To post or not to post? Teasing out tensions between privacy and social connectivity.

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Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted, and approved, for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy, in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signed

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15th day of February, 2021

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Introduction

For many people around the world, the use of social media or social networking sites (SNS) has become an intimate part of their everyday experience. This digital space is abundant with information, stories, and pictures that which signal a larger moment of technological progress. Part of such progress is the increase in accessibility of technological devices, like the smart phone, across the globe. As more people have access to devices from which to interact with other people and to engage with, as well as contribute to, streams of information online the scope and reach of the internet has become seemingly infinite. As with any other historical advancement in technology, there is a corresponding societal impact of new technologies integrated into everyday life. However, such processes always bear with them implications for the power dynamics of a society and the way people come to be affected as a result. The steam train, electricity, phone lines, the first computers and the emergence of the internet were all inventions whose integration into life changed the landscape in which we lived.

The world has once again seen a massive shift in its social and information landscape with the advancements in machine learning and algorithmic processing in which platforms like Facebook have not only become feasible but popular. SNS, like Facebook, form part of the social web. The term 'social web' refers to platforms designed to foster social connections through the sharing of various forms of information (What is Social Web? - Definition from Techopedia, 2020). I will argue that part of what has driven the popularity of the social web, and, SNS in particular, is its ability to fulfil a human desire for social connectivity – an end which we desire as not only part of our basic human needs but for the value it brings to both us as individuals and as part of larger society.

However, the growing infrastructure and reach of SNS is not solely about the benefaction of collaboration and connection to society. In light of scandals such as the one concerning Cambridge Analytica[1] in the 2016 US elections, it is gradually becoming clear to the public that whilst they may not be paying monetarily for use of SNS, they may be paying in far more dear ways through the surveillance of the personal information and data they generate as users.

[1] The Cambridge Analytica saga is detailed by the data breach – and use - of 50 million Facebook user data points by the company Cambridge Analytica in the 2016 US election to target key voters with personalised political advertising leading up to the election to sway voter opinion (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018).

It is becoming clear is that the pervasiveness of surveillance online happens in obscure and covert ways.

Platforms used for social connectivity pose a challenge to privacy and all that it could potentially safeguard. Thus, it is important to attempt to understand the implications of SNS given the mass popularity of sites like Facebook given its growing power to survey, analyse, and influence people.[2] In this research I will endeavour to answer the question: as the social web becomes one of the predominant ways for people to stay connected with one another through platforms like Facebook, are we being forced to choose between our privacy and this form of social connection?

I begin in Chapter 1, by introducing the notion of social connectivity as an innate human need which motivates the nature of action many individuals take. Social connectivity is outlined as a key contributor to people's wellbeing and ability to 'flourish'. I then introduce how one's need for social connectivity stands in balance with autonomy. This lays the foundations for later arguments: individuals need to seek out forms of social connection that affirm not just their being in relationship to other people but their ability to interact in a self-determining way. This need is a major motivation for why people use a site like Facebook. However, there is more to SNS that the benefits it brings people. As such, an examination of the motives and implications of the companies behind SNS platforms is necessary to understand the full scope of effects SNS has. In Chapter 2 I offer such an examination, and provide insights into how social connectivity and privacy are brought into tension with one another as a result of an information and power asymmetry between individuals and Facebook. How such an asymmetry arises will be elaborated on with reference to Michel Foucault's framework of power in order to lay the ground for the implications of power for a choice between social connectivity and privacy.

In Chapter 3 I begin to develop the implications of power for choice. I outline the importance of privacy for autonomy as a relationship that allows people to seek out social connectivity without compromising (through choice or coercion) their ability to make their own choices. As such, I will argue that privacy is valuable in how it serves as a way to resist the type of power

[2] I will focus primarily on Facebook and its subsidiary companies within this report. This is because it is one of the original forms of SNS and maintains primacy in the industry to this day. Moreover, given that the company was one of the earliest founders of SNS, it established many of the innovations and industry standards upon which other SNS have borrowed and leap-frogged from. When I refer to SNS I refer to Facebook, its subsidiaries, and the SNS who have taken its cue from Facebook's operations.

Facebook and other SNS have begun to accumulate. The contributions of this chapter spell out what is at stake at a higher level in the nature of the choices individuals make with regards to the use of Facebook and the factors that could potentially impact such a choice. I will explore the conditions under which we may be tempted to trade off values such as privacy for social connectivity. Moreover, I will investigate potential ways to safeguard such a capacity whilst resisting strategies of power that seek to undermine it. I acknowledge that there are a host of factors that could contribute to what motivates people to use SNS. However, given the scope of my report I believe it prudent to limit my analysis to the factor of social connection given its significance for human social life.

In Chapter 4 I then turn to explicitly unpack what would make a choice forced rather than free by developing an understanding of what autonomous choices mediated through one's social environments and constraints would look like. The contributions of the four chapters will allow me to tease out an understanding of the operative factors at work in determining whether we are in fact forced to choose the form of social connection SNS offers or our privacy.

Before proceeding further I want to take a moment to acknowledge the theoretical framework from which my analysis stems. As with all theoretical frameworks there are inherent issues of scope as well as potential biases and blind spots. My analysis is informed by Western liberal democratic values which means that there are some underlying assumptions with regards to the context of users I refer to. These SNS users are in developed countries – or located within pockets of more infrastructurally developed locales in developing countries. These are people for whom the values of autonomy and privacy are likely to be important.

However, I am also aware that there is no homogenous subject possible to refer to and that elements of this analysis such as values, power asymmetries, and the nature and significance of access to technology are all things experienced differentially according to one's specific context. What I endeavour to address are thematic linkages in users' base experience of SNS and the potential for whatever specific issues of power or context they may experience to be amplified by unchecked technical apparatus at a global scale.

Chapter 1: Social Connection and Social Media

This chapter contributes to work studying the social effects of social media usage. Although several studies (Ahn & Shin, 2013; Akram & Kumar, 2017; Collin et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009; Phua & Kim, 2017; Tyler, 2002; Whiting & Williams, 2013) have examined the benefits and detriments of social media on individuals, there has not been a strong focus on the underlying motivations people have for using these platforms. To take such a focus requires identifying the significant role some our more basic motivating needs, such as to seek out food, water or social connection, play in motivating and shaping human action. The confluence of these needs and the various reasons that compel us to use SNS require further examination. Moreover, the interplay between what the role of social connection in relation to other values, such as autonomy, is another approach worth unpacking especially within a Western liberal democratic framework that frames this report.

How we may weight other values makes for an intriguing problem given that our desire for what social media brings us may lead us, in our pursuit of that desire, to trade-off one for another. I will explore whether the innate social nature of human beings may drive us to seek out connection with others – potentially through such trade-off's – or inherently reduce our capacity for autonomous decision-making as individuals. This chapter will explore the complexity of the balance between individual's innate need for both autonomy and social connection as well as how a force like SNS might pose a threat to such a balance. In doing this, it draws strongly on the work of Baumeister (2011), Chambers (2004), Christman (2004), and Ryff and Singer (2006).

Social Connection

The human being is an essentially social creature. As a species, we live amongst others. We need social connection and, hence, are motivated to act so as to fulfil that need. This influences many of the decisions we are inclined to make. Politics, anthropology, biology, and philosophy (to name a few fields of inquiry), point us to countless examples of this fact irrespective of whether their subject matter indicates a rebelling against, or embracing, of that social nature. However, what does it mean to be an inherently social being who needs social connection? How does that affect the things that one, as an individual, does? We can understand that as

individuals we are immersed in relationships. For the majority of people, it is the rule rather than the exception that we are born into a community of some sort. As such, one navigates the influence of their relationships, their communities, in attempts to form their own beliefs, decisions, and actions. It is a navigation in which one must balance one's innate human need to be connected to others, whilst still retaining some level of autonomy over their beliefs, decisions, and actions. However, this still does not spell out what it means to be 'socially connected'.

If we were to try to understand what it means to be socially connected we could, at first, come at it from a definitional perspective. 'Social connection' means to engage with, or feel linked to, others. 'Social' generally refers to interactions with other people ("social", n.d.) and 'connection' to a process by which two parties or entities are joined by some common thread ("connection", n.d.). Why would such a process unfold? In the past, human beings lived in close communities that shared responsibilities for sustenance and safety in order to stay alive (Seligman, 2012). As technology has developed, we may no longer organise society in the methods preferred by hunter-gatherer societies, for instance, but some mutual dependence remains. Though a mutual dependence for survival may account for some of the primacy with which we accord being a part of a community or society, the need for social connection is not limited to such. Social connection is valuable beyond survival for us in the way it facilitates our wellbeing.

Why Do We Need Social Connection?

The conceptual framework of 'Wellbeing' offers a useful understanding of what humans require to live a life that both physically and psychologically nourishes them. Discussions to do with wellbeing are concerned with subjective states where one feels autonomous, at peace with one's self, capable of seeking out personal development and surrounded by positive relationships (Ryff & Singer, 2006). The psychological field that studies wellbeing is referenced to illustrate the primacy of social connections in human psychology not only in terms of meeting an innate desire, but it showcases that the pursuit thereof is of particular value to our lives.

We have an innate need to feel as if we 'belong' to feel that we have relationships that are meaningful to us, and to act so as to maintain those relationships (Baumeister, 2011, p.122). A 'meaningful' relationship is a connection between people whereby they feel supported, understood, and comfortable, in those relationships. Even the less intimate instances of social interaction have some meaning for us in orientating ourselves in relation to others, to where we feel that we belong. In so far as we are raised amongst other people, through which we come to survive, it is through those relationships that we also begin to learn how to make sense of the world around us. This need to belong, or need for social connection, is also in a way part of a need 'to know'. We find ourselves needing to know about others and the nature of the world, as well as ourselves, as part of building relationships. The recognition of how these relationships coalesce across history and cultures into the various institutions and structures that we come to recognise, affect, and be affected by in our daily life is part of what it means to feel as if we belong. Digital technologies and the use of the internet serves as an example of such a coalescence in locales where the apparatus is readily available.

As various studies have shown, our overall sense of wellbeing is partly constituted by the relationships we have with other people (see Ryff & Singer, 2006). In seeking out, building and maintaining social connections, our innate need 'to belong' is fulfilled. It forms part of a broader nexus of conditions to meet through which we feel fulfilled. The relationships we have with other people forms part of the necessary conditions that allow one to 'flourish'. This broader nexus is the necessary condition for the possibility of a person's wellbeing or flourishing through positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment (Seligman, 2012, p.44). We can be said to be flourishing when we experience and cultivate our interactions with the world around us in a way that is meaningful for us, that brings about positive emotions, feelings of accomplishment, and engagement with other people. In the same way that we are driven to attain food, shelter or water, there is a similar drive to attain, and maintain, meaningful relationships with other people.

The psychologist, Seligman, who has worked extensively on well-being, believes positive relationships are a necessary but not sufficient condition for wellbeing. Therefore, the other elements Seligman identifies as contributing to wellbeing are as integral to Seligman's account as positive relationships. He does not believe that people's primary objective is positive relationships (Seligman, 2012, p.41). Seligman (2012) believes that it is in pursuing meaning and engagement from multiple facets of one's everyday life – of which meaningful

relationships are one – that one comes to flourish. Whilst they are an essential part of life and one's wellbeing, seeking out or engaging with positive relationships alone is not what he considers enough to bring about flourishing for a person.

I am inclined to agree with Seligman. However, I must complexify his framework slightly because the network which supports the various elements he outlines for wellbeing are possible by virtue of the interconnected nature of the human species through which various activities and pursuits are made available. An example of how we are interconnected are our systems of language by which we organise ways to ensure sustenance, social cohesion, as well as a way to understand these (as well as other) activities. Language make the universe comprehensible around us and implies bonds between people, between institutions, for its formation . Even dissidents of a social order will seek out people with whom they may share a plight. In our pursuit of the many things life has to offer, we will always have a need to share part of our lives with those whom we feel 'at home' with. This frames social connectivity as not only something that we desire, and pursue, solely because we are wired as social animals, but for a higher purpose in what it brings into our lives.

Whilst social connection cannot bring about flourishing within an individual alone, it proves part of the necessary conditions that form the foundation of wellbeing. The environment in which we live plays an important role in informing not just the type of strategies an individual will develop to fulfil their needs but inform the nature of the individual as well. The co-dependence then between individual and society, between the I and the We, raises an interesting question: given our social nature and the structures of the societies in which we live, how much autonomy do individuals have to choose to be part of their societies? Can we meaningfully choose to be a part of these networks? By 'meaningfully choose' I refer to the idea that we can critically evaluate the information concerning a choice and make a decision according to what we feel is best for ourselves, in our context, rather than making a decision based on undue external influences. The answer to these questions would shed some light then on how much autonomy individuals may have to choose to be a part of SNS.

Me versus We: Autonomy and Social Connection.

This innate need for belonging does not mean that we need to give up our autonomy where social connection is concerned. While autonomy will be further clarified later in this section, autonomy is understood broadly as the scope of freedom one has to be left to make one's own decisions about what course of action one might make, free from unwanted external forces that may seek to interfere with such choices. Whilst we do require social connection, autonomy also plays an important role in our wellbeing (Christman, 2004). As much as we require relationships with others, it is essential that we have the opportunity to question the environment around us and forge our own way amongst it. This includes being able to decide how we go about meeting our needs. This section will further explore such questions by taking a look at the significance of identity formation in relation to others and how autonomy mediates the fine line between individual and community.

Social connection forms an important part of how the individual 'self' comes to be informed. We are born into community. It is through others that we come to learn how to make sense of what we experience in the world around us. We are shaped, though not determined, by the society (and its design) in which we live. Language, for instance, is an example of a system that we come to be conditioned within. As we learn how to speak a language, we learn a systematic way to articulate and order our experience. It is in a similar way that other aspects of social life are inherited by the individual from the larger environment around them as they develop from infant to adulthood. A language is often imbued with cultural history and values by which the meanings of its concepts and words come to life. As we learn how to employ language and use its concepts to navigate the world, so too do we learn what goes into the formation of different preferences, desires, values not just for other people but for ourselves, as well.

It is this experiential process by which most individuals come to be shaped. Though our identity has some societal constraints we are not solely determined by those constraints. That is to say we are still able to be autonomous. These identities are not static but rather change over time. People shape the structures of the social structures that we live within and the effects of each on the other flow into one another like an ouroboros. These social dynamics help to shape the skills necessary for autonomy to emerge, such as skills necessary for one to understand one's environment and adopt or form strategies to navigate in it, one's preferences, capacity for critical self-reflection (Christman, 2004). Within all of this, it is still possible for the individual to be autonomous. In fact, it is integral part of an individual's experiential education that they

learn the skills within, and through, their social environment necessary to cultivate their own autonomy (Christman, 2004; Chambers 2004).

However, the nature of the social dynamics an individual is embedded in are important as not all social structures will allow for these types of elements of autonomy to flourish. However, this is not to say that elements of autonomy are, to some degree, not possible in social structures not designed in such a way. The social structures around us set the perimeters of an individual's field of feasible possible action. This is how we come to learn of our cultural norms for instance. It is important that social factors allow an individual to develop the capacity to assess the environment as well and themselves and take the action they see suitable. Should an environment severely restrict an individual's ability to critically assess and question it they, more likely than not, will be expected to acquiesce to whatever the predominant norms are rather than make decisions they believe to be the right course of action. However, it is possible for people to be autonomous and exercise certain freedoms in restricted social systems just as it is possible for people within more liberal systems to fail to cultivate and exercise their autonomy. But more on this later.

