pornographic material, the fact that most of the images present on the web are of people with Asian or African features or, in fewer numbers, Slavic. It is because it is easier and cheaper to produce these films in places where the legislation is less severe or where the participation of the local forces make it less risky and a better paid business, and because these are the aesthetic tastes of the white western men, the largest number of users of these services, which raises even more the sense of estrangement of the consumer. The confusion between reality and representation creates a never ending uncertainty between the

real and the imaginary and this therefore produces, amongst other things a process of distancing from oneself, a sense of not having to take responsibility for one's own actions. The confusion between reality and simulation is also present in reality television shows: "Reality shows are more than true to life and television... becomes the main source of interpreted models, values, and themes through which the individual can build his own identity and give some sense to his own life" (Codeluppi, 2007, p. 57). From this point of view, the medium of television widespread and popular and that of the more elitist computer produce similar effects.

The world made up by the computer lets people experiment with a new sense of self that is decentralized, multifaceted, and fluid (Turkle, 1995). The construction of fantasy worlds built and shared with other members of the virtual community allows people to play multiple representations of themselves which obtain the recognition of the members of the virtual group, contributing to increase the fluidity and multiple representations of the self. Cyberspace offers a world free of the risk of losing face, of recognition, where people can look for that particular intimacy or the satisfaction of those desires that both frighten and attract them, giving, a sense of freedom and unlimited power. The ambivalence to sexuality therefore finds a safe place to manifest itself on the web. These elements explain the great success of the on-line sex market: privacy, security, electronic payment, and fast pay are fundamental elements for the success of the pay as you go sex industry on the web.

Consumers who pay for sex are, in real life, generally extremely reserved and, obviously, the chance to download pornographic material or to have interactive sex via the Internet of their own office or home constitutes an element of certain success for the on-line paying sex industry. In the last 10 years, the sex industry and the electronic one have proceeded together in both their growth and development. "The sex industry is often the first to adopt new technologies and to open new areas, and it is only after this that mainstream business appears and establishes itself on the scene" (Hughes & Roche, 1999; Hughes, 2000).

Globalization and the Merchandizing of the Sex Market

The diffusion of the sex business and the growth of profits in this sector cannot be considered exclusively in economic terms without thinking about the human cost. The sex industry is based on the sexual exploitation of real people, mainly but not only women and children who come from areas that are backward and characterized by poverty. By now numerous research has been done on people who prostitute themselves (Kempadoo, 2005) bringing to light the psychological sufferance from which they suffer, very often having stories of violence and rape behind them. The United Nations estimate that there are about 200 million people in the world forced to live in a regime of sexual and economic slavery (United Nations Bureau, 1997); Only a minority choose to work in the sex industry, and sometimes this is the last possible option to live. In this sense, it is possible to maintain that the expansion of the global sex market and the use of the Internet have normalized the sexual exploitation of women and children in the poorest countries. Migration, mass tourism, and digital technology have certainly contributed to the expansion and the normalization of the sexual exploitation of women and children in areas of the world that were at one time far from the process of globalization. This normalization of exploitation has as a consequence what can be considered obvious, the growing circulation of pornographic images and merchandising of bodies and of interpersonal relationships, including that of children. The possibility, to put images and scenes of violence on the web, taken in parts of the world where almost everything becomes possible to be able to guarantee material survival, where there is no protection and no childhood rights, rights for minors or the sick and weak, easily creates the exploitation of a rich and profitable

sector. The western rights of people and individual rights benefit from resources that come from countries where the concepts of the person and the individual are unknown and where necessity and need bend the body and the will of the most fragile and weakest.

The majority of Internet users are educated white men who live in western societies (Penttinen, 2000; Wajcman, 2000), and the pornographic market on-line mainly aimed at them with particular attention to their tastes and preferences. The aesthetics and tastes of the consumers induce the production of images and the selection of women and children with particular physical characteristics, building and strengthening in this way cultural stereotypes with regards to physical and racial features: from oriental women defined as docile and servile, coloured women, hot and wild, blonds of Slavic origin, exotic, and refined, to Latin Americans, hot and sensual. Stereotypes suggest different fantasies of the consumers who populate the information highways and the real ones. Globalization produces an aesthetic of the body and requires the respect of those aesthetic standards. The global sex market follows these rules and definitions of the body: bodies become commercialized in terms of ethnic origin, bringing to light sexist and racist features of international pornography and prostitution in a global context. The aesthetic and the short lived practical materials circulate in the ethics of global consumerism (Appadurai, 1996).

One does find not only images to download and interactive sex on the Internet but also information for the use, sex tourism, information about places all over the world, where women can be found, where men and children are available for sex, comments on personal experience, advice for future trips, how to corrupt or get around controls, how not to be taken in, how much to pay, how to satisfy the most eccentric tastes, etc.. All these data are easily found on the web. In this sense, the Internet has been used to spread the globalization of sex markets, where making contact is simple and information on international prostitution is easily accessible, and the circulation of this information has contributed to making it all be considered as normal. It is possible to get married to women or adolescents on-line, choosing between the available images, women and children attracted to the possibility of getting the chance to emigrate to western countries and legalize their stay through this arranged marriage. It is possible to book sexual services online from a distance foreseeing trips in different countries. It is obviously possible to rent cars, book hotels and sexual services of every kind, in a simple package holiday, even easier than a package holiday for families, and if you are not satisfied then it is possible to change the rented body with another halfway through the trip (Hughes, 2000). Satisfied or you get your money back.

Globalization of Bodies

The Internet could have had made the paying global sex market democratic, making the people who offer their services in the sector of the sex business autonomous and entrepreneurs. In reality, as it is easy to understand, since most of the web pages and sites require an entrepreneurial ability other than economic and technical resources, and since a large part of the production is undertaken in the poor southern countries of the world, this has simply provoked an increase in the number of people exploited in this business. The number of requests for women, children, and adolescence increases because, as we well know, even images get old and must be quickly substituted by new ones, because the consumer (who is ever more demanding) and expert ask for new products.

Only a few web pages and sites built in the western world are directly run by the people who sell their own images and who use a whole series of costume changes so as not to be easily recognized in reality, but these are,

however, extremely rare and minor cases (De Voss, 2002). In these cases, one can observe a process of sexual auto-nomination where the subjects become entrepreneurs of their own bodies, inserting them into the market of merchandized sexuality and in a logical consumerism in which the representations of the body become products to buy.

Bodies have traditionally been instruments and means of exchange, and today been normalized by the various services connected to the sex business again. Globalization penetrates social life through the planetary circulation of the culture of consumerism, producing the merchandizing and commercialization not only of forms of culture or ideologies but also of human bodies. The women and children of poor countries are the subjects, and at the same time, the main objects of these processes of merchandizing. The global economy forms the new division of international work on the base of different nationalities, ethnic groups, races and gender (Pettman, 1996). Appadurai (1996) spoke of ethnic scapes and gender to explain the movement of people. The movement contributed to the deterritorialization of the world, which became a constant experience on-line. Paraphrasing the words of Appadurai, one could dispute that mass migration and the widespread circulation of technology and information mark the experience of the contemporary because they heavily influence the work of the imagination: spectators and images are at the same time in circulation and are not easily traceable to local spaces, nations, or regions.

The success and the expansion of every type and form of the sex business cannot be explained without considering the diffusion of the culture of consumerism that has imposed and imposes the logic of quantity rather than quality of calculating the value of people in terms of money, of satisfying desires and needs in the form of merchandise. One must, at all costs, reach a better material well-being, sacrificing one's own body, one's wife's, son's or daughter's: concepts of relationships of gender and family patriarchal/traditional and contemporary aspirations for a better well-being and an improved life, produce a mix of tradition and modernity which induces one to think about the use of bodies for sexual services as an economic resource which at times cannot be given up. From this perspective, the professions, tied to the sex business even when chosen and not imposed with violence, are anyway perceived as a way of getting money when there is a lack of any other alternative (Afanasyev, 1996); Which is made possible also by contemporary ideology that promotes sexual freedom as an expression of individual freedom and from this point view, sex that is paid for is considered a business that supplies economic means for survival.

The Normalization of Pornography in Contemporary Society

There is last one reflection on the pornographic market before concluding. Pornography started out as a male consumerism of images and representations of prevalently female bodies. In the last 10 years, however, pornography has begun to circulate among women at first through the sharing of pornographic material of couples with their husbands and boyfriends, then also as an individual and solitary activity (Thornburch & Lin, 2002). At the same time we have seen the emergence of male prostitution for a female public and for sex tourism for women. We are dealing with a decidedly minor number compared to that of men but which is, however, not insignificant, and which brings to light a phenomenon which is present and growing. Pornography and prostitution, more in general the sex business, traditional environments exclusively and jealously male only, have today taken a hold on women too.

The emancipation of women, which characterized and characterizes the contemporary western way, seems to have difficulty in producing models of behaviour not so many light years away from those of men, and the

women, refusing a traditional vision of sexuality and of a typically male type, marked by the separation of sexuality from affection and characterized by the search for erotic satisfaction, independently from the relationship with another. The models proposed by the mass media, from the stars of mass culture to the most successful television series, *Sex and the City*, to give an example well-known throughout the western world, show women are capable of dealing with their own sexuality, able to have temporary erotic relationships, flexible, defined by the episodic and not the durable, scarcely interested in the relationship and more orientated towards the performance. In other words, models have up to now characterized the male type. The moral judgment of these women, at least in fiction, has nothing to do with their sexual behaviour and, as it has been traditionally for men, is based on other behaviour in the public sphere (Giddens, 1992; Castells, 1997).

Obviously, this could not have come about without certain scientific discoveries and important technological innovations in the field of contraception enabling us to have a vision of female sexuality as something separate from procreation, which brings us back to the subject of the relationships between technology and society that were spoken of previously.