Autonomy is important for one to be able to enter into social relationships in ways that are meaningful for both parties. Without it, people would be vulnerable to being manipulated or coerced by the social factors around them. Peer pressure, for instance, typifies an example where people feel they cannot choose an alternative course of action for themselves for fear of some form of cost, such as social isolation, and so are pressured into an action or decision. Societies that harshly restrict the ability for women to move and interact with the outside world, freely or only so long as a man chaperone is present, render these women vulnerable to coercion and control by the men given the power over them. The above forms of pressure exist in varying degrees in most societies and many Western countries have tried the cultivation of pockets of distance from such influences and consequences for people who act in such ways as ways to temper it. Whilst autonomy and social connection are complimentary to one another, they would be drawn into conflict should the attainment of one be at the expense of the other. There is a balance between the two that seems to require support on a social level commitment if both needs are to be honoured. If I were to have autonomy but be without social connections, I would be alone in the world. As Seligman would phrase it: I would not be able to use my autonomy nor flourish for an essential component of what I need as a person is relationships

as well as self-determination. Such relationships serve as a space in which my character can be appreciated, supported, questioned and developed through interactions.

Should I lack autonomy but have social connectivity, a similar logic would apply because I would lack the critical distance from others to deliberate and form my own decisions and actions. If I were a woman in the type of society described above, my ability to make decisions for myself would be incredibly hard given the lack of control I am accorded over my body and movements. Perhaps I may have freedom in my thoughts but my ability to bring about the actions, states, and interactions is undermined because I am denied control over my body.

At this stage it is necessary to more specifically define the notion of autonomy in order to clarify the relation between autonomy and social connection. Autonomy has been broadly introduced as the scope of freedom one has to be left to make one's own decisions about what course of action one might make, free from external forces that may seek to interfere with such choices. However, more has to be said about what constitutes 'the scope of freedom' to make one's own decisions. I will draw on Chambers' (2004) two orders of autonomy to clarify this distinction. Chambers' account of autonomy is useful because it allows us a way to conceptualise autonomy in a broad sense that encompasses the variety of decisions people may make with regards to how, and by what rules, they prefer to live their life.

First-order autonomy is when a person is free to choose for herself whatever type of life she wishes to lead so long as she remains able to critique, question, and reject if necessary, the rules that come along with such a life (Chambers, 2004). The rules she lives by are those she chooses and endorses for herself and not those forced upon her as a result of her choice to live in a certain way (Chambers, 2004, p.4). Second-order autonomy is where an individual is able to live a life of her choosing so long as that choice is uncoerced by external forces and rather informed by her own values or understanding of the good (Chambers, 2004). Critical interrogation and self-determination of both one's self and one's environment are important aspects of both orders of autonomy. This rings true even if one were to use these capacities to autonomously choose non-autonomous lives (Christman, 2004; Chambers, 2004).

If one were to choose a nonautonomous way of life, such as in choosing to join a military or religious institution with strict rules and prescriptions, then such a decision can be made in line with second order autonomy even while compromising one's first order autonomy. One can

choose to live a particular kind of life according to the values and rules one believes are best, so long as it is uncoerced, even if the consequence of that choice results in one being expected to conform to rules not of one's choosing nor within one's ability to interrogate. However, it is problematic to favour one form of autonomy without the other as it makes one vulnerable to coercion (to be further elaborated upon in Chapter 4).

The first and second orders of autonomy can be applied to illuminate the relationship between autonomy and social connection. Individuals always exist as a part of a broader social dynamic that they navigate as part of their broader capacities of autonomy. Whilst our need for social connection may motivate some of the action that we may take, it need not entirely determine us. Whilst there is a space in which autonomy mediates the action we do take we cannot forget the magnetism social contexts holds to pull us into conformity. The idea of societal safeguards against manipulations or coercions of power will be developed further in Chapter 2.

Social Networking Sites and Social Connectivity.

If in principle we can meaningfully and autonomously choose to be socially connected, the ways in which social connectivity has advanced may nevertheless still undermine that choice. The actions we take are greatly influenced by our various needs and desires. This is important to establish because it indicates the cause behind why people are compelled to take certain actions. It is for this reason that we become so enamoured by various advancements in the social structures, and technologies, around us that promise to fulfil our need to belong and to know. It is this motivating mechanism that has plausibly driven the mass adoption of social networking sites as the internet became more available to more individuals across the world. This section will unpack how SNS work and why its mechanisms may appeal to our base motivations, such as our need to belong, to compel individuals to make use of the platforms.

SNS, like Facebook, have emerged, and blossomed, as a result of the advancements in technology and spread of digital technologies. Millions of people around the world have taken to these technologies making them a familiar feature of contemporary life. This allowed for the integrative and interactive nature characterised by Web 2.0. Widespread access to the technology allowed scores of people to create personal profiles on particular pages (platforms), to connect with other people also signed up to the platform and participate in content-sharing

such as photos, live events, news, and so on whilst being able to interact with that content. The internet revolution has marked the swift alteration of the world into a very different kind of place. Digital technologies have become readily available and as a result have changed the nature of how our social structures function.

I have discussed above how social structures can influence the choices that individuals make. With the availability of digital technologies, social media sites have become a very attractive way to participate in social realms. One can share and communicate with other people, engage with varying types of content, asynchronously or in real time. The physical space, often proving an obstacle to mediums of communication, is bound to spatially bound systems like letters and telephones. This distance seems to dissipate between people with SNS. And as more people take to use of SNS, the more others are inclined to follow suit. This is attributed to a phenomenon called 'network effects'. Network effects refer to the increased value that a product or service gains as the number of people using them increase (Banton, 2020). The more people who use SNS, Facebook for instance, the more likely others in similar social circles will use it. As more people begin to use the site, the greater the perceived value of the platform. Given the popularity of sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (to name a few), it is worth understanding what drives people to using these platforms.

Why do people use social media? My position is that we are motivated to make use of various platforms because we are fundamentally motivated to develop strategies by which we satisfy our need for social connection, as discussed above. There are other ways of investigating similar motivated reasons which are worth outlining here. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a particularly useful framework as it provides a lens to analyse why people are drawn to media and for what reasons. UGT posits that people are not passive consumers of media but rather active participants that utilise sources of media that best fulfils their particular, and varying, needs (Ungvarsky, 2020). UGT posits that how people use social media is determined by one's needs and the environment one is immersed in (Urista et al., 2008). This is a similar assertion to the schema I have sketched above in which the interpersonal dynamic between individual and their (social) environment plays an integral role in determining the field of possible action an individual may take. Within this field of possible action, people seem to autonomously choose to use social media as such a strategy of needs-fulfilment. Whether such autonomy extends past being of the second order to include the first still remains to be seen.

The increasing popularity of SNS has resulted in a shift in the way that we socially interact with people. SNS mediates interpersonal relationships that once occurred face-to-face (Akram & Kumar, 2017; Beer, 2009; Clark et al., 2018; Phua & Kim, 2017; Urista et al., 2008; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Where once face-to-face interactions or interactions through media like radio or newspapers had distance, scheduling, and accessibility, as obstacles (Urista et al., 2008), the rapid spread and adoption of not just digital technologies but SNS has cut through such impediments. It provides personally relevant and satisfying content to its users that allows for quick access to one's personal networks as well as information. But at the heart of these interactions is the need for social connection through which entertainment, personal exploration, development, and knowledge acquisition, can come to be met.

Part of that social connection includes utilising the dynamics of social bridging and bonding to experience beneficial interactions between people. The use of SNS for social bridging and bonding refers to the two ways that social capital accumulates to an individual. Social capital is understood as the resources and social mobility an individual has as a result of an established network of relationships (Phua & Kim, 2017). Social bridging is the weaker form in which people seek out information and opportunities to engage with it and other people with whom they are not close with or that they may not even know offline (Phua & Kim, 2017, p. 5). Social bonding is then the stronger form in which the individual seeks out, in their close circle of relationships, interactions and information that facilitate closeness and trust in that relationship (Phua & Kim, 2017, p.5). Part of social bonding interactions informs the need to belong by forming part of strategies that nourish and maintain social relationships with others. This informs part of the gratifications referred to that people tend to seek out in the use of this kind of media. However, this interaction itself is not a straightforward one.

There are levels of nuance in how individuals go about seeking this gratification. In cases where one chooses to use SNS, even if it is detrimental to one's wellbeing, one may still pursue a form of social connection through the platform. Clark et al. (2018) asserts that how an individual uses a platform like Facebook determines whether that use of social media results in a higher or lower wellbeing. 'Use' of social media here refers to whether an individual is actively seeking out interpersonal connection online or uses the platform passively. When one is actively engaging with other people and the content they generate, rather than passively consuming it, one will feel higher levels of connectedness, and so wellbeing, similar to what one would feel if one were engaging with another person face-to-face (Clark et al., 2018, p.34).

Passive engagement correlates with lower wellbeing as individuals may feel as if they are connected to other people or their interests, but this is a 'pseudo-connection' that is short-lived (Clark et al., 2018, p.33).

Whether we succeed or fail at mastering this new form of technology, it becomes clear that at the very crux of the matter is a deeply human need to feel connected to others, to feel as if one belongs and is in 'the know'. That 'need to belong', to feel as if we are a part of something, can be expanded to include the impetus for seeking out social capital. How an individual goes about using SNS such as Facebook determines their experience of the platform. This kind of intentionality, and use of one's autonomy, augments social bonding and social capital in a different space which also feeds into whether or not one's experience of SNS facilitates or impedes an individual's wellbeing. As part of being motivated to use social media to fulfil one's need for social connection, the interactions with other people on this medium result in social bonding exercises from which social capital accrues to the individual as it would offline, too (Phua & Kim, 2017, pp.5-6). SNS creates one such environment. It creates a space where one can belong, where one can situate one's self as a part of a network, a (online) space, no matter how big or small, where one is privy to an abundance of informational flow as well as a participant in generating those flows of information.

This section has sought to establish the strength of the compulsion to participate on social media platforms as not an arbitrary, or merely convenient thing, but as forming part of a strategy to ensure the fulfilment of a deeply human need for social connection. The primacy of the role of SNS in social life needs to be established in order to dismiss the idea that it is not significant enough to interrogate nor is it a sufficient approach to argue that if one does not like SNS that one can just opt out of it. There are multiple external and internal influences at work that make investigating SNS worth serious consideration. At the same time, this motivation for social connectivity through SNS does not preclude a level of autonomy on the level of the individual for how one chooses to integrate this platform into one's life.

The individual element of this system has been outlined here and will inform how we come to understand the larger nexus of the interplay between individuals, technology, and the powers that develop and utilise such technology. Afterall, if we are compelled to use social media because it, even partly, satisfies an innate human need, we may be willing to compromise on other needs. My initial discussion of autonomy suggests that there is a balance that can be

struck between social connectivity and autonomy. If what we feel we are getting out of using SNS is so fundamental to us as humans living in this era, even if it be passively and in ways that diminish our wellbeing, what would we do to maintain our access to these spaces? What would we be willing to part with? Could privacy serve as a social good, a social safeguard, to protect our autonomy whilst allowing us to pursue a need to belong and know?

Chapter 2: Power and Surveillance

In Chapter 1, I elucidated some of the innate compulsions to connect and have knowledge of others in a system like the social web, and how social connectivity can stand in relation to autonomy. In this chapter I wish to go 'through the screen' and understand what influences designers to shape these services we as individuals are becoming increasingly compelled to frequent. We must not lose sight of the fact that it is people who drive these developments and not some malevolent automaton. It is people who design technology, drive its progress, and it is people who are affected by its consequences. It is important to understand the nature of the relationship between people, technology, and the designers of technology. This chapter will elaborate on the nature of the interaction between individual and social web, which following on from Chapter 1, will further explore whether we can meaningfully choose to make use of the social web. This is necessary to establish if we are to elucidate how tensions between social connectivity and privacy arise and complicate free choices, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

This chapter contributes to work in the field of critical data studies. Although a number of studies (Illiadis & Russo (2016), Williams (2013), and Zuboff (2019)) have examined the intersection of data, profit, and power, there remains a need for systematicity in the conceptualisation of power and its implications for the social web. As such, this chapter provides further insights into the nature of this power which forms, not a new form of power as Zuboff suggests, but a part of a larger tradition of contestation between individuals and forces that would seek to govern them. Situating an understanding of SNS like Facebook in relation to its users as an iteration of such contestations provides a useful context to understand the larger context of power contestations at work as well as potential ways to navigate them. This approach differs from previous studies by situating the effects growing corporate power has over the world's population in relation to the use of the social web and other digital technologies. Situating power in such a way can be paralleled to other struggles against power in political and familial spaces. Sovereignty of nation, of thought, and of body, are but a few examples. Such struggles contest the frontier between power relations that seek to conduct or influence the behaviour of groups or individuals. The influence of behaviour would complicate the question as to whether or not one is being forced to choose certain ends to make use of SNS.

The frontiers of power relations have existed throughout human history and so cannot be accredited as an invention of, what might be called, 'surveillance capitalism' that governs SNS, despite what someone like Zuboff suggests. As will be argued in this chapter, the strategy power surveillance capitalism utilises is, thus, not a significant threat to us because it is a new form of power but rather because it has crystallised into one mechanism the once diffuse and various strategies of power buoyed by access, and use, of information about individuals in an unprecedented manner on a previously unimaginable scale. To understand how such a crystallisation has taken place, I will draw strongly on the work of Michel Foucault (1978), James Williams (2018), and Shoshana Zuboff (2019): all theorists concerned with the question of the effects of power on people.

The Emergence of the Social Web

There are numerous ways to interpret and understand the nature of the various platforms and players that make up the various structures that we would term 'the web'. Critical data studies is concerned with the ways global societal, economic, and political, structures inform Big Data (Illiadis & Russo, 2016). Big Data is generally understood to refer to the large scale accumulation and analysis of data generated online. My approach is of a similar bent given how such structures shape the reality of this environment we enter into when we use services like SNS and its subsidiaries. These services are the public-facing and accessible structures beneath which lies a warren of machine learning algorithms and databases all overseen by specialists. This system makes up the operations of businesses whose digital offerings tend to require access to large quantities of information to increase its efficacy. The highly competitive environment pushes technology companies to strategically leverage every element of their innovations to increase their profits in ways like utilising user data. However, the mass scale digitisation of information and the consequent storing, ordering, analysis, and dispersion, of that information has resulted in a power imbalance between individuals producing the data and companies collecting it (Bozdag, 2013; Coll, 2014; Fuchs, 2011; Trottier, 2012). Though the implications of the social web may affect people in different ways, for the purpose of this report I will be trying to establish a base level understanding of what its technical apparatus is and how it might be mobilised for, or against, different social contexts.