Perhaps the best way to explain these transformations and social changes is to consider how much the logic of consumerism has permeated and influenced interpersonal relationships, taking them back to a process of merchandizing from which no business is excluded: flexible work, flexible time, flexible love, little space for life or work projects which are founded on duration, relationships, and recognition. The answers to needs, necessities, and desires are searched for in the products, services, and representations of what we think can satisfy. In this sense, the logic of the market and of money, which characterizes the pornographic market too, characterizes every environment in contemporary life, making us think about all that is absolutely taken for granted and not problematic.

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Georg Simmel's *Flirting* and *Secrecy* and Its Application to the Facebook Relationship Status—"It's Complicated"

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In contemporary society, many people spend a great deal of time communicating, or social networking, with one another in the virtual world (cyberspace) rather than through direct face-to-face interactions. The reliance of communication via social network sites is an aspect of virtual socialization, and its influence on our lives is increasing. The most popular social networking site is Facebook (FB). Most FB users share a great deal of personal information on their home pages including their relationship status. As depicted in the 2010 Academy Award winning film *The Social Network*, it is the relationship status of persons that initially intrigued Harvard students to check out the sites of their friends and classmates. Today, most users are still very interested in the relationship status of friends, family members, fellow college students, and acquaintances. One of the more captivating statuses is the "It's Complicated" relationship (ICR) status. Interestingly, all relationships are "complicated" so why a specific category of "It's Complicated?" It is proposed here that the person in an ICR is most likely involved in a secret relationship. This paper explores the "It's Complicated" FB status, utilizing Georg Simmel's work on *sociation*, *sociability*, *flirtation*, and *secrecy*.

Keywords: Facebook (FB), secrecy, It's complicated, relationships, sexting

Yogi Berra, a Major League Baseball Hall of Famer, is famous for his quotes as he is for his achievements as a ballplayer. On one occasion, Berra was asked about a local restaurant and he reportedly responded, "Nobody goes there anymore; It is too crowded". The quote is as funny as it is applicable. Facebook (FB) has become so popular that people are leaving the social network site in favor of sites less-traveled. Nonetheless, FB remains very popular as a means of mass communication and it is the "friend's" relationship status that intrigues many members the most. And perhaps no relationship status draws as much curiosity as the "It's Complicated" option. In this paper, the FB relationship status of "It's Complicated" will be explored (e.g., under what circumstances does one choose such an option, and excerpts from interviews with "It's Complicated" subjects) and analyzed via Georg Simmel's theoretical concepts of *sociation*, *sociability*, *flirting* and *secrecy*. The role of power in a relationship will also be explored, including Simmel's work on the superordinate and subordinate relationship. It will begin this endeavor by examining FB.

Do You "Like" FB?

Chances are you do "like" FB. FB is, after all, the world's largest social network site, with more than 900 million users as of May 2012. If you are at least 13 years old, you can join FB for free, just like everyone else.

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The word “like” is important within the FB domain as users are bombarded with messages from “friends”, advertisers, and an assortment of others who all encourage you to “like” a particular message. Despite the seemingly cynical view of the world that many people possess, FB users like a lot things. As of early 2012, FB averaged 2.7 billion daily “likes” and comments. FB users are busy beyond reading and liking posts, and they like to upload photos and 250 million photos posted per day. The international appeal of FB is attributed to the 70 languages in which FB is available (*The Post-Standard*, 2012, February 4).

FB was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his fellow college roommates Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, while he attended Harvard University. As a commercial enterprise, FB was valued at nearly \$100 billion in Initial Public Offerings (IPO) in early 2012 (Pepitone, 2012). On May 17, 2012 when it debut for public offering, FB was valued at \$104 billion (\$38 a share). It was the third-largest public offering in the history of the United States, behind General Motors and Visa (*The New York Times*, 2012, May 23). Public trading opened at \$42.05 but shares fell soon afterward, closing at \$38.23, just 0.6% above the IPO price. The value of the stock continued to fall and three days after its opening closed at \$32.25 (*The New York Times*, 2012, May 23). Despite its initial disappointing public start, the FB network site remains more popular than ever before.

Facebook is such a social phenomenon that *Time* magazine named Mark Zuckerberg the 2010 “Person of the Year” because of his influence on culture (Grossman, 2010; Delaney, 2012). FB, a free online social mixer site originally designed for college students only, but now open to anyone, allows users the opportunity to maintain a large number of friendships. However, the name “FB” is a little misleading, as there are no face-to-face associations on FB; rather, they are “virtual” relationships. Presently, many people spend a great deal of time communicating with one another in the virtual world (cyberspace) rather than face-to-face interactions. This phenomenon is an aspect of *virtual socialization*, and its influence on our lives is ever-increasing. The amount of time Americans spend online has increased each year for at least the past decade. Time spent online generally comes at the expense of spending less time with personal face-to-face relationships. Twenty-four percent of social network site users surveyed responded that they have missed important moments in person because they were busy trying to share those moments on their social network (Laird, 2012). In a 2008 study, 65% of Americans were found to spend more time with their computers than with their significant others (Kelton Research and Support, 2008). The average visit to a social network site in 2008 lasted more than 21 minutes, up from 15 minutes in 2007 and most consumers make numerous visits each day. In 2012, Americans spent 441 minutes a month on FB via FB Mobile alone; Worldwide, FB users spend a total of 10.5 billion minutes per day on FB (Laird, 2012).