I have spoken rather generally around the idea of the social web, of SNS platforms and of the businesses or companies that form the back end of this system. Though I do not have the scope to give an adequate account of the history of the internet nor the scope to give an enriched account of the economic forces and dynamics accompanying it, I will endeavour to give an overview of the way the social web has developed so that a company like Facebook could set up its platform in the way that it did. Such an overview is important in order to understand the nature of power relations between users and the companies who run SNS platforms. Elucidating the nature of this relationship will be integral to establishing the framework in which individuals make choices with regards to SNS. A central point of this discussion is to establish the political economy of the social web or Web 2.0 as inherently linked to processes of capitalism and its strategies of power. This will be expanded on in the following section, and the consideration of whether ultimately such choices would require the trade of a value like privacy for social connectivity will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The development of technical capacities from earlier iterations of the world wide web, or Web 1.0, to Web 2.0 saw an uptake in the availability of technologies, popularity of usage, and overall system efficacy. Web 2.0 is characterised as the emergence of a participatory web culture in which individuals contributed content and engaged with the content of others (Beer, 2009). Search engines like Google and early versions of SNS like Facebook emerged between 1998 and 2004. Computers became less expensive and more available and the corresponding improvement in technology provided increased opportunities for people to interact with other people via the web. This was met with the rise in popularity of participating on online platforms like Facebook and Google.

Facebook is the most prolific of SNS platforms available. Its inception in 2004 was the beginning of social media as we have come to understand it today and many of its practices set the tone for other SNS to follow, which is why it (and its subsidiaries) are the primary focus of this report. The company created a platform, a meeting place, in which one could create a profile and find people, organisations, and content. On this platform, various types of media came to be circulated: photography, news, general content sharing, to name a few. The purpose of connecting people together was the company's earliest mandate; however, as it has evolved with time its mandate has transcended the service of connecting people to the development of other practices that might make it financially successful. As the number of users and frequency of engagement on Facebook increased the more popular it seemed to become, attracting ever

more sign-ups. On the backend of this, the more individuals participating on the platform, the more information became available to Facebook to use to 'improve its service offering'. I put this in quotes not because I believe it is false, only that the phrase is too easily accepted at face value. I will say more about this in the following section.

Facebook is *prima facie* free for anyone to use. However, if one looks at how the network functions it becomes apparent that though one may access the platform free of charge there are hidden costs. With around 2.5 billion monthly users of its services, excluding the number of users forming a part of the company utilising messaging service WhatsApp and once-competitor SNS Instagram, it becomes clear to see that the reach of this platform is great ("Facebook Reports Second Quarter 2020 Results", 2020). Reports vary on the specifics, but it is becoming clear that a majority of users spend vast amounts of time on these platforms *daily*. Individual activity is not a pebble dropped in the vast sea of information available online that becomes obscured by the ever-fluid flow after a slight ripple. Each ripple can be captured. Nothing goes by unnoticed. The development and maintenance of this platform is not only about catering to social connectivity, as discussed in Chapter 1, but about utilising that kind of demand in running a business. The question then arises: who is the customer of these business models?

Individual activity online – each click, swipe, post, and so on – leaves behind a complete picture of that interaction. This process is known by various names such as data excess or data exhaust. The functioning of computing systems leaves behind a string of instructions: inputs and outputs that piece together the public-facing platform that we surf across with ease. This data is a necessary by-product of computing processes (Schneier, 2015). It also has a further use: though this data was initially generated as a by-product, it has been systematically expropriated by technology companies like Facebook to quantify the nature, frequency, and content, of those activities into useful information about user interests and behaviour online that can be used to boost content more likely to generate engagement (Fuchs, 2011; Williams, 2018; Zuboff, 2019). This kind of segmentation of data is where the value of Facebook offering its services for free is gained back.

Facebook, though not alone in this practice, provides information about the behaviour of uses which allows for increased prediction services either in the form of personalised content or targeted advertising (See Vold & Whittlestone, 2019; Zuboff, 2019). This kind of information

is especially valuable because of its ability to accurately target advertisements. The capacity to target and time advertisements which are tailored to the individual's interests is a powerful tool. It is a powerful tool due to its ability to personalise and target people with tailored information in which people may be influenced to buy something, thus leading to a higher conversion rate (i.e.: it is more likely a person will buy what is advertised to them). It is the provision of this kind of service that attracts companies to Facebook, and where Facebook is able to make its profits (Johnston, 2020).

Thus, we have a triangulation of forces at work here: people who want to use the platform for various reasons, the platform offering services not just to the users but tailoring its offerings to attract third-party buy-in, and third parties wanting to maximise the reach a platform has for its own various ends. The nature of this relationship is one of one-way surveillance: systematic observation of people through the use of various technological structures that is geared towards using the generated insights into people for commercial ends (Schneier, 2015). The scale that this level of data is generated on proves dangerous because wide scale surveillance gives corporations and governments the necessary means to potentially discriminate against or exploit any group or person (Schneier, 2015). This kind of informational flow is fast becoming the status quo.

Furthermore, the way that corporations are setting up the nature of their businesses (now experienced as apps, sites, search engines) has begun to capitalise on the access to individuals their sites allow. Making use of the insights this data affords them has become a more viable, and perhaps essential, strategy to maximise the information that can be gleaned from data to optimise their businesses. There is much to be gained by trying to nurture and sustain the network effect of one's platform. The internet is a diverse realm that is constantly in flux and so the competition to keep people consistently using one platform or site rather than another is fierce. The abundance of information available online means that people can shift their attention rapidly. There has been a consequent impetus for corporations to design their platforms to try keep as many people engaged as possible. This is a competition for individual attention to maximise profits. James Williams (2018) argues that this competition takes the form of gaming the design of platforms so as to commandeer and direct the attention of individuals to particular sites through a collaboration of strategies. Such strategies appeal to habituated behaviours that many people may be unaware are motivating their action.

The strategies for directing attention, in the sense Williams refers to, habituates such behaviours through a combination of design and research accumulated by Facebook which keep people wanting to use the platform. The more frequently this happens, the more likely using such an interface will become a regular habit. SNS becomes used habitually through a myriad of designs curated to appeal to our base needs to feel validated and connected – among other things. SNS designs utilise psychological hooks – appeals to aspects of one's psychology that immediately command one's attention and seem to require immediate action - to keep one engaged on a consistent basis. These psychological hooks are driven by a platform designed upon an unpredictable reward system in which one is never sure when one will receive a notification, a 'like', or see content that one will find satisfying and so even the anticipation of that moment itself becomes satisfying akin to the experience of a slot machine or video game (Griffiths, 2018, pp.66-67).

In extreme instances, forms of SNS addiction due to this logic have begun to emerge (Medya et al., 2018). Our own reward system is much more predictable: one that is in tune with our base needs to stay alive that cause us to seek out those things that we need to stay alive. In this case such rewards include social validation, bonding, and affirmation. Our psychological reward system is exactly what is targeted by design features such as 'likes' which users are sent notifications of (Griffiths, 2018, p.67). This process cultivates a dopamine release loop which predisposes individuals to habitually check and engage with content on SNS in anticipation, or pursuit of, some sort of reward. The use of notifications helps solidify such habits as well as direct individual's attention back to the platform. Perhaps one uses Facebook or Instagram to feel connected to others but it must be acknowledged that there are additional pulls on one's desires that gets intentionally designed into the system.

The benefits of a platform establishing a habitual user base is the accumulation of data from which a rich picture of the type of interests of various individuals through which patterns can be identified and reproduced to tailor content individuals are most likely to interact with in a process called personalisation (Vold & Whittlestone, 2019; Hannak *et al.*, 2013). Personalisation serves a purpose not only to keep a platform more engaging but provides a feedback loop of the collection of information about an individual that is already taking place. This is possible because one's activity across the web is not only trackable but the necessary infrastructure exists to analyse such diffused sets of information. Without systems to organise and analyse this information it would remain as 'waste' by-product. However, the development

of a way to organise this system into a cohesive narrative is where the value of the information emerged. To extract this narrative is to piece together the information in such a way that it brings to life the user on the other end of the screen: their behaviour and interests. The 'piecing together' of this information is done through algorithmic processing, or machine intelligence, whose accuracy only improves with the more information, or training data, it has access to (Zuboff, 2019). It is this infrastructure of analytics and targeted content in which the true value of the information generated by individuals online is extracted.

If SNS has mastered its feedback loop to cement itself as a habituated part of daily life through strategies of surveillance, what is the overarching logic at work? It is quite plausible that there is an emergence of order across technology companies that is concerned with directing attention. However, this itself does not automatically capture the complexity of the issues at work. Zuboff (2019) offers an insightful analysis of the political and economic logic at work in the current climate that she characterises as 'surveillance capitalism', and which can help us to answer the question of who the customers of these business models are.

The Rise of a 'New' Governing Force

The significance of the various information practices emerging on the web becomes apparent with perspective. When one considers the various practices in their totality it becomes apparent that there are common themes across the board. The internet is transitioning into a multifaceted and dynamic informational system that is predominantly made possible by companies who are primarily motivated to utilise the interconnected nature of such a system to maximise profit. This is not inherently a bad thing: the use of technology for advantageous economic gains has also corresponded with gains in standards of living, healthcare, and technology is something that is apparent throughout human history. However, these sets of gains have all had their own drawbacks. My focus is on the drawback of the technology we are dealing with now that has access to incredible amounts of information that is unequally distributed with. This technology marks the rise of an economic order that alters the typical relationship between individuals and businesses.

Zuboff has analysed the totalities and intricacies of this relationship under the term 'surveillance capitalism'. Surveillance capitalism is understood as an economic order in which

various technological infrastructures – such as those used to run a site like Facebook - are used to observe and collect information about individuals' behaviour as material used to augment and drive commercial practices (Zuboff, 2019, p.8). Zuboff attributes this practice as giving rise to a new form of power which she calls instrumentarian power. She defines instrumentarian power as the power to use the knowledge one has of other people's behaviour in order to shape it towards one's own ends (Zuboff, 2019, p.8). In this section, I will give an overview of Zuboff's notion of surveillance capitalism and how it facilitates what she believes to be the rise of a new governing force: Instrumentarian Power.

The typical relationship between individuals and businesses is something Zuboff pays some attention to. She traces the historical, political, and economic, themes from the industrialisation period to the more recent years dominated by neoliberal capitalist ideology where a business' mandate has shift towards maximising value it brings in for its shareholders (Zuboff, 2019). The shift in mandate to maximise value for shareholders, Zuboff argues, is what marked the rise of an era that valorised the inventions and players of the market above general society. The view that the free market was an independent force operating independent of social relations has been a position long held by the classical economics school. Though this view is much contested (see Polanyi, 1944; Granovetter, 1985), some elements of its view of agents as an entirely rational agent and the market as a force of stability and self-regulation have survived into the neoliberal climate of the 21st century.

Within such a climate, big technology companies such as Google, Apple, and Facebook, could rise to prominence. However, no longer was the nature of the relationship between individual and capitalist mediated through labour, wages, and the means of production. The advent of technological companies introduced a new model of capitalism in a new world where millions of people began using cell phones and then, eventually, smart phones. Companies who ran the platforms people used on their phones developed the technology that could be understood as, what Zuboff dubs, 'owning the means of behavioural production' where individuals are not the sources of labour any more but rather the raw materials from which value can be extracted and sold for profit (Zuboff, 2019, p.69). The means of behavioural production refers to the process of surveillance, analysis, and use of individual data to improve information that can be used for targeted advertising. This process of generating richly detailed user profiles on individuals that are designed to inform predictions of future content and keep individuals engaged is part of a process Zuboff calls the production of 'behavioural surplus' (Zuboff, 2019, p.69).

Behavioural surplus can be understood as a combination of what Williams (2018) called the attention economy and notions of data exhaust or data by-products that serve to provide the material for SNS companies to tailor content and advertising. SNS appeal to us in the sense that they seem to offer up a way to fulfil of our social, entertainment, and informational needs and desires. However, this only scratches the surface of a design beneath the systematic feedback loop between individuals and the forces that design the nature of the platforms that scores of people use online. The ability to predict and filter relevant content, to direct attention, is in principle what will allow for a more pervasive, even sinister, form of power Zuboff identifies as instrumentarian power to emerge. She states:

> "Instrumentarian power bends the new digital apparatus – continuous, autonomous, omnipresent, sensate, computational, actuating, networked, internet-enabled…[as] a panvasive means of behavioural modification whose economies of action are designed to maximise surveillance revenue…The knowledge that now displaces our freedom is proprietary. The knowledge is *theirs*, but the lost freedom belongs solely to *us*" (Zuboff, 2019, pp.374-375).

The rules of engagement between individuals and broader societal forces are constantly in flux. The availability of information between the two camps partly determines the nature of that engagement. When organisations such as states have greater access to knowledge about the population over which they rule than the population does about the state, an asymmetry of knowledge can create an asymmetry of power. Zuboff sees in the face of such an asymmetry a total loss of freedom: the use of knowledge set to the ends of profit at the cost of us. Yet she gives little elaboration beyond this into the sustaining logic and implications of such an asymmetry of power.

An asymmetry of power refers to the way in which an organisation or institution can use knowledge to develop various architecture or strategies by which it can produce discourses in which individuals can become immersed. A strategy of power is to frame the truth in a certain way, to narrativize it, and in such a way come to imbue such narratives within the minds of the population so as to bring about adherence to that strategy. We are dealing here with a diffuse notion of power. Where does this leave the individual? If the benefits of social connectivity are being funnelled into the medium of SNS which is made possible through surveillance

capitalism: do the benefits outweigh the costs? Do we really understand the nature of the 'cost' yet and if not what are the implications for our choices to use a Facebook?

We are becomingly increasingly aware of concerns around surveillance, around the use of information about ourselves to inform the nature of the content available online. On the one hand, we continue to partake in such a system even as more evidence begins to reveal that the cost of such a participation is much dearer than we may realise. On the other hand: personalisation algorithms that use behavioural surplus to generate relevant content (and marketing) keep us inclined to continue using SNS also have contributed to many people's ability to access useful information.

There is this tension between this metalevel organisation of surveillance capitalism which has cleverly designed its product offering to be so valuable that individuals do not want to be excluded from its systemisation of knowledge despite concerns around surveillance. Whilst Zuboff believes that this is how surveillance capitalism exercises instrumentarian power: what we want and how we go about getting it is being determined by corporate interests, I think her analysis requires some closer attention because it does not seem to fairly represent the benefits individuals experience nor account for the history of power relations evident in such types of interactions. A notion of power such as the one Michel Foucault offers may prove useful in unpacking the tension between those with the capacity for surveillance and the surveyed. As such we need to take a closer look at what the notion of power then entails.

Power and Foucault

Foucault is a prominent analyst of the effects power has, in its various iterations, on a subject or individual. Foucault draws on historical developments of the relationship between institutions of various sorts throughout Western European history and their attempts to govern people immersed in them not by domination or exploitation alone but through a different means: shaping people's conduct. I use this lens as a conceptual framework to guide my analysis of the nature of power that we are contending with. I will broadly outline an understanding of the nature of power relations and the general characteristics that are apparent in the practice of technology companies such as Facebook. I will then turn my attention to

particular strategies of power immanent in the conflicts around privacy and autonomy which play out in our desire for social connectivity[3].

Power signifies a complex logic of relation between people that can elude full comprehension but one that we must struggle to attain nonetheless. By grappling with power through the lens of Foucault's work, I believe we get a sense of how power works, what makes it effective, and a way to comprehend the logic of power as we are beginning to see it instantiated across the web. I will draw on Foucault's notion of power relations, its effect on individuals, how this comes to manifest as biopower and, later, its emergence in a set of strategies or technologies of power that can be understood as 'governmentality'. In so doing, it will also become apparent that Zuboff's notion of instrumentarian power is limited.

The power technology companies have over a large amount of people is a keystone claim made by many theorists in trying to articulate the changing nature of relationships between ourselves and digital technologies, or between ourselves and other people when mediated through those technologies. The undercurrent of these negotiations of power in relationships is slippery and unstable. When trying to understand power relations Foucault proposes that the best way to make its strategies intelligible is to begin by identifying the points of resistance against its various strategies (Foucault, 1982, p.780). The nature of this resistance against forms of power can tell us something about the nature of that power such as what it is concerned with or what strategies are implemented to bring about that end. It is Foucault's hypothesis that in identifying the reactions that emerge against power, the nature of that power can be illuminated. Concerns around privacy, autonomy, political freedom, and economic monopoly could all serve as instances of resistance against the exercise of power in its strategies of surveillance . The nature of where it emerges, how it affects those who seem to have it as opposed to those who seem to lack it, is equally diffused and unstable. It is for this reason that I wish to elucidate the notion of power in order to have an enriched understanding of the term.

Power can be understood as a way of indirectly influencing the action of others. Power is a way "to structure the field of possible action" (Foucault 1982, p.790). In other words: how one might possibly behave or act becomes limited by another party in such a way that one is more

[3] Though there are multiple dimensions of power one may consider, given the scope of this report my analysis is limited by the constraints of my evaluative framework.

likely to pursue certain outcomes than others. However, for the relationship to be considered one of power it must not prevent one from maintaining a variety of ways of responding or resisting. Foucault is adamant that the tussle between power and freedom is exactly what characterises freedom for where there is no freedom, there is not power but domination (Foucault, 1982). One is disempowered in instances of domination for there is no possibility for counter-action. A power relation requires a relationship of free agents for power "is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free…slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains" (Foucault, 1982, p.790). As such, power relations can be understood as the way that one's conduct comes to be guided by how choices within one's field of possible action are framed; the relation must be one of multiple recourses to react or resist or respond. There is a parallel here to how Foucault sees freedom to act and Chambers' (2004) notion of first and second order autonomy in which though an individual may have one's choices mediated through social forces, it is the ability for one to choose how one wishes to live, and under what rules one can live under or endorse, in which one can act autonomously.

There is a certain level of power at work in social forces that influences the context within which one makes a decision according to what one thinks are viable options for one to pursue. One can act with autonomy when one can act according to what one sees as fitting for one's self in one's particular context. Where it becomes complicated is where one can act with second order autonomy but not first order autonomy. There are also instances where one can act with neither first nor second order autonomy. Under such conditions one's possible field of action is entirely determined and relations become closer to that of domination rather than power. Power relations are an intrinsic and unavoidable element of society in which its strategies can begin to coalesce and approach domination: all the more reason why it is important to illuminate, understand, and question the natures of power relations within societies (Foucault, 1982, pp.791-792).

Given that power is a diffuse and relational force which cannot be found solely in institutions or organisations or people, it can be said to flow in the interactions between people. As people interact with one another within their networks, the relations and strategies of power can coalesce and come to crystallise within a particular institution. Foucault argues that any interrogation of power relations requires one to identify systems that distinguish the various aspects of society, the objectives that system pursues, the means at its disposal to bring those

ends about, and the institutions it uses to uphold the framework (Foucault, 1982, p.792). One such system at the management of people can be sourced back to the model of the family. The notion of 'economy' initially referred to the proper management of the members of a family and its resources which later was adapted as an approach that could be used to characterise what was entailed in governing a state (Senellart & Burchell, 2008, p.207).

Where family once lay at the centre of the model of economy, the rise of industrialisation ushered in its replacement: at the centre of the economy now lay the management of the population's lives and its resources. This change was brought about as new forms of technology were developed. To improve the condition of the population was to take on as a mandate the need to sustain life: to ensure the health, productivity, and reproduction, of that population. To govern a population in such a way is to ensure the state has the power to direct its resources of (re)production and, ultimately, its own longevity. This required knowledge of the people one sought to govern.

How the notion of economy was understood shifted from the model of the family to considerations of the broader population of a country. This shift was bolstered by technical advancements required ways to gain information about the lives of the population over which a state was supposed to govern. Foucault cites the use of statistics as one of the emerging technical factors that allowed governments to quantify and aggregate experiences of people within a country (Foucault, 1978). The accumulation and access of greater knowledge about the people constituting the population of a country was integral for a state to develop institutions and apparatuses to sustain its directive to govern people. Institutions and social apparatus such as the family, schools, medicine (to name a few) served a dual purpose. Such information was essential to inform what kinds of strategies the state would need to execute to ensure that its population thrived. To thrive is meant in this sense to refer to a biological kind of welfare: people remained healthy, productive labourers, and continued to have children. On the one hand, these institutions provided the insights about the behaviour of the people who fell beneath their purview from which particular interventions to improve the condition of the population could be actioned. On the other hand, they also served to produce certain norms to be replicated their constituency adherence.

A consequence of the concern with improving the condition of the population is the requirement of interventions in the lives of people in which the body of an individual becomes

a target of power. Foucault identifies two strategies of power that targeted the body in order to sustain life: the characterisation of the body as a type of machine whose overall functioning and (re)production was to be optimised and secondly, the expansion of this logic to monitor and make interventions over the bodies of the population in general (Foucault, 1978, p.139). It is the latter strategy of power that has come to be understood as biopower.

Biopower is the power over bodies: to survey, intervene, and discipline the bodies over which a state governs (Foucault, 1978, p.139). Foucault argues that these interventions are affected through the regulatory controls of various institutions where bodies were subjected, and expected to conform to, various forms of discipline (Foucault, 1978). In many instances, the discourses of institutions that were a part of our lives came to influence how we came to understand ourselves. Given that power is relational and emanates throughout society, there could be varying agendas and power relations across society that coalesce in the various institutions. However, with regards to the state, this crystallisation of similar power relations would trickle down to influence the design of social architecture like education, military, religious, and economic structures across its population.

We as people exist, are shaped by, and contribute to these structures and so their discourses inform part of how we come to understand ourselves. This is what Foucault identifies as a process by which we produce ourselves as subjects of particular discourses (Foucault, 1982). Our own participation in producing ourselves as subjects of such discourses echoes the sentiments of Chapter 1, in which the various structures around us whether interpersonal, cultural, political or economic, come to have some influence in how we are and/or how we understand ourselves.

> This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise, and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects…subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge. (Foucault, 1982, p.781)

This is what Foucault refers to when he speaks of the types of indirect interventions a state could exercise over its population. By the body becoming a target of power, a subject of a discourse, knowledge about that body may be gleaned, contributed to. This knowledge is

essential for larger scale interventions surrounding production or societal organising. Foucault notes that the very development of capitalist systems required this assertion of the body as machine upon which interventions and adjustments could take place to optimise the available labour and prioritise ends such as economic processes (Foucault, 1978, p.141). The individual as a resource ripe for shaping is a strategy of power that is traceable prior to the advent of surveillance capitalism but still an effective one, nonetheless. I will elaborate on this by contrasting what Foucault teaches us about power with Zuboff's notion.

Contrasting Foucauldian Power and Instrumentarian Power

Zuboff's notion of instrumentarian power places the significance of the threat of power on the novelty of its commodification of the individual as a resource to be shaped to the ends of external powers. However, Foucault's framework refutes such an interpretation by providing a notion of power that accounts for a long struggle between forces that wish to produce individuals as subjects and individuals themselves. In this section I will compare the two notions of power. Adopting Foucault's framework offers insights into the diffuse strategies of power institutions and organisations employ without sacrificing the power individuals themselves have as well. This insight will be argued as preferable to Zuboff's framework in so far as it shall allow us the critical perspective to elaborate on strategies of power and see how their synthesis, in the context of surveillance capitalism, is where the threat to the individual really emanates from.

The conception Foucault introduces of power as a force that is able to frame the field of possible action and produce people as subjects of, through subjection to, its strategies of power offers a useful tool to understand the complex and fluid interactions we see around us in daily life. In the past we have seen fascism and totalitarian governments use such strategies of power. In the present, we are faced with a body of corporations, not states, beginning to take up a similar style of power. The distinction between corporation and state is an important one because I believe that their mandates as organisational bodies differ substantially. As Foucault suggested: the state – particularly as we have come to understand it at present across Western countries – has as part of its mandate the question of *governing*. Of conducting others' conduct in such a way that aids the unity and welfare of the population (Foucault, 1978) – however that welfare is defined. A corporation, a business, takes as its primary goal a different objective: its mandate

is the success, wellbeing, thriving, of itself. To put it differently: its concern is to maximise its operations so as to maximise its profits. This mirrors the shift Zuboff highlights that emphasises shareholder value.

Whilst I agree with Zuboff that the nature of digital technologies and the abundance of information made available through them is new, I do not believe that the use of this knowledge marks a new style of power. The difference between the two forms of power is that the type of power Foucault is concerned with is governing the conduct of people in the pursuit of the maintenance of life rather than instrumentarian power. Instrumentarian power is concerned not with using its knowledge for the maintenance of life – with a level of wellbeing – but in maintaining a system of informational and behavioural surveillance to achieve the ends of its own agenda. However, what both accounts of power have in common is a concern with shaping the behaviour of those they seek to govern. Perhaps, surveillance capitalism may be more prone to edge towards domination than state power given that its concern is not with life but its mandates as a business.

Foucault argues that the intersection between the individual and technologies of governance form part of the way that an individual comes to be formed, how they act and understand themselves and others. These technologies of governance pervade the structures of social life which themselves comprise the larger societal milieu a state would oversee and sanction. It is in this way that the production of behaviour is brought about. However, Zuboff argues that the production of behaviour is new and localised to the increased technological capabilities seen under surveillance capitalism that provide the structures for something like instrumentarian power to take place. Zuboff overlooks how social institutions influence individual behaviour in her assessment of socio-economic historical developments. She traces the rise of capitalism as marking a break with the communal, group, orientated modes of society and hence, a break with the power such modes exercised over the individual to bring about their conformity to social norms (Zuboff, 2019, pp.34-35). It seems then that Zuboff believes that this shift from mass to individual freed the individual from external influence. In contrast, while Foucault's characterisation of society has many parallels with Zuboff, they differ in their assessment of the role of power relations and individualism. Foucault would argue that even in more individualistic societies, power relations are still present in shaping the field of possible behaviour and action that individuals may undertake.

The conceptual lens a Foucauldian analysis of power relations proffers thus reveals that instrumentarian power is not new. It has long informed a strategy of power that seeks to govern people by framing the action they may take in a narrow sense, in line with the objectives of the institution or discourse (say a religious institution for instance) employing that strategy. Instrumentarian power reflects the central tenet that Foucault's notion of power holds, too: a concern with behaviour. The production of certain types of behaviour as well as the monitoring and regulation of behaviour are held common in both accounts of power. To orientate instrumentarian power as a part of this spectrum of power strategies, rather than as an entirely new form of power, is to recognise that it forms part of a fundamental negotiation of power relations between people and forces or bodies that seek to govern people. To recognise this continuity means that we can look to various counter movements against such power strategies as ways to resist becoming wholly totalised by power. When there are no ways for us to resist within a power relation then that it is not power but domination. This would beg the question then: are we dealing with power when we are talking about SNS and surveillance capitalism or are we dealing with the emergence of a strategy of power that is approaching domination?

A Game of Power or Domination?

The influence of the environment around us has a hand in the way we will experience material reality and the opportunities available to us to explore or react to those realities. However, this does not mean that we abdicate to the strategies of these power relations. Recall that Foucault holds freedom as inextricably bound up within power relations. It is the force that allows us to recognise and identify the process of power relations; to be free to be an agent who can engage in relations with other people whilst continuing to explore for one's self one's own notions of subjectivity outside the framework one has marked.

Foucault's account of power accepts the convergence of the individual, their freedom, their associated networks of power relations as well as their material conditions. Such recognition allows for the conceptual flexibility in identifying power relations as well as one's ability to respond. By bringing that awareness to the foreground, it is easier to recognise relations that threaten to become relations of domination as opposed to an exercising of power. I mean domination here in the sense that the field of possible action is entirely determined; one has no

alternative courses of action by which to resist as is necessitated by Foucault's understanding of a power relation.

However, it must be noted that Zuboff is correct in identifying a change in the form power can take. We are no longer dealing with the diffuse and siloed strategies of power within a state. The internet is not confined to one structure but diffused and immanent in the various societal, political, and economic hegemonies that inform the perimeter and structures in which we live our lives. The knowledge accruing from that diffusion, however, is being fed back to a few corporations to use as they will. This is a convergence of the strategies of power and knowledge towards an end that has hitherto been part and parcel of the functioning of a state. It has now emerged above it, an ally when partnered with. A potential destabiliser if not.

The way that digital technologies work vis-à-vis various surveillance apparatus does indeed categorise the individual and attach them to their own identity. Each person's interaction is mediated through their own user profile comprised of a history of tracked interests and behaviour through which further predictions of information that would appeal to that person (read avatar or profile) may then be generated (Vold & Whittlestone, 2019). It becomes all the more apparent that such interactions will produce an individual as a subject when one considers that the nature of the things one engages with throughout the internet is a convergence of various discourses that one also negotiates and experiences in the 'biological' world in a digital world.

There are parallels of this logic in Zuboff's notion of instrumentarian power. Where Foucault speaks of how individuals come to be subjugated and made subject to through the coalition of knowledge and power in restricting the field of possible action, Zuboff speaks of a form of surveillance that is designed to observe, analyse, and ultimately, produce types of behaviour in line with its own objectives (Zuboff, 2019). Greater surveillance may result in the narrowing, if not determining, of possible action. The knowledge that emerges as a result of millions of individuals generating information about their behaviour and interests is what Zuboff identifies as necessary for the revenue of surveillance capitalists and costly for our freedom. The knowledge exists only for their use. And this use is not necessarily for our benefit.

I think it would be overly simplistic to pretend that we are not garnering some benefit from this system but this cannot divert attention from the fact that we are losing our ability to shape the

design of these systems which are beginning to design much of our life. We walk a tightrope, teetering between power and domination: whilst we may be free in our relations, Zuboff argues that our options are becoming few and far between. Should our options be the by-product of instrumentarian power then individuals would lack the ability to respond that Foucault believes is necessary for a relation of power. Zuboff overlooks such a distinction. The threat Zuboff is warning people of is not power but domination.

The development of informational delivery systems has been integral to the development of human wellbeing, to help us improve our lives. This is the intention of many people when approaching technology. However, there is a disconnect between the intentions of individuals' use of technology and the intentions of businesses using, and designing, those technologies (Williams, 2018). Technology is useful to us when it is aligned with our objectives. Digital technology may indeed be the necessary condition for the possibility of mass level behavioural observation upon which models of capitalism requiring information to maximise the efficacy of their products and consequently, profits. But it is also the necessary condition for the possibility of individual's accessing information in a way that was impossible before the internet.