Spending time on social network sites like FB is not only costing millions of people “face” time with significant others, it has been linked to lower grades in school and has been linked to lost productivity in the workplace. Research conducted at The Ohio State University (2009) has also identified a link between FB use and lower grades in college. However, more than three-quarters of FB users claimed that their use of the social networking site did not interfere with their studies. As early as 2009 it was apparent that FB users who logged online during working hours were costing businesses a substantial loss in productivity, 1.5% according to Nucleus Research (2009). Nucleus Research (2009) conducted a study with 237 randomly selected US office workers and found that more than three out of four (77%) reported having a FB account; 61% of them accessed FB during work time; 33% of them built their entire FB profile during work time; and one of three respondents indicated that they only log on to FB during work hours. The average user spends about 15 minutes of work

time on FB each day, but some employees spent as much as two hours. Based on Nucleus Research calculations, these figures amount to a 1.47% loss in productivity. As Rebecca Wettemann, VP of research for Nucleus, explains, companies facing tight margins and financial pressures may be operating on a profitability margin of 2% and losing 1.47% of productivity can be the difference between staying open or closing shop (Nucleus Research, 2009). In their battle to curtail lost productivity, many companies restrict (block) the office computers of their workers from accessing social network sites such as FB. In 2010, the Commissioner of Human Resources in Vermont reported that Internet usage at the agency dropped by 25%—a full 2,300 hours in the first week of the implementation of monitoring program designed to track workers web viewing habits (*Tech Journal*, 2010). To be fair, it is worth mentioning that many companies, primarily charities, and non-profit organizations benefit tremendously because of FB. FB at its core is about sharing and connecting, and such a premise is perfect for charities and non-profits soliciting financial donations and other forms of help. Libby Leffler, Strategic Partner Manager at FB focusing on community partnerships and programs explains, “The goal for our team is simple: Provide causes and nonprofit organizations with the tools that they need to best utilize our open platform to engage with supporters and inspire advocacy” (Kanani, 2012).

Not surprisingly, research has found that narcissistic users spend the most time on FB (Smith, 2010). Such FB users spend a great deal of time self-promoting. Self-promotion on FB is described as “any descriptive or visual information that appeared to attempt to persuade others about one’s own positive qualities” (e.g., posting celebrity look-alikes, attempts to garner as many friends as possible, and constant posting of new photos in an attempt to show how much fun one is having). A number of FB users take advantage of the social network site by embellishing on their lives. Research indicates that 24% of Americans and 28% of Brits admit to exaggerating or lying on a social network site about who they met or what they have done (Laird, 2012).

FB enables their members an opportunity to set up personal profiles; create links to photos, achievements, likes and dislikes, and buddy lists; and to keep in contact with friends. The concept of “friend” is important with FB as members are able and encouraged to ask other members to be their “friends”. If accepted as a friend or “friended”, the friends can view each other’s personal pages and share information. Friends can sign each other’s “walls” as well. Many FB members, especially younger ones, attempt to secure as many friends as possible. Having over 1,000 FB friends is not unusual for younger people. However, roughly half of all FB users have fewer than 100 friends (Laird, 2012).

Yogi Berra’s quote “Nobody goes there anymore; It is too crowded” seems almost philosophical and yet practically relevant. Berra was born Lawrence Peter Berra and he earned his nickname “Yogi” from a childhood friend who thought he looked liked the Hindu sage in a film about an Indian snake charmer (NPR, 2012). The nickname “Yogi”, derived from this Indian sage, is especially relevant in light of its meaning—having or exhibiting wisdom and calm judgment, and Berra’s quotes labeled as “Yogi-isms” as if he is a famous philosopher full of quirky insights. Sociologists, for example, might want to embrace a Yogi-ism form of observational social research advocated by this Berra quote: “You can observe a lot by watching”. Thus, in addition to “participant-observation” and “non-participant-observation” research, it has “watching-observation”. While the author has long marveled at “Yogi-isms”, and long thought of the relevance of this particular quote to describe FB, as the author searched for the exact wording of the quote referenced here, he/she stumbled across an article written by Linda Musthaler (2008) with the this quote as a title. Musthaler described years ago how much was made of the fact that Bill Gates stopped using his FB account because he was getting 8,000 friend requests daily and he found himself so busy turning “friends” away that he could not

use the social application in a productive manner; So, he just abandoned it.