The development of digital technologies has been a result of competition amongst companies who have recruited the people with the technical know-how. There is no way to succinctly identify whether this development was driven by a desire for profit, in the name of innovation, or some quest to democratise knowledge. It could be a combination of those values depending on how one assesses the variables. However, I mention it because it circles around a question, I have been asking myself throughout the research of this topic is: does the issue of power arise because surveillance is done for the sake of profit or is the issue purely that people are being subjected to surveillance? The two are intimately connected. Surveillance is not an act that is done for its own sake, it always serves some form of agenda. The systematic observation of people is an effort done in pursuit of something. The use of surveillance as a way to monetize the scale of human activity is not a neutral activity especially when that purpose shapes how people can interact with various platforms. The fact that commercial ends are what determine the format people access the majority of their information is where the threat seems to emanate from. It places individuals and societies in a vulnerable position with little recourse to action where the strategies of power can become domination.

However, to argue a game of domination is afoot is to assume a complete reliance on the internet as a given, that we have no recourse to alternatives - which is not entirely the case. One could argue that there is still a significant aspect of human life that is not expressible or captured through surveillance of their internet activity or even that there is a significant population of the world that does not yet have access to the internet. One could argue that though digital apparatus may capture what one searches or where one goes this does not entirely capture the essence of people. Surveillance capitalism may have access to what one does online, one is not fully determined by that in an offline space: one has recourse to multiple paths of potential action that exceed what can be captured through online surveillance.

Whilst I see the merit in such an argument and believe it serves to remind us that we do not live our lives entirely mediated through these apparatuses I am inclined to disagree. The nature of the global zeitgeist is one hurtling towards digitisation of public and private structures. Such a move will ensure that even when one is 'offline', many of the structures of the real world will be mediated through digital platforms like Facebook– and as a result through a small set of private companies – that the vulnerability for unilateral exploitation of the consequent information generated from these various sources can continue to perpetuate a power asymmetry. For those who live in locales that elude this kind of digital capture, the terms of engagement are being settled before they themselves can even get to the negotiating table. The use of technology is creeping into every facet of everyday life in developed, and pockets of the developing, countries and as a result so too are the apparatuses of the big technology businesses.

Take for instance how Facebook's recent acquisition of the messaging service WhatsApp as well as the competitor platform Instagram. Such acquisitions are evidence of the broadening reach of a company relying on surveillance into facets of daily life that transcend the original platforms they began on. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed to many people the growing dependency on the internet. Global versions of 'lockdowns' have driven more people onto the web and made many beholden to it as multiple forms of work, education, and socialisation became the only ways people could engage with one another. This may be evidence that there could be a time in which we become entirely reliant on the internet and vulnerable to the forces that provide the services on it. We seem to slowly be awakening to the dark cost of such services but despite that people are hesitant to challenge this status quo because of the benefits they feel the reap from using SNS. As I write this, many people across

the world are still in some form or another of widespread modes of social isolation and distancing using online spaces in lieu of physical ones.

What then are our alternative courses of action? Our points of counter-conduct to a system that is increasingly effective at conducting our conduct. We are becoming increasingly reliant on SNS and other platforms on the social web in our day-to-day lives. How much choice do we have in resisting this technology of power? What would such a resistance look like? Yes, power relations are an inescapable part of social existence. Would a conceptual framework such as the one Foucault lends us allow us to bring to light how various power strategies operate and inform how we can respond with strategies of resistance? Perhaps this would prevent a collapse of power into domination. The next chapter will be concerned with assessing the viability of such strategies of resistance to power by investigating the role and necessity of values like privacy and autonomy in mediating social connectivity as it has been gamified by Facebook.

Chapter 3: Sites of resistance: privacy as our vanguard.

In the previous chapter, I delved into the underlying logic that connects the experience we have of SNS, as users, and what makes the provision of its services a viable business: the collection, analysis, and use of data under the term 'surveillance capitalism'. In the elaboration of surveillance capitalism, there emerges the potential problem: the use of everyday users, and the information they produce as a by-product of that usage, as a resource from which value is extracted and sold. The asymmetry in information, and as a result: power, enables this practice. Given the expansive ability for SNS to subject individuals to surveillance to modify behaviour, the question of privacy gains significance as a potential way to resist a strategy of power that requires unilateral access to information. Are we being forced to choose between our privacy and the form of social connection sought out on SNS? This section will provide an expansion of what is meant by privacy in order to answer such a question.

There is little consensus on what privacy should be defined as. There are varying approaches that see privacy as an intrinsic human right or as serving a more instrumental purpose in the rights that privacy safeguards (Macnish, 2018; Nissenbaum, 2011). Some philosophers reject using the notion of privacy at all as a means to understand the impact of power asymmetries and surveillance in society. They find its conceptual offerings hyper-individualised and too feeble to scale an adequate analysis of the problems arising in the face of issues like SNS surveillance (Coll, 2014; Gilliom, 2011; Pieters, 2017). As such the research into privacy seems divided by what actually counts as personal information (Price, 2020), individualist versus relational approaches (Pieters, 2017) and the correctness of control versus access accounts (Macnish, 2018). Privacy has been framed in such a way that obscures what should be included within its purview, the role or good it serves, and why it should matter to people. As a result, privacy can become a vacuous, abstract, concept people may feel is of value but either may not consider it to be of a higher order for themselves or lack the understanding of how to protect it.

Privacy may have its limits as a conceptual tool, but I will argue that privacy, if understood beyond its narrow applications in much of the research, can serve as a site of resistance of power in the Foucauldian sense: a way to safeguard autonomy and prevent the degradation of relations of power into relations of domination over individuals and society alike. In this

chapter I will set out to understand the way privacy is depicted in various sources of research as well as test the viability of a relational, context-informed, and instrumental, understanding of privacy. I will draw strongly on the work of Helen Nissenbaum's notion of 'Privacy in Context' (2011) to support my framing of privacy as one that acknowledges the role of social structures and power without becoming bogged down in the debates of access versus control accounts of privacy. This discussion will delve into why people have undervalued the importance of privacy on SNS and establish what exactly it is we give up if we give up our privacy.

What counts as personal information?

There has always been some level of concern online around access to people's personal information. However, what constitutes a person's personal information has lacked consensus. This makes it increasingly difficult to address concerns around the access to, and consequent use of, people's personal information because it is hard to pin down the source of what creates such a conflict. I will try to unpack the distinction between what counts as personal information as opposed to information that is about a person.

What it means to protect one's 'personal information' is a rather cryptic notion. Some scholars such as Marjorie Price (2020) draw a distinction between personal information and what would seem to be innocuous 'raw data'. Price argues that personal information is information by which a particular person can come to be identifiable as themselves; information that makes one distinct from any other being (2020). However, information that is captured by indirect sources such forms of covert tracking technologies, such as cookies, cannot count as personal information because it is of a generic sort of information that does not identify the particularities of a person (Price, 2020). I disagree with Price's distinction between personal information and information that is about a person because it overlooks the insights about people that are generated through 'raw data'. It is this exact loophole that technology companies have been able to exploit.

To frame personal information in such a way obscures a new form of information by which a person can be identified. This 'generic' set of disparate data may not be considered personal information in this form nor are they considered to generate much value for a company should it remain in this form. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, the true value is the analytic

constitution of this information about a particular user from which to draw behavioural inferences for the purpose of better targeted services, content, and advertising. It is this very type of information that has been depicted as not being 'personal' despite the fact that 'raw data' does not remain in that form for very long (Bongiovanni et al., 2020).

What distinguishes information that is about a person and information that is personal is a matter of degree. When information about a person is collected at scale through their online activities– where they go, what they do, what they are interested in, what they search for or even what they do not search for – the result is information that is as intimate as personal information. The collation of such data into a user profile is what distinguishes individuals – attaches them to a history of their movements and activities. However, the richness of detail in such a profile is not recognised. Where intimate personal information in other facets – such as an individual's medical history – is considered confidential between an individual and their doctor (or a few parties whom one consents access to), information profiles online are not. The novelty of the efficacy of machine learning algorithms to organise and analyse large sets of information has not yet been accompanied by an ethical framework with regards to how it is accessed or disseminated. Any product of one's behaviour online is information that can identify one's self. As such, I would argue – in line with Zuboff's argument – that the information produced by individual activity is necessary for the generation of behavioural surplus in which SNS can use its digital apparatus to influence and direct user's behaviour.

Facebook maintains that it does not sell personal data – their marketing and privacy policies consistently reinforcing such a message. This is true – in a sense. But it is also misleading. Whilst Facebook may not sell the personal information they accumulate, they do not have to share that in order to share what is of actual value to them: the predictions it can generate as a result of the 'raw data' one generates online. Facebook likes, search histories, and watched content all give indications of the nature of the content you as a user want to see. This can be used to predict which content types and ads to share based on those interests. Only the infrastructure of a company with the kind of reach and access to the data a company like Facebook would have is capable of generating such predictions. The value of those predictions "reduce risks for consumers, advising them where and when to place their bets" (Zuboff, 2016, p.96). Zuboff drives home the point that we cannot be mistaken about who the consumers are here: companies who pay for the products. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the foremost concern of a business is primarily shareholder value generation and so it is not surprising that the

concerns of big platforms are not about the implications of its operations for individuals. As Zuboff (2019) points out, we must not forget that in the hierarchy of this political economy, our online activity is the raw material from which the valuable is extracted. Companies pay to utilise the analytics generated on Facebook. Whilst this strategy of power may at present be localised in the practices of targeted advertising it paves the way for potentially more sinister projects to follow. If our person and our information are divvied up as if the two were not interdependent, we potentially set the (false) precedent that what happens in the digital world to digital information is removed from real world consequences. Countless examples of digital activism, increased efficacy in journalism, and SNS as corporate and government watchdogs show that the two are intrinsically connected.

Luciano Floridi (2013) has an interesting take on the way a person should be treated in relation to their personal information. Floridi's view reiterates the idea that the difference between information that is personal and information about a person is one of degree. Floridi focuses primarily on informational privacy which he defines as the restriction of possible knowledge about a person which ensures her freedom to gather information, learn, and act without external influences (Floridi 2011, p.3). This is due to his view that people are, in part, constituted by their information and, as such, any threat to one's information is a threat to that person (Floridi, 2011, p.16). What happens to information about one's self has real-world effects on that person on the receiving end. What it means to be constituted by one's information refers to how the sum of qualitative information by which they can be recognised gives insights into the character of that person. Informational privacy plays an important role in that it serves to create friction in an environment and the information flows between actors within it. The informational flows in traditional media had greater levels of friction given their reduced technological capacity to process information. However, the rise of digital communication technologies has increased the ability to access information in unprecedented ways with little friction to get that information out to a wider audience (Floridi, 2011, p.8). An account of informational privacy must provide friction to prevent an external party's ability to track and collect one's information as well as guard against the use of that information to influence a person – all well-known features of online usage.

Our information is, thus, intimately related to us and we to it. In the rise of information-heavy digital apparatus, information generated as a by-product of our engagement with such technologies is personal. It reveals intimate details about us as people and manipulation of it is

not as abstract as one would think. The connection Floridi draws that anything that is done to one's information is done to one's self as well elucidates the way information about us, information that we produce, mediates our immediate environment. There are real world consequences of how our information is handled because reality for more and more people is increasingly structured according to data reliant digital structures. There are simple examples of this: suggestions on places one may be interested to visit, eat at, or avoid given their user history. There are also potentially more problematic instantiations of this same logic: the spreading of misinformation with one's filter bubble, the re-entrenching of real-world biases in machine learning algorithms that influence how people are treated such as racial or gender biases (see De Diego Carreras, 2013 and Moran, 2020). The information realm is not distinct from what we could call the 'biological realm': the space in which we breathe and eat and sleep. The two are coterminous - even if, for some, they feel as if they are removed. It is for this reason that I think that though one could delineate and analyse multiple types of privacy, I would prefer to grasp how they all intersect on a particular type of platform. If informational and physical privacy (under which could fall privacy of one's thoughts) are under siege by a force that transcends geographic space, a force that is entirely immersive in its reach and scale, it is integral to elaborate on the nature of that force. Moreover, to resist such a force will require an elucidation of the distinctions of analyses of 'privacy', before knitting together the concerns they hold in common so as to unify a front against a pervasive and subtle threat.

Framing Privacy: the limits of binary accounts.

I have been skirting around defining privacy in the above discussion to give an indication of the way many conversations around privacy unfold. This has been intentional for many an approach to privacy, the manner in which it is defined tends to reflect a certain ideological approach to what one wishes to achieve in that definition of privacy. In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned how discourses around privacy have become factionalised in preferences for one interpretation of a definition over another. It seems to me that there is much in common with what various scholars want to protect by virtue of their distinctions; however, this is obscured by the emphasis they wish to drive home. I will give an account of two opposing positions in a hope to get to an understanding of the commonality of the term 'privacy' that can bridge the various limitations of past analyses as well as uncover the multiple commonalities are appealed to by scholars and general citizens alike. The two opposing

positions to be considered will be the favouring of the access over control account of privacy as well as the relational over individualist account.

Whether to frame privacy as the issue at hand when an external party *accesses* one's information without their consent or when an external party has *control of, or over,* one's information has been the subject of many debates (see Fuchs, 2011; Macnish, 2018). It is my view that both positions have their merit and provide a stronger understanding of privacy when viewed in conjunction with one another. Kevin Macnish (2018), however, rejects this position entirely. It is Macnish's view that the access account of privacy should be favoured over the control account. Macnish understands the control account to be when one has *control* over one's information – i.e., control over who sees it, what is done with it, and so on – whereas the *access* account of privacy does not identify a violation of privacy to occur unless that information is accessed without one's consent (Macnish, 2018, pp.419-420). He argues that if one loses control over one's information it does not entail that one's privacy is violated even though a loss of control over one's information may predispose us to act as if our privacy has been violated (Macnish, 2018, p.429). He maintains that unless the information has actually been accessed by another party, no such violation has occurred. Yet Macnish nevertheless argues that what is actually at work in such an instance is threat of harm to other rights we protect by keeping certain things private which he believes to be different to a harm to privacy (Macnish, 2018, p.419).

I believe Macnish misrepresents the value of the control account by obscuring how its notion of privacy serves the same instrumental value as the access account in preventing the harm that arises when one's information is accessed. Control of one's information is a form of access: to control one's information is to control who can access that information. As for the argument that the collection of one's information does not amount to a violation of privacy unless it is accessed, such an assessment is naïve because it overlooks the larger societal context in which the collection of information is for the sole purpose of access. Without some level of control, there is no way to guard against that information being not only accessed but used for purposes outside of one's control. As such, I think that Macnish introduces a paradox in his preference for the access account because there is no way to ensure the access account holds without a level of control over one's information. Moreover, to argue that a loss of control is a threat not to privacy but to the rights and interest's privacy protects is nonsensical. A threat to privacy is a threat to those rights for without privacy to safeguard them those rights may be breached.