Many college students tell the author that they have abandoned FB too; Primarily, because there is so much traffic that they do not have time to use the social network as they wish. The traffic on other social network sites reflects the diversified interests of virtual world connections. Beginning with the second most popular site (based on traffic rankings), the leading social network sites are: Twitter (250 million monthly visitors), LinkedIn (110 million), MySpace (70 million), Google Plus+ (65 million), DeviantArt (22.5 million), LiveJournal (20.5 million), Tagged (19.5 million), Orkut (17.5 million), and CafeMom (12.5 million monthly visitors) (eBiz, 2012). Add up all these monthly visitors in the 2-9 top traffic ranking sites and it still pales in comparison to FB's 750 million monthly visitors. Thus, the part of Yogi's quote that "Nobody goes there anymore" reflects the 587.5 million visitors per month to the other nine "Top 10" sites; while the "It is too crowded" part of the quote refers to the 750 million monthly visitors to FB. And whether someone spends a great deal of time on FB or some other social network, it still represents time taken from the daily activities of all users. In other words, think of a 24-hour day as a pizza, how big of slice do you want to allocate for time on social networking? Yogi, as you might expect, has a quote about pizza too. One time at an Italian restaurant, Yogi was asked if he wanted his pizza cut into four or eight slices, "Four", he said, "I don't think I can eat eight" (NPR, 2012). People who visit the smaller sites might think they are spending a smaller amount of time on social networking because it represents a path less traveled, but whether it is on FB or CafeMom, if the amount of time spent is the same, it is still the same amount of pizza.

Despite the number of people no longer climb on FB, the total number of users continues to climb, and climb quickly. There are many possible reasons for FB's popularity, including FB helps to fill the void of time for lonely people, it helps to boost self-confidence, it facilitates new friendships, it helps to facilitate current friendships and familial ties, it is a good way to find old friends and acquaintances, and, it helps shy people forge new friendships. Perhaps the prime reason for the popularity of FB is the "relationship status" feature.

Our attention now shifts to the important feature of "relationship status" on FB.

Relationship Status

As depicted in the 2010 Academy Award winning film *The Social Network*, it was the relationship status of persons that intrigued Zuckerberg's schoolmates at Harvard to check the sites of friends and fellow students. Most students, of course, were looking for single people to date; they also found it interesting to learn who was dating with who as the relationship status includes a spot to identify the significant other. Ever since FB was opened to non-college students, and the relationship status of other users still intrigues people the most to check out the sites of their friends, family members, fellow college students, and acquaintances. Before FB, most people worked with three primary categories of relationships: single, involved, or married. Yes, it is true that categories of the engaged, divorced, separated, and widowed have long existed, but before virtual contact with one another such a label of social identity was limited to close face-to-face relationships.

FB acknowledges: single; in a relationship; engaged; married; It's Complicated; in an open relationship; widowed; separated; divorced; in a civil union; and in a domestic partnership. The author first became interested in the FB status categorization while finishing up his/her chapter on socialization in his/her *Connecting Sociology to Our Lives* (Delaney, 2012) introductory sociology textbook and the discussion of "virtual socialization". At this time, FB received kudos from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLADD) because it expanded its relationship status options to include "domestic partnership" (CBS News,

2011). Jarrett Barrios, president of GLADD, said, "By acknowledging the relationships of countless loving and committed same-sex couples in the U.S. and abroad, FB has set a new standard of inclusion for social media" (CBS News, 2011). The focus of this paper, however, is to explore the "It's Complicated" relationship (ICR) status. One might immediately wonder, are not *all* relationships "complicated", so why a specific category of "It's Complicated"? Presumably, *whether* someone is in a relationship or not is not complicated even if the relationship itself is complicated.

So, what is an ICR? What circumstances place people into an ICR? And, why would people claim this status? This paper represents the early stages of attempting to find out more about ICR. The author has conducted interviews with 15 people—college and non-college students who identified themselves to the author as being in an ICR, and applied Georg Simmel's theoretical work on *sociation*, *sociability*, *flirting*, and *secrecy* in an attempt to help explain ICR.

Simmel's *Sociation*: Everyday Interactions Are Complicated

Among Simmel's primary interest was *sociation*—the study of human interaction. Throughout his career, Simmel examined a wide variety of interactions. His sociological study of human interaction was guided by the dialectical approach which, among other things, led him to believe that "the world can best be understood in terms of conflicts and contrasts" (Levine, 1971, p. 35). Simmel came to believe that *sociation* always involved potential opposite extremes: harmony with conflict; attraction with repulsion; and love with hate (Delaney, 2013). Thus, *sociation* involves the potential of both positive and negative outcomes during interaction. Such a conclusion is difficult to argue with as each of us has participated in numerous interactions in general, and relationships in particular, where the results were not as anticipated. Volatile relationships may have their moments of calm, and loving relationships may result in couples fighting with another from time to time even to the point where they need to "blow off steam" (a safety valve) in order for the relationship to sustain or thrive. There are certainly occasions when friends need to "chill" from time to time in order to keep their friendship from exploding. In short, every relationship is convoluted because human interactions are complicated. Consequently, it is not a surprise that dating relationships are complicated.

Simmel's dialectical approach and views on *sociation* lead us toward an analysis of the FB status of "It's Complicated".