Another way in which privacy gets framed is in terms of *whose* privacy is being dealt with. There is a tendency to frame privacy in an individualistic way. Whilst I would agree that all individuals have a right to privacy there are large implications for privacy beyond just what pertains to the individual. As a right of all individuals, there is a social good that is served when privacy of all people within a society is observed. If something is framed in terms of the individual it brushes over the significance of that event should it occur at a larger scale. An individualistic framing of privacy in digital spaces places the emphasis on an individual's ability to determine information about themselves, to adjust, or delete that information to protect it from others. The danger in this is in potentially overlooking the importance of relationships, privacy over one's physical spaces and information, as well as the role privacy plays in freedom of choice (Coll, 2014, p.1255). This is exactly the obfuscation that has hidden the potential dangers of Big Data and allows the use of 'raw data' to lend itself to surveillance. Coll (2014) argues that it is the hyper-individualisation of notions of privacy that have allowed privacy to become a tool of surveillance for what Coll (2014) calls informational capitalism[4].

Privacy can be a tool of surveillance because in classifying what information can or cannot be accessed by a third party a clear indication of what type of information there is to be known, even if it lacks substance, is given. The more clearly defined privacy is, the more it can be controlled for if information is to be protected and clearly delineated as off-limits it must first be identified (Coll, 2014, p.1251). What is defined as 'off-limits' is where privacy can be used against the individual. What this means is that people are so focused on their right to access and protect their personal information, in the sense Price refers to, that information about their person is left as fair game for a company like Facebook. For instance, people may object to their personal information being collected but not to their data-exhaust being collected – even though that data can lead to inferences about that personal information (Coll, 2014, p. 1260). Many individuals are not aware, nor concerned, about such a distinction and hence, ambivalent as to whether or not they are used as a datapoint for some broad form of analytics.

For many people, their being subjected to surveillance does not explicitly effect, or threaten, their day-to-day life and in fact, many are ambivalent in the face of it. Moreover, many people

[4] Informational capitalism is a diagnosis of the current climate Zuboff describes as surveillance capitalism: the use of access vis-à-vis digital technology to information to drive capitalistic interests. In keeping with the terms used earlier this report, I will use surveillance capitalism as synonymous with informational capitalism.

may not even realise it is taking place. On an individual level, it may not be cause for concern but when one considers the surveillance of millions of people it poses a different threat. A hyper-individualised view of privacy does not take into account the inherently relational nature of privacy nor the significance of what the information of people interacting with one another can lead to. There is a need for collectively prioritising privacy across the board to protect individuals and societies alike from the abuses of power an asymmetry of information can result in. Privacy must be seen as a social good that protects people's freedoms, and their capacity to access those freedoms, rather than as an individual resource to be protected (Coll, 2014, p.1260). Privacy is not just about an individual having a say in who has access to their personal information but about ensuring a society where the relational informational flow is not utilising narrowly defined notions of privacy to create a loophole in which surveillance and information can be used against people. To see privacy as a social good is to see it as the protector of rights and values of which all people are entitled to, such as autonomy.

Whilst I agree with Coll that privacy must be understood on a relational level, as a social good, I reject his assertion that privacy is a "partner of crime" (Coll, 2014, p.1250) to surveillance. I agree with his diagnosis of the limitations of privacy and how it has been capitalised on in the current climate of informational norms but believe that privacy can be a way to resist surveillance rather than assist it, as shall be argued in a later section of this chapter. Whilst Coll may indicate the necessity of such a perspective to recognise and incorporate the social and power issues that structure how privacy may be defined in particular regions at particular times, he stops short of fully laying out an account of a social or relational perspective of privacy. There is a need for individualist virtues of privacy that protect autonomy to be squared with social approaches to privacy to ensure that the way information flows between people is included (and protected) within the purview of privacy.

The various social environments we exist within inform the structures and mediums upon which we rely for the transfer of information between people. As discussed in Chapter 1, our broader social context influences the way in which we live as individuals. The impact of technological advancements, such as SNS, have been framed in terms of the impact it has on individual privacy rather than its systemic impact on societies as a whole. The way that individuals have become the focus of privacy obscures the relevance of asking the broader questions about what such a kind of discourse would have on broader society (both locally and globally). It may give the individual the semblance of control but in so doing also manages to

hide the power imbalance that results from a platform provider having access to millions of individuals' information (even if they do have some control over personal information) (Pieters, 2017). It becomes clear that one cannot defend one's self against surveillance capitalism in the name of an individualistic privacy. Individualistic privacy provides insufficient tools to understand the nuanced nature of the impact of these technologies on social life and what falls through the gaps in its scope can be leveraged.

Is it possible to have an account of privacy that serves as an instrumental value which serves to protect both individual and society? That can incorporate how inherent power relations within society effect how privacy comes to be understood and valued? Much of the significance of privacy for the good of both individual and society have been covered however, the inherent social and power structures have not been fully considered. Such a consideration is developed in the contextual approach framework that Helen Nissenbaum (2011) introduces. Though her framework has its own series of limitations, it serves as the catalyst for a way of conceptualising the importance of privacy within realistic social contexts which people would make an appeal to its protection.

The Complexity of Context

Nissenbaum attempts to construct an account of privacy that is applicable to the varying social instances in which it might be drawn upon to protect one's freedom. She argues that a right to privacy is not a right to control or secrecy but rather a right to appropriate flows of personal information within society (Nissenbaum, 2011). That is to say: a right to privacy in the sense that both control and access accounts of privacy refer to. One has the right to control what happens with their personal information as well as determine who can access it. The 'appropriate flow' of personal information is determined by what Nissenbaum calls contextual integrity: the social contexts and the informational norms that such contexts give rise to which determine the ends, values, and purposes, according to which we adhere and develop norms around how, what kind, and with whom we share information within that context (Nissenbaum, 2011).

Nissenbaum believes that informational norms are developed as part of social contexts, which themselves take shape as a result of history, place, culture and so on,. These norms serve to

preserve the integrity of the context in which individuals live their lives (Nissenbaum, 2011). Contexts serve as spheres that structurally facilitate opportunities for engagements between people. One can consider the context of health care whereby its informational norms dictate values around the flow of personal information, such as patient-doctor confidentiality.

What is of special interest is how Nissenbaum frames her contextual integrity framework to depend on a substrata of every day human activity. The interdependence of the individual and their society is the lynchpin of Nissenbaum's framework. The individual and their societal context shape one another as well as the informational norms which, consequently, determines the appropriateness of sharing certain information, under certain conditions, in certain contexts (Nissenbaum, 2011, p.130). Consider for instance an example in which a psychiatrist bumps into her patient at the food market. The way the two interact with each other, what information they share, will be altered drastically by the context of the market as opposed to the psychiatrist's office. The informational norms in such a situation would dictate that the psychiatrist must above all value her client's confidentiality, as such the norm would be that psychiatrists will not acknowledge or greet the client without them first doing so (and as such acquiescing to a level of recognition in that setting).

Contextual integrity provides a heuristic for assessing when one's privacy, or rather an informational norm in a given context, is at risk of being compromised. In the face of new practices of informational flow, it is possible to determine whether, and then *how*, that practice affirms or challenges contextual integrity. This can be done by elaborating on the accepted norm within a given context and how it dictates what is an appropriate flow of information between the parties involved may be. This norm of informational flow may then be contrasted to a new situation in which the same, or similar, information flows between people to identify ways the two practices are similar or distinct (Nissenbaum, 2011, p.159). In identifying the ways a new practice of information transmission between people affirms or challenges an already established norm it is possible to unpack whether the new practice is a breach of contextual integrity (Nissenbaum, 2011, p.159).

Where such considerations gain significance is with regards to the use of SNS. Nissenbaum points out that the scale of use of the internet across the globe has given rise to a new primary source of informational flows which are proving to be unprecedented in their modes of transmission as well as highly exploitative (Nissenbaum, 2011, pp.33-34). The online

informational realm is intimately integrated into the structures of social life and the constraints on the way information flows in this environment is flagging (Nissenbaum, 2011). Nissenbaum critiques the way such informational flows are being normalised. She states:

> "…different principles govern the flow of information: information we share as a condition of receiving goods and services [that] is sold to others… Default constraints on streams of information from us and about us seem to respond not to social, ethical, and political logic but to the logic of technical possibility" (2011, p.34).

A few pages later she pointedly remarks: "contexts, not political economy should determine constraints on the flow of information" (Nissenbaum, 2011, p.43). Nissenbaum would be in agreement with some of Zuboff's arguments: the political economy of the current era is overstepping its mark in order to pursue greater knowledge for greater profits. The increasingly normalised practice of harvesting personal information for commercial ends is done because it is technically possible and financially expedient. It has been met with little protest because it seems that people have freely made the choice to pay for those services in their information; however, it must be acknowledged that the social, commercial, and financial cost proves to be significant enough too many to make such a choice. If it is a question of what is to be valued more in such instances, I would argue that we know not what we trade in for a few reasons: one, the obscuring of the true value of 'raw data'; two, many of us might not care about what is known about us on an individual level because we have not considered the broader societal implications should an entity have millions of people of a similar attitude to whom they may now have almost full access; and three, we have normalised a practice of informational flow without fully understanding the mechanisms by which it truly worked. Physical and informational privacy have been blended into one another as surveillance through SNS takes both within its crosshairs.

The value in Nissenbaum's approach is that it provides a specialised tool to interrogate a context for a suitable notion of privacy that protects how information flows between agents within that context. One cause for concern arising from Nissenbaum's account could be the potential for such an approach to assume that whatever informational norm already entrenched is unproblematic to begin with and, as a result, continue to accept it. To use an informational norm as a heuristic to determine the appropriateness of a novel information form in an uncritical

manner may perpetuate biases underlying the first norm – the perpetuation of racial biases in the use of machine learning algorithms could serve as an example.

A second cause for worry follows on from the first: Nissenbaum's account is broad and so is open to interpretation with regards to how to apply her normative framework. Marcel Becker (2019) proposes that one way to strengthen Nissenbaum's framework is to bolster the social approach to privacy by articulating a notion of what he calls 'substantive goods'. Substantive goods are the immaterial ends to which most people orientate their actions within their particular contexts according to their specific values, norms, and objectives (Becker, 2019). An example of such an immaterial end is if the substantive goods in/to which one directs their action are instances of ends that are greater than the individual alone. Consider a journalist pursuing venerable reporting for the sake of democracy or the scientist adhering to ethical regulations to ensure fairness and avoid malpractice. The pursuit of such goods is part of the fabric which knits together social life: their pursuit is good for all of broader society (Becker, 2019).

With regards to SNS surveillance, such an account of privacy would recognise privacy as a substantive good in protecting individuals from surveillance, manipulation, undue influence, and misinformation. Such an account of privacy would lend significance to the idea of privacy as a site of resistance against power imbalances within society; as a substantive good which provides the enabling condition for autonomy – among other moral rights – to obtain. It is to the idea of privacy in relation to autonomy and privacy as a site of resistance that I turn now.

What does it mean to resist?

In Chapter 2, I spoke of the distinction Foucault introduces between relationships of power and domination and suggested that what we are seeing a trend towards an emergence of the latter in the current climate of Big Data analytics and surveillance. I have, however, also suggested that privacy could be a site of resistance against the struggle of a growing asymmetry of power relations between individuals and a company like Facebook. In this section I will cover how forms of resistance to the power relations as they stands now may slow this change towards domination. Furthermore, I argue it is essential we understand our viable courses of action to respond to the problems in this power structure.

Foucault argues that one of the best ways to analyse power is to begin with the identification of forms of struggles against it (Foucault, 1982, p.780). To begin with the identification of forms of resistance is to locate the power relations at work in a situation, to uncover what they are and how they operate by using the strategies that struggle against them as a guide (Foucault, 1982, p.780). To investigate forms of resistance is a way to trace power relations. Recall the diffuse and complex web of power relations deeply integrated throughout every facet of human life that Foucault called our attention to, such as the relationship between individual and family, church, and scientific discourses such as psychology. It becomes a slippery task indeed to try uncover the mechanisms of such power relations when they are subtly woven into the banality of day-to-day life.

Sites of resistance serve then as flashpoints, as markers to turn the tapestry over and trace an intersection of power strategies as they intersect around one instance. Foucault gives by way of an example of sites of resistance, or what he calls "series of oppositions" (Foucault, 1982, p.780), the opposition to "the power of men over women…of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live" (Foucault, 1982, p.780). Foucault teases out that what these oppositions have in common is a struggle against the way instances of power have far reaching abilities to control people's bodies and lives. The sites of resistance serve to reaffirm the role of the individual as having value in and of themselves. They aid people in resisting the strategies of power that would seek to leverage the knowledge, and perspective, to shape and influence the individual to ends that are not their own through (Foucault, 1982)

Strategies of power relations that seek to use knowledge as a strategy of power to direct the behaviour of individuals minimise people's ability to resist such strategies. This is because who they are and the action that they feel available to them will be shaped by discourses that produces people as certain types of subjects. Such strategies, evident in the practices of SNS discussed in Chapter 2, and the above sections, chip away at the delicate balance between the self which must remain both autonomous and yet in relation to others at the same time. It frames personal information as a narrow sphere of identifiable facts whilst allowing for the broad collection of 'raw data' which paints a far more compelling picture of the person at the centre of that information than their personal information alone could do. Privacy can serve as a site of resistance to such strategies. Privacy can serve as a counterstrategy to interrupt the flow of information that makes such strategies viable and effective. However, it must be acknowledged

that the notion itself has been developed as a discourse in which scholars like Price and Coll participate in the production of a narrative which can hinder the efficacy of resisting a power as diffuse and prolific as that held by SNS companies.

Foucault identifies three types of struggles: one, against domination; two, against forms of exploitation whereby the individual is separated from that which they produce and three, against forms of subjection which narrow the field of possible selves a person may become and, in this way, force her into a subjectivity in which she must submit to technologies and discourses of power (1982, p.781). The struggle between privacy as a discourse versus a site of resistance forms part of the frontier of a battle around what type of informational flows should become the norm. It is a key battleground in determining whether the telos of our technological advancements will sacrifice people for profit-driven innovation or be reclaimed as being for both people and innovation.

Let me be clear: I do not believe that privacy is the sole means of resistance in such a struggle, only *a site* of resistance. There are alternative forms of resistance starting to gain traction such as creating new forms of SNS or abstinence from the platforms entirely. It is the vanguard of our collective individual ability to self-determine, to critically engage with structures of society (and so power), to have a hand in shaping those structures rather than becoming determined by them. The value of privacy as a relational, contextually informed and instrumental discourse is particularly significant in its ability to safeguard autonomy. Autonomy, I believe, informs an important part of our ability as individuals to know that we can resist. To recognise that we should be allowed to form our own opinions and decisions without being coerced or manipulated.

Autonomy and knowledge of resistance.