Simmel's *Sociability*, *Flirting*, and *Secrecy*

Having interviewed the 15 subjects in an ICR led to four general categories of possible explanations as to why people would claim to be in an ICR. Thus, the FB status of "It's Complicated" is most likely used when:

- (1) The person is dating more than one person at a time, but not necessarily hiding it;
- (2) The person is not dating anyone but wants the appearance of dating. The IC status does not require identifying a name, so this option works well. Also, such a person may desire drama and attention;
- (3) Forbidden love as the result of such things as lack of parental approval; boss-subordinate; or professor-student;
- (4) Secrecy.

Although dating someone secretly can be the result of forbidden love, it is proposed here that one person in the ICR is already involved with another person while the ICR identifier is not. Furthermore, only the ICR identifier will use the IC status. After all, a person in a committed relationship, engaged, or married, cannot

suddenly change FB status to “IC” without having to explain this FB status change. Thus, the ICR is a variation of secret dating, or having an affair. In this manner, the person in the ICR is not cheating on another, but his/her partner most likely is. Nonetheless, the IC status person is put into a position of a secret relationship. Chances are he or she would prefer a different status, like “in a relationship” with...

The ICR starts like most others. That is, there has to be some sort of declaration of interest or attraction stated by one person toward the other. Such as, “I want you to know that since I first met you I have had a crush on you.” or “I am very attracted to you”.

Sociability and Flirting

If the feelings are mutual between two persons, a flirting stage emerges. *Flirting* involves playful interactions. Simmel referred to the play form of sociation as *sociability* (Martindale, 1988). Georg Simmel discussed flirting in his work on *sociability*. According to Simmel (1972), *sociability* is the association of people for its own sake and for the delight of interacting with others. The limits of sociability rest purely with the participating interactants (Delaney, 2013). Flirting is an excellent example of sociation because so many people flirt and do so in different ways. Forms of flirting range from the pure fun of flirting with others (e.g., smiling at strangers just to make them happy) to flirting for some specific end goals, such as preferential treatment, romance, or sex. People may flirt for a free drink at a bar and people have been said to be “flirting with disaster” when they attempt an endeavor that may backfire. Academics “intellectually flirt” with the challenge of conquest over some unexplained phenomena, although this type of flirting might be considered as boring work by those not familiar with the “rush” of seeking and obtaining new knowledge.

Simmel (1972) outlined many categories of sociability. The most relevant to this discussion is coquetry. Coquetry represents the play form of eroticism (Wolff, 1950). It is a type of flirting that has for an end goal, sex. In this type of flirting the two individuals playfully tease an “offer” while countering with a “refusal”. This give-and-take represents flirtation. Simmel believed that the nature of flirting is to play up alternately allusive promises and allusive withdrawals—to attract the other but stopping short of a flat-out decision, or commitment. Flirting involves swings back and forth between offers of enticement while keeping the other at bay with a playful “no”. That the two people have a mutual attraction will eventually lead to the fulfillment of the coquetry interaction.

It could be argued that sociability is what makes life enjoyable and durable. We cannot work or study all the time. It is necessary for everyone to take some time off and enjoy life. Sociability, specifically flirting, provides that avenue.

In the cyberworld that we live in, flirting is often accomplished via texting. The pursuer may text flirt something like:

“I have been chasing after you for years. You better not make it difficult for me; I am your little secret admirer.” “I have had a crush on you for so long. How could you not know?” “Just wanted to let you know I was thinking about you all day.” “I’m going to be dreaming about you all night.”

The intensity of the flirting varies by person and couple but one person the author interviewed shared this text message exchange with his “secret admirer”:

He: “What is up?”

She : “I’m failing at making cupcakes.”

He: “I’d like to try ur cupcakes.”

She : "Well, I'd love for you to try them. I'd love for you to try everything of mine. My body is yours."

The texting exchange described above shows how quickly flirting can evolve to sexual desire. Depending on the couple involved, and age is an important criterion here, text flirting may involve sexting. Sexting is flirting with an attitude! *Sexting* is a term coined by the media that generally refers to sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude photos of sexually suggestive messages through text message or email (Crisis Intervention Center, 2011). According to the Crisis Intervention Center (2011), sexting is most common between people in relationships; but sexting someone that you have a crush on is the second most common. In the author's research, a male subject told the author that he opened a text from his soon-to-be IC partner and was delighted to find a photo of her wearing nothing but her panties in front of her bedroom mirror with a message that read, "I was thinking of you. Hope you have a great day!". Needless to say, the male subject indicated that he had a great day.

In any developing relationship, an increasing number of exchanges of communications (text, phone, or face-to-face) will lead to the strengthening of the bond between the two people. The ICR is a little more complicated as based on the premise of this paper it will be revealed that one of the two people in this developing relationship is already involved with another person. This represents a decisive point in the budding relationship. In any relationship, there is the risk of a broken heart, or at the very least, the chance to be hurt. That entering a relationship with someone already involved in a relationship is a decision that should not be taken lightly as the risk of someone getting hurt is very high. It also implies entering a world of secrecy. This is especially true for the person about to claim the ICR on FB. But, let us not get ahead of ourselves yet.