The instrumental value of privacy has been discussed at great length in the above sections. However, a detailing of how it is connected to autonomy has yet to be spelt out. I will argue that privacy is an enabling condition for the possibility of autonomy. As Becker (2019) and Nissenbaum (2011), argue, privacy is partly essential for an individual to learn how to exercise their autonomy, how to determine their own ends, independently of other people. Notably, in the context of this paper: autonomy is integral for one to determine the way one may decide to

pursue forms of social connectivity. As Nissenbaum correctly argues, in order for one to learn how to self-determine there must be a sphere in which one is free to learn, think, and act (or not act) without observation so as to avoid the inherent, yet indirect, disciplining effects which take place when an individual is aware that they are being observed (Nissenbaum, 2011). This is a similar proposition discussed in Chamber's notion of autonomy in which the protection from potential coercion in how one might act forms an important part of ensuring one can act autonomously. This sphere does not have to be purely physical; I am not trying to say that if one lacks physical privacy that these conditions cannot obtain. Traditionally there have always been a multitude of places people could retreat to even if it is within their own thoughts. However, having a place of retreat to develop these skills, to make autonomous decisions is the sense in which privacy can be understood as an enabling condition of autonomy.

Privacy serves as enabling condition by which our rights and values, such as autonomy, may be not only safeguarded but facilitated. An enabling condition is one which allows a cause to have a certain effect. Distinguishing between the cause and the condition can be difficult to do in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. This is because there can be multiple necessary factors that triggered a certain outcome but some of those factors were pre-existing whilst others emerged (see Cheng & Novick, 1991). For instance, an apple falling from a tree may be caused by a combination of conditions – each one necessary in itself for an apple to fall such as: its weight, the weakening of its attachment to the branch and gravitational forces . True, these conditions together could be considered jointly sufficient for an apple falling. However, the presence of some of these conditions considered in isolation are factors that enable such an effect to take place. Gravity as an enabling condition is that condition in place that allows for the apple to fall when its weight outmatches the strength of the stem attaching it to the tree. The weight of the apple may be the cause of its fall but without the condition of gravity such a cause may not have its effect. In the case of autonomy, it requires certain conditions to enable it to function. Privacy is a condition which enables those other conditions to have the effect of autonomy due to its ability to safeguard the agent from events that may inhibit the agent's functioning such as undue external influences.

The integration of the social web into our everyday lives is starting to encroach on even those inner sanctuaries as we use technology (vis-à-vis SNS or search engines or apps) to investigate, document, or connect with others about our inner state. As discussed in Chapter 1, Christman (2014) points out that autonomy requires an integration of different critical skills and personal

development which must be facilitated by a social environment which allows for those capacities to emerge. How our social environment is beginning to be structured by the likes of platforms like Facebook is not designed to facilitate those capacities but rather to keep one consistently engaged with and sharing (directly or indirectly) information that the platform can use to continue to keep one hooked. The formation of digital apparatuses utilised by SNS such as personalised targeting has been shown to threaten our ability to self-determine given the ability to use personal data to show individuals highly specific content designed to influence or manipulate their behaviour in some way (Vold & Whittlestone, 2019; Zuboff, 2019).

We are vulnerable to informational manipulation as we become increasingly reliant on the social web as primary sources of information and as it is mobilised to use our own interests and behaviour to feed back to us information likely to keep us using the service. This form of filtering may be done currently in the name of 'relevant' and 'efficient' service offerings, but also holds the potential to manipulate our world views. There has already been a wealth of research into the dangers of this kind of manipulation in what are called 'filter bubble effects' (see Hannák et al., 2017; Schneier, 2015; Williams, 2018). Due to the nature of personalised newsfeeds and search results on Facebook and Google (and the scores of their partners), people become unwittingly ensnared in an echo chamber of the information that reflects back their own opinions, beliefs, and social groups that share in them. This begins to hinder people's ability to act with first order autonomy for it obscures them from clearly seeing the rules of engagement which determine how they see the world and interact with the world, shading the information available to them in the hue of their own opinions.

In the face of echo chambers, behavioural and informational manipulation in pervasive and hidden structures of everyday life, the sphere of private spaces is fast receding. Our ability to source information in a way that is not biased to influence us in some way is limited as an intentional gaming of the design of the social web. Renegotiating the terms of trade, of informational norms, as our discussions of privacy would warrant, in this new context is one way to reclaim our ability to access knowledge, to level the asymmetry of access to it, and to stake a claim in spaces where we can be without fear of surveillance. It is to reclaim the capacity for critical assessment and demand the transparency to ensure that, if we wish, we can have all the facts at hand. Not just the facts deemed the most relevant to us given our user profile generated by widespread surveillance of our activities across the social web. This is essential to determine our own courses of action, to understand if factors around us are changing in

untenable ways, and to source our own forms of opposition to it without being on the backfoot to a digital behavioural prediction network that could potentially thwart any means of resistance.

I am reminded of the words of the Serenity Prayer: *grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things I cannot accept, and the wisdom to know the difference.* We must hold tight to our ability to determine between the things we can change, the things we cannot accept. We cannot do this in the face of the current model of the social web nor should we do without what the social web brings us. So, what are we to do?

Privacy and autonomy: the means of resistance

If being able to resist requires having the knowledge that it is possible to act on alternatives to those given as resistance, and if autonomy is needed to have the capacity to have the knowledge of what it is to resist (and to have the capacity to resist if necessary), then privacy provides the means of achieving such an end. Privacy is an enabling condition for autonomy for it safeguards the individual from potential strategies of power that seek to coerce or influence their decisions. To describe the role of privacy in such a way is to see how it is ideally positioned as a shield that protects against, and bolsters resistance to, the three kinds of struggles Foucault identified. Privacy on Facebook, on SNS, can stop the harvesting of data for behaviourally targeted products (and profits) that will result in our domination by stripping us of our ability to respond and resist power because our field of possible action will be already so restricted by its apparatus. In stopping the harvest of every facet of human life, a halt to the exploitation of individuals will also be affected which will in turn protect individuals from being manipulated by the information they are fed, from being produced as particular kinds of subjects. Our production of data just by living will no longer be a revenue stream. The appropriateness of informational flows between individuals and social web platforms would need to be renegotiated.

One may argue that given that people consent to this contractual exchange between themselves and the SNS platform so that they may gain access to the services, which - as detailed in Chapter 1 - offer some value, the nature of the informational flow on the platform is justified. But it is the nature of this consent which further perpetuates the problem of misinformation

and exploitation. The terms of service contracts have themselves been designed to discourage meaningful comprehension of the terms required of individuals.

Consider how Facebook has approached addressing rising concerns of its users for their privacy. Though it publicly presents concern and commitments to protect its user's privacy, it does little beyond this act of public relation marketing to deliver on those sentiments (Glance, 2018).[5] The issue of how privacy policies are constructed has been subject to much criticism (see Fuchs, 2011 & Nissenbaum, 2011) for its obscure language and click-consent format. The pop-up box that allows one to 'consent' without reading the terms of agreement, the long complex texts that actively discourage people from reading the terms, and the awareness of legal systems needed to understand these facts and their legal validity (Zuboff, 2019, pp.48-50). Moreover, such a model of assenting to terms and conditions assume that the individual is in possession of all the facts so as to make a rational and unbiased decision (Nissenbaum, 2011). Given the complex design of these documents, it is evident that the odds are being stacked against the individual who would like to understand the nature of the agreement they are entering into. However, for many individuals the strong drive to be on SNS and the immense complexity of the documents means that they decide on the easy option: to click the box that says that they have read the terms of service without actually doing so. There is a level of trust they place in the SNS platform. Afterall, the platforms do say they care about their user's information.

Our ability to respond to the immense power a Facebook has over societies across the world is severely undercut by the asymmetry of knowledge. There is a plethora of ways we could go about trying to rectify this situation and I believe that re-staking out what is private – i.e.: what is people's information versus what is theirs to use as they wish – must inform part of that strategy. Further studies will be necessary to hammer out the details, which exceed the scope of my research here, of how to pair privacy as a social good whilst protecting society from harms plotted in private. Afterall, as much good as privacy serves it is not exclusively positive for society. One thing that remains clear, despite that, is that given the asymmetry of power-knowledge under surveillance capitalism or SNS platforms or whatever you wish to call it, some level of privacy has to be reclaimed to disrupt the current flows of information that bolster

[5] The recent (January 2021) announcement that WhatsApp's data would be accessible to Facebook a further example of this discrepancy between the company's articulated concern for their users privacy and their actions.

its power. If nothing else, framing the importance of privacy as a disruptor or friction generator may allow us to closer analyse the context in which we are making choices around what we value as citizens of the digital age. It seems to me, and perhaps to you as well, that privacy has been part of a series of trade-offs in the online realm and that only now are we beginning to understand that we may, in fact, have been trading in very dear things indeed. But why have we made those choices? Have we made such a choice freely or, given the evidence presented in this chapter, is our hand forced in some way?

Chapter 4: When do we choose freely?

In the preceding chapters I have sketched out the landscape of why individuals may be compelled to use SNS such as Facebook (Chapter 1), the general operational milieu of its platform and the potential dangers thereof (Chapter 2). I have also introduced privacy as a site of resistance to some of the threats to people and society alike that are beginning to emerge as platforms like Facebook place the benefits their services provides to users in tension with other valuable aspects of individual life (Chapter 3). Whilst I have argued that privacy is important to value, an objection could be made that one can freely choose to determine what one values for one's self even if those values exclude privacy. This chapter problematises such an argument by complexifying what informs how one comes to value certain ends over others in making choices for one's self. This lays the ground for a consideration of whether the choice to take part in SNS can be a truly autonomous or free choice.

Although a number of studies I have considered in the preceding chapters have examined elements of the motivating factors in user participation in SNS, and the cost thereof, there has not been a strong focus on interrogating underlying assumptions of what constitutes the choices agent's make - particularly what makes a choice forced rather than free. The choice to participate might not be a free choice because it is driven by social needs and desires which SNS appeal to so as to influence choices individuals make. Are such types of influence a problem for making autonomous choices? To answer I shall explore the contributions of Berlin (1969) and Chambers (2004).

I have introduced the idea of a delicate balance between the individual and the collective: how we navigate and mediate our understanding of ourselves and of others in part due to the nature of our surrounding social contexts. Such a perspective of the autonomous agent takes as a given the capacity for critical self-reflection and evaluation, to form reasons for one's action, to act, all for which one may be held accountable to. Who we are, where we are born, and into what kind of circumstances, are all things that are beyond an individual's control. But it is in coming to make sense of these kinds of experiences in which our understanding of ourselves as having the power to effect the world around us begins to emerge.

We form an understanding that we are not wholly determined by these circumstances though we are socially and historically informed in the nature of the understanding that we develop. From this, we come to learn that sometimes we have the freedom to choose the direction of our

lives. We come to learn that we can use our autonomy to make free choices even within environments in which we experience certain constraints. I have also spoken of the historical precedents of power formation and how we can trace their effects in the social and technological structures we see today. Such structures inform the constraints on individual's choices. That is to say, that in a certain sense, the structures in which we live have a role in mediating the field of our possible action. The challenge arises in understanding whether the act of restriction possible actions qualifies as a restriction of free action and imposition on autonomy.

Free Choice and Autonomy

In Chapter 1, I introduced the notion of autonomy to argue that in principle we can make free choices. In this chapter, I will develop how our ability to make autonomous choices in complexified by our nature, our social environments and structures with that environment such as those designed by SNS companies.

My analysis of Chamber's proposition for autonomy is relevant to revisit at this juncture because it highlights the idea that autonomy is not about being entirely unconstrained in one's action. Rather, autonomy is about one having the capacity to freely choose how one acts – even if one is constrained with regards to some of those choices. To reiterate Chambers' main points: for one to act with second order autonomy, one must be able to choose, in a way that is free from coercion or influence, how one wishes to live. Whereas for one to act with first order autonomy, one must be free to question the rules or constraints that may come along with the way of life one chooses for one's self and live by only those rules one would endorse for one's self.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Chambers (2004) argues that there is a tendency in Western liberal countries to accept the prioritisation of second order autonomy and overlook the fact that individuals do not make choices within a vacuum. In fact, social contexts and forces can shape and limit the options an individual feels are available to them which, consequently, influences the types of choices one may make. If there are instances where the individual has a restricted set of options in terms of the action she may take – and little choice in the rules that regulate those choices nor feasible alternatives to choose – it is important to recognise that social contexts may enforce certain choices. In the event of such, Chambers (2004) believes it is not enough to justify the choice in terms of (second order) autonomy, but to consider what makes

a choice just (p.12). It may be necessary to design social interventions or safeguards that prevent individuals from having to make choices that lessen their equality or cause them harm to facilitate their ability to act with both orders of autonomy in a way of their choosing, and in a way that protects them from social norms and rules that may so narrowly limit their options to ensure an individual makes the contextually 'right' choice. Chambers (2004) gives the examples of the practices of the foot-binding of women and female genital mutilation. Women living in societies in which these practices are considered a rite of passage to make a woman 'suitable' for marriage may well choose with second order autonomy to subject themselves to these practices for the alternative – the social costs of ostracization, poverty, punishment, should they abstain – are simply unviable options to them given the context (Chambers, 2004, pp.15-19). The choice to remain within, or gain access to, a way of life such as marriage and community in the previous examples may be made with second order autonomy but they come at a harsh price in which women's ability to feasibly question, reject, and fully endorse the social norms of the way of life they have chosen are severely restricted. In such a case, many women cannot be said to be living by rules which they have been able to choose for themselves, to choose with first order autonomy.

It is possible to unite both, to ensure individuals can live with both orders of autonomy and meaningfully choose and endorse the ways one will live those lives. However, to frame autonomous or free choices as one getting what one wants is not enough. Part of ensuring that one is meaningfully making that choice – of ensuring it is autonomous – is the ability for one to critically engage with what comes with said choice. To act with first order autonomy enables one to guard against but also rebuke and engage with coercion.

Berlin (1969) puts forward two notions of liberty which supplement the argument that defining freedom as merely one's ability to do something one wants is vulnerable to manipulation if one is not also free from coercion. Positive liberty is the freedom to do certain things, to be the master of one's life and to make decisions that one sees fit (Berlin, 1969, p.8). Negative liberty, on the other hand, is where one has freedom from potential interferences and coercions of others so as to ensure one has a private sphere within which one may decide how one wishes to act, to come to form the critical capacity for reflection and action to pursue the ends one might as one may see fit (Berlin, 1969, pp.3-4).

Berlin (1969) argues that many people interpret freedom (freedom to choose and live in a meaning similar to my understanding of autonomy) in primarily its positive sense. To favour positive liberty is a dangerous position for Berlin feels it is one susceptible to manipulations of power which result in a loss of one's liberty. Berlin points out that the significance of self-mastery for positive liberty is at odds with our experience of ourselves in which we can feel enslaved to our basic natures. In becoming one's own master, one must learn to bridle such passions in pursuit of what one's more rational self knows to be better to pursue for one's self (Berlin, 1969, p.8). One learns to distinguish between what one wants and what one values – and how to perhaps delay what one wants to act in such a way that will bring one closer to what one desires. The idea here is that sometimes it is acceptable to coerce people for the purpose of a certain end which they, their higher and 'true self', would subject themselves to if they had the wisdom and freedom from their base passions to recognise that the end for which they must be coerced will bring them close to freedom and that higher self (Berlin, 1969, p.9).