Secrecy

If a couple decides to enter in a secret relationship they may create cute little nicknames for each other, like all couples do, but they also modify otherwise standard status distinctions. For example, instead of referring to each other as GF (for girlfriend) and BF (for boyfriend), they may use the SBF or SGF to signify a secret boyfriend and secret girlfriend. In the beginning, a secret relationship sounds exciting and thrilling; and it certainly can be. Simmel described the *secret* as the hiding of certain realities by one or persons from another person or persons. The information that is being withdrawn could be positive (as in, "I am buying you a new car for graduation next week") or negative (as in, "I am cheating on you but don't want to break up with you yet"). Simmel gave grand status to secrecy. He argued that *secrecy* is one of man's greatest achievements as it represents an advancement from one's childish stage in which every conception is expressed at once, and every undertaking is accessible to the eyes of all, to a point where one learns to hold back certain bits of information for the good of others or self (Delaney, 2004). The secret offers a possibility of a second world alongside the manifest world; and the latter is decisively influenced by the former (Wolff, 1950).

Simmel (1950) described how all forms of sociation involve interactants who have some bits of information on the other(s) but certainly lacking complete knowledge. In some cases, we know relatively little about the other and as a result each interaction presents an opportunity to learn more about the other. People who have a mutual attraction to one another may find that as they spend time together they have little or nothing in common. The spark is there, but the flame will burn out quickly. On the other hand, as we interact with the desired other we may become even more enamored. The more time people spend together and share bits of their life story, the more we learn about them. Simmel also indicated that we could never know anyone absolutely, and that helped to explain why the person be cheated on is unaware of the other's participation in an

ICR. Using his dialectical model, Simmel (1950) viewed the relationship between interaction (being) and the mental picture we create of others (conceiving) as based upon the reciprocal relationship already established. That is to say, we interact with others based on the information at hand; and the information at hand may contain half-truths, false-truths, and flat-out errors of judgments. Presumably, we all understand that it is impossible to know everything about people, even those we are closest to as it would be impossible to communicate such a huge amount of information between interactants. The phrase “TMI” (too much information) comes to mind here. But there is a difference between not knowing everything about another and having information that is purposely kept hidden. The intentional hiding of information takes on greater intensity when it clashes with the intention of *revealing* (Delaney, 2013).

This intentionally hidden information is a secret. The weight of bearing a secret is sometimes too much for some people to endure. As a result, they may confide this secretive information with a trusted other. One female respondent told me, “I just couldn’t keep it a secret any longer that I was cheating on my boyfriend. I had to tell my best friend about it”. Her friend asked whether or not her boyfriend noticed a change in her behavior. Simmel (1950) indicated that the behavior of the concealer modified relationship even if the person being cheated on was unaware of the secret actions of other. Telling a friend that you are cheating on your significant other may relieve some built-up pressure from within but it comes with the possibility of being betrayed. Other dangers with living a secret life involves the external danger of being discovered and the danger of giving oneself away.

While Simmel valued the concept of secrecy, he also extolled the value of *faithfulness*. He described faithfulness as a significant sociological form because it is such an important feature of the sustainability of social relationships. Faithfulness promotes loyalty, social autonomy, reaffirming affective interests and the strengthening of psychological bonds. Faithfulness is applicable to the ICR for many reasons, including the realization that the person secretly dating the “cheating” other will always have to consider the reality that he/she may fall to be a victim to the other’s cheating in the future.

It’s Complicated

At this point, a relationship has been formed between two people, one of whom is currently still dating another. They want to spend as much time with each other as possible. When they are apart they will communicate their desire to be together face-to-face sharing physical proximity and time with one another. Getting together is a rush. Hooking up is a thrill. There is drama, tension, and pressure (both to perform and to live up to the expectations each have created). The couple declares their feelings to each other. The single person wants to change FB status from “single” to “in a relationship”. But the person already in another relationship asks that you not do that, after all, you are in a secret relationship. Furthermore, to keep this new relationship a secret, the involved person cannot change FB status. “We have to keep this a secret” declares the cheating person. “But, I want to acknowledge our relationship to my friends on FB” counters the other. A compromise must be made. Enter... the “It’s Complicated” status. To add salt to the wound, this couple cannot even be FB friends out of fear of their secret being revealed!

The posting of the IC status on FB will result in many wall postings with comments from “friends” such as:

“Who is she?”

“Why is it complicated?”

"When can we meet him?"

"How long have you been dating?"

The ICR FB status person tells his significant other about the comments posted on FB and is asked, "What have you been telling the people who ask about us?". There seems to be a tone of concern and yet desire. At this point, all is good with the ICR couple. The cheater says things like, "I would love to be GF for real and be able to enjoy being together and being public about it. I wish it was like that". For now, that is enough, even though the single person might want a lot more. Over time, the single person may press for more time together. Such concerns are met with responses like, "Let us just enjoy our time together... I'm happy and don't wanna fuck anything up with you." But things are fucked up.

They find time to be together but has described earlier, if they live in a small town, publicly dating will be difficult. Even those living in large metro areas with plenty of public space available, have to be able to explain the long periods of time they are unaccounted. This difficulty will lead to a strain. The cheating person may start to feel guilty. He or she may even, unsuccessfully, attempt to break up with their real partner but the guilt will reel them back in. All the while, the single person in the ICR is left to dangle off to the side. The secret is not so valuable any longer. Attempts to communicate are left unanswered, or delayed in response. The pressure is mounting. The former adrenaline rush of secrecy is replaced by doubts and concerns.

Inevitably, what happens? Like nearly all dating relationships—ICR ends! And although a few ICR subjects the author spoke with mentioned that their relationship did develop into a "real" relationship, most ICR ended in heartache and pain. And, also, like most relationships, one person is hurt more than the other... and this person is most likely to be the original single person. He/she ends up with no one after the failed ICR, whereas the cheater simply returns to the original relationship.

The Role of Power

As a sociologist, Simmel was intrigued about the role of power in relationships. Simmel's analysis of power is articulated in his discussion on the *subordinate* and the *superordinate*. The superordinate is the person(s) with power over those who do not, the subordinates. In nearly all forms of interaction the disparity in power is made clear. Among the easiest examples of power differentials is the employer-employee relationship. In some cases, people may exert physical strength to show their dominance over others. Simmel looked at the superordinate-subordinate relationship as a form of socialization critical for social life and as the main factor in sustaining the unity of groups (Delaney, 2013). Simmel believed that *superiority* and *subordination* constitute the sociological expression of psychological differences in human beings (Spykman, 1965).

Within any relationship, including the romantic, there is generally an imbalance in power. That is to say, one person almost always has more power than the other. Being involved in a secret relationship may give one the feeling of power because they have full access to information that others lack. For example, one male subject involved in an ICR reported:

I saw her at the street fair with her boyfriend. I felt bad seeing her with him and yet when I walked passed them she smiled at me and I smiled back with that knowledge that we have of each other's secret worlds. Her boyfriend, of course, was clueless to her secret life.

At the time, this male thought he had the power because he felt like he had closer, more intimate knowledge of his SGF life than the real BF had of his GF. However, the author asked who really had the power

here. The BF went home with the GF and you went home, alone, waiting for a call or text. Furthermore, who will determine the next meeting? In this case, it was the SGF who dictated all get-togethers. A female subject (in an ICR) reported that she had the power because she regularly threatened to reveal the truth about their secret. This attitude, of course, caused a great deal of strain in the ICR.

As with most relationships, the individual members involved in the ICR become aware of who has the power. If you are in a relationship and not sure who has “the hand” (a reference to the *Seinfeld* (1992) episode, “The Pez Dispenser”, wherein Kramer once told George he had “no hand” and George realized he wanted hand, as in “upper hand”, or having an advantage), apply Willard Waller’s (1938/1951) “Principle of Least Interest”. This principal theorizes that romantic partners usually proceed at different paces in their emotional involvement with one another. If the differences in involvement become too large, the less interested partner is in a position to exploit the other. Thus, the partner less committed to the relationship has the advantage, or upper hand. As a means of illustration, if your current relationship ended tonight, who would be hurt the most and who could move on the quickest? The answer tells you who has the power. Sensing the end of his ICR, one male respondent said he sent a text to his SGF saying he had just returned from a family event and wished that she was with him as his GF. His SGF responded by saying, “Aww... Well, I would have loved to come as girlfriend but you know that I can’t”. When pressed for a better response, his SGF responded: “I would like to spend more time with you but its hard getting away for all that time. I’m sorry if that is not good enough for you. We can end the relationship now if you want, or keep going as is”.

Clearly, the SGF, in this case has all the power. They broke-up shortly afterwards.

Parting (Ways and Thoughts)

As with nearly all romantic relationships, the ICR is doomed. It will end. For the person with the power, an ending is not nearly as difficult as it is for the other. For the person who had to keep the ICR secret but wished not to, the break-up can be really hard because it was never public in the first place and as a result, it is less likely friends and family can come to an emotional rescue. The person in the original relationship can more easily move on, albeit at the risk of feeling guilty for cheating and living in fear of being “outed” for his or her secret relationship. The jilted lover may now have the power because he/she can “drop the dime” (“snitch”) on the cheating ways of the other.

One male respondent said:

One day I got a text from my SGF that read, I am really sorry but I cannot have any type of relationship with you anymore. I am trying to make things right with my BF. Please respect that. There was nothing he could do... That is, except to change his FB status back to “single.”

As this respondent and most other ICR persons indicated, being involved in an IC relationship has complications beyond that of other romantic relationships. Nearly all respondents stated that they would try to avoid ICRs in the future. While the flirting and excitement associated with the early stages of an ICR seems to be as exhilarating as the beginning of any other romantic relationship, the secrecy typically associated with an ICR appears to add much stress—both to the relationship itself and to many of the participants.

As for the author, although his/her life is complicated, his/her FB status is not!

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