Positive liberty can be twisted, using this logic of self-mastery, to tyrannize individuals: to coerce them in the name of their own good. We see a similar type of coercion take place in political spheres where individuals are subjected to undesirable conditions that are justified in the pursuit of some end. The argument goes that, if the individuals were as rational, wise, unblinkered, and so on as the group doing the imposing, they would understand this and agree with such a decision. As such understanding autonomy to be when one is free to do what one wants is not sufficient to ensure that one has the freedom and autonomy to truly choose their actions. One may be free or autonomous in principle but in practice, without a certain level of protection from coercion, it is another matter entirely.

Positive liberty and second order autonomy share an emphasis on the freedom to choose one's way of life or course of action for one's self. Negative liberty and first order autonomy both hold in common that autonomous choices require that one is able to critically engage with the caveats that may come from such a choice, without ensuring that one is free from coercion into the acceptance of that choice. Now, to turn our sights on the way SNS operates and its implications for autonomous or free choices with the conceptual tools Berlin and Chambers offer us. There is a growing normalisation of the use of SNS and an acceptance of the infrastructure required to run SNS. However, the levels of obscurity with regards to how that infrastructure contributes to by-products like behavioural surplus may mean we are not protected from coercion and, hence, potentially places our autonomy in this realm in peril.

Supporting Autonomous Choices.

To act with autonomy is to make choices in line with what one values for one's self, how one wishes to live, and by what rules. Whilst autonomy may entail that one can freely choose what one wishes to live by - this is always mediated through constraints of some kind whether they be social or of one's own desires and nature. In exercising one's capacity to critically reflect on what one desires and values, within a given context, one then chooses what is suitable. This is an account of how one can act with autonomy even if those choices are mediated through some level of constraint. However, whilst people may have the capacity for autonomy in this way, their ability to enact it may differ across individuals and circumstances. As such, it would not do to prescribe some universal notion of what it is to make a free choice.

As discussed in relation to Chambers' accounts, it is possible for individuals to freely choose ways of living for themselves with second order autonomy that surrender one's capacity for first order autonomy. I have argued that it is not enough to just be able to choose something for one's self, that choice must be made in a meaningful way which involves one's capacity to critically engage with, reject, or endorse, what comes with said choice. Moreover, this capacity for first order autonomy must include within its definition negative liberty.[6] Negative liberty as a part of autonomy implies a level of privacy. This reiterates that privacy can serve as an enabling condition ensuring negative liberty. Whilst a sphere of non-interference is important, the requirement that the individual exercise their critical capacity to evaluate their context and form their own reasons by which they will act cannot be shouldered by individuals alone, shadowed as they can be by higher systemic power asymmetries. Some level of assistance to maintain the enabling condition of privacy is necessary.

As Chambers and Foucault put it: what individuals believe to be viable courses of possible action are influenced by social forces. It may seem slightly paradoxical to consider that free choices may occur with a constrained environment or context. However, as Foucault teaches us, how a particular context is formed is never a neutral process. Social structures serve an

[6] This being said, I do acknowledge that the degree to which people can claim their right to first order autonomy would vary from person to person due to individual characteristics, socio-politico and other contextual elements. It is a possibility but one more or less likely to some people.

important role in the strategies of governing over people. To put Foucault in conversation with unlikely partners, I believe that the economists Richard Thaler and Cas Sunstein (2009) offer up an insight that would affirm Foucault's assessment. The two point out that there is no such thing as a neutral design: all designs have some purpose or another as their mandate which will affect the behaviour of people who utilise or are exposed to the design (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, pp.421-422). Ideally, one would try to design the choice architecture people are exposed to in as fair and transparent a way with the explicit mandate to help people make better decisions in line with what they value and need (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). As Foucault warns that institutions can frame what kind of behaviour, or subjectivity, is expected of its constituents so too do Sunstein and Thaler warn of ill-thought designs ability to narrow the field of possible action to less than desirable choices.

There are many instances in daily life in which people will be asked to make decisions about things that pertain to them whether it be retirement savings plans or whether to read the terms of service of a SNS. The environment in which these choices are presented to us matters for it is unavoidable and, if not considered thoroughly, can hinder people in making decision's best for them (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). In instances of difficult, complicated, matters in which decisions must be made individuals may not be in possession of all the information necessary to make such choices, they may lack the necessary skills and education, or be pressed on time, and so on. In light of this, a well-designed choice environment tries to present the information in a way that helps people make sense of what is offered to them in each choice so that they may be better equipped to make a decision for what suits them (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). To nudge towards what is the better option. A nudge, it is important to note, is something that one can resist (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, p.20). SNS, on the other hand, seem to try to design their choice environment in such a way to obscure such considerations. The difference between the two is Thaler and Sunstein are trying to argue for choice architecture that tries to bolster and support individual and societal wellbeing and mitigate harm whilst SNS' main concern is further its parent company's own interests[7].

The rise in popularity of SNS across the world establish a platform like Facebook as the type of institution which mediates the available choices, through design, available to users. The growing social acceptance and benefits from network effects may function as social forces that

[7] Nudge theory is also subject to critique that it may coerce people in the name of their best interests. The authors try to mitigate that issue by arguing for transparency and inclusion of people's right to resist 'nudges'.

may nudge individuals to use SNS as a way to connect with other people. Such social forces are subtle rather than explicit. At first, it may seem that the normalisation of use of SNS does not mean that any person is forced to use the platform. It is a decision that one makes with second order autonomy. Many people have an awareness of Facebook's invasive privacy procedures and the choice to participate on the platform nonetheless is not forced on anyone if one does not value social connectivity at the cost of privacy. Facebook, and other SNS, are not the only way to pursue social connectivity however, they are becoming predominant ones which will result in these platforms seeming the more viable option than alternatives. One can choose to use SNS and has the capacity to establish for one's self how one will use the platform so one seems to have a level of first order autonomy with regards to the choice one made.

However, how far does that ability for one to question the rules one will be constrained by when choosing to use SNS reach? Does one really have first order autonomy in this regard? Human beings tend to opt for the path of least resistance where possible (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, p.124). Even where people may sense that something like reading the consent form to sign up for a SNS may be important, the notification has been designed to be easier to click 'accept' than to read and so many do not. Even as more and more individuals become concerned about the use of their data and privacy violations online, many consent to SNS conditions in this kind of way.

There is phenomenon called the privacy paradox which can be attributed to the above behaviour. The privacy paradox can be understood as a discrepancy between the concern that individuals raise for their privacy and the nature of the ends they pursue in the course of their lives (Glance, 2018). How this paradox plays out in the engagement of individuals on SNS, despite a growing milieu of technological practices that utilise surveillance practices, is in part fed by the nature of how SNS designs its choice environment. SNS seem to utilise this tendency for the path of least resistance in order to appeal to more people whilst obscuring what is entailed in using SNS.

The design of SNS frameworks also places an emphasis on the quantity of one's engagement through appeal to what one may desire rather than what one may value. Moreover, the subtleties of SNS legal policies and platform designs mean that one cannot fully grasp the rules of the way of life one has chosen so as to critically engage with, and endorse, them. This decreases one's ability for first order autonomy and may, in the long run, prevent one from making further decisions with second order autonomy. This is made possible by the asymmetry

of information in which full insight into the individual is offered whilst the possibility, or levels, of influence by the SNS is hard to track. Such an asymmetry means that it is difficult to guard against coercion in the information one sees and how it potentially plays out in the world around us. Consider for instance the implications of the spread of 'fake news' and its consequent political implications of unrest, mistrust, and misinformation. Mistrust in the information we consume, misrepresentation of the alternative opinions available are all potential tools by which people may be manipulated. As a result, decisions in relation to SNS, or utilising SNS to make decisions, may result in a lack of negative liberty as well as a corresponding impact on one's ability to choose with second and first order autonomy going forward.

Whilst it would seem then that in principle one may be at liberty to choose, in the positive sense or with second order autonomy, to participate in the use of SNS, one may lack the ability to critically engage with so as to meaningfully live by the rules of engagement that come with such a decision. This suggests that it may be more complicated for people to exercise the kind of autonomy I have outlined. The privacy paradox is something that many believe SNS companies exploit in order to obscure the full privacy risks of some of their services from users or to frame the benefits of the platform as outweighing any potential costs (Glance, 2018; Choon & Jane, 2018). As much as one may value one's privacy, there may be other values one holds in higher esteem and is free to choose in favour of. It is becoming apparent that many people are inclined to trade their privacy for the convenience many digital technology apparatuses' may bring to their lives (Bongiovanni et al, 2020). Moreover, in the face of numerous obscure privacy policies which differ from platform to platform, it is increasingly difficult for people to truly understand what the connection between the services as they understand and utilise them are and the backend use of the information derived from that activity is (Choon & Jane, 2018).

Even if users try to protect themselves through various strategies such as limiting the information they share, the lack of transparency in back-end informational processing and widespread, mostly invisible, apparatuses of surveillance render such attempts feeble (Choon & Jane, 2018). As a result, not only does privacy becomes something increasingly hard to ascribe a value to, and the implications of the harm a lack of privacy can cause become obscured. This makes individuals vulnerable to exploitation by a SNS like Facebook for not only has it gamified how it presents the implications of its use so as to depict itself in a positive

light, but it is also difficult to fully equip one's self with all the necessary information to choose whether or not to use SNS. This perpetuates the sense that the benefits are greater than the threat of a potential harm to us. As a result, we continue to see SNS platforms in a positive light and the risk of a loss of privacy can be justified not as a risk of harm but merely the cost of getting free access to efficient and rewarding services (Glance, 2018). It is problematic that the values of social connectivity and privacy have been placed in opposition to each other rather than as mutually beneficial relations. Individuals alone cannot adequately resist SNS power apparatuses which means privacy and autonomy honoured and strove for at the collective level is more likely to make an impact on altering platforms to include more socially beneficial and transparent technologies. Already ground has been gained in this regard with the development, and uptake of, digital apparatus that resists surveillance such as DuckDuckGo, anti-tracking software, VPNs, activist groups, and the development of privacy sensitive alternative SNS. Such moves utilise privacy as a site of resistance to foster social connections whilst guarding against the potential exploitation of people on the basis of the information that can be inferred from the information they generate whilst interacting with each other.

In principle, one can freely choose but the meta-implications of the type of data mining in such opaque and unregulated ways that have been discussed pose a significant threat to the autonomy of people and society. It marks the signal for a mass accruing of power to a private organisation whose operations are increasingly complex and difficult to understand in their totality. It would seem then that SNS appeals to individuals' desires whilst obscuring what, or which, of their values may be compromised as a result of their using the platform. This makes is difficult to know if one is getting what one intended in using SNS. Whilst social connectivity is something we desire by virtue of our natures it is also an end that we value. Facebook has played on our need for social connectivity – which is both a desire and a value – and obscured the true cost for utilising the platform as a way to fulfil that need. Answering the question of whether the choice to use its platform is a free one or not will then require a delicate and nuanced position that accounts for how SNS has gamified its design as well as our capacity for free choices with certain kinds of choice architecture.

Conclusion

The scope of my research has considered the notion of social connectivity as a basic human desire that compels much of our actions to fulfil the need to connect and know. I will now bring together the various conceptual tools I have utilised throughout this research to pose an answer to the driving question of my research: as SNS like Facebook become one of the most predominant ways for people to stay connected with one another, are we being forced to choose between this form of social connection and our privacy?

Our need for social connectivity is an interesting one to consider for whilst we are motivated by it in the sense that it is an innate desire, it is also something we pursue because we value it for the benefits it brings to our lives in its pursuit. Social bonding and capital form part of the tapestry of human life – interweaving with other elements of collaboration and individual activity in various forms. There are various strategies of how one may go about fulfilling one's need for social connectivity. One such medium has been the use of SNS such as Facebook. It would be easy to accept the idea that by virtue of the fact that one has a choice as to whether or not one uses SNS as a strategy of needs-fulfilment, the nature of that choice does not need to be examined. However, the gamifying of design structures to capture and direct attention, the obscurity of SNS business practices as well as their access to millions of people in an intimate, and unprecedented, way requires an analysis of how such factors would effect individuals not just in terms of social connectivity or privacy alone but in terms of its implications for power.

I introduced a Foucauldian conception of power as a way to refute one of the more prominent contemporary voices sounding the alarm about the threat of the methods under surveillance capitalism. I have discussed how Zuboff's wish to frame the threat of surveillance capitalism as emerging from its novel ability influence individual's behaviour as misguided. Foucault's analysis of how power seeks to use social structures and institutions to define the field of possible action in various ways has historical precedents. Thus, the threat that Facebook, and SNS using similar logic, poses to individuals is its ability to use its analytical apparatus to predict and shape behaviour is not new. It is a threat to individuals because it has finessed the diffuse strategies of power into one mechanism which has the capacity to capture an ever-increasing facet of one's life. The nature of surveillance on SNS breaches a minimum sphere of negative liberty through which privacy which enables – nay, *ensures* - that one is protected from certain level of non-interference and may make autonomous choices in a free, critical, and reflexive way.

Whilst there are many people, communities, and aspects of social life that elude the full extent of surveillance to be utilised in some form of strategy, the ever-growing calls to continue digitising the world may indeed be edging us closer towards a notion of Foucauldian domination in which our ability to react, to push back, is entirely squashed. As Foucault points out, where there is power there is resistance. Part of such resistance is the rejection of narratives of identity one is subjected to. I introduced the notion of privacy as a site of resistance, as an enabling condition for autonomous choices. By claiming privacy as a way to resist a power that seeks the totality of knowledge about individuals, one can re-stake one's own claim to the space in which one exists for whatever ends one wishes and not as a raw material for information to be gleaned from and sold to others. Privacy plays an important role in resisting power, in safeguarding one's autonomy, and hence: one's ability to choose how one wishes to pursue and experience social connectivity.

This is not to say that Facebook and other SNS are evil nor does this argument serve to overlook the significant benefits and enjoyment that make it so satisfying for people to use. I merely wish to establish that part of what makes a choice free is one's capacity to choose how one wishes to act. Free choices can be impeded by social forces or constraints where one may have the freedom to choose a way of life for one's self and does so with second order autonomy (for one's own reasons rather than as a result of coercion) but thereafter such a choice is made one is unable to do other than accept the rules that come with one's choice. It seems that SNS is designed with an awareness of aspects of human cognitive frailties and intended to nudge one in the moment of decision towards quick and easy decisions that may appeal to what one desires in using SNS rather than what one values. The design of the choice environment itself tries to capitalise on vulnerabilities to optimise individuals engagement with the platform. Such a design feature is evidence of a narrowing of the field of possible action that an agent may take until perhaps one is addicted to the interface the platform designs. The tension between social connectivity and privacy arises with how Facebook obscures the full nature of the choice that one must make to participate. Both social connectivity and privacy are ends of value that have come apart in the sense that our desire for social connectivity, among other things I must acknowledge, has been gamified so as to be that which more effectively appeals to us, say than the value of privacy. Privacy, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, is not immediately clear from the outset on the value it brings to the table and so its loss seems no matter of great concern until

one considers that which it enables by its existence. What one stands to lose should it fail to be protected.

So, are we forced to choose between social connectivity and privacy? It is unclear and context-dependent. No one universal answer will suffice for whether or not one is forced depends on the conditions under which one makes such a choice - which can vary from person to person. In principle, perhaps, an argument can be made to say that we are not forced: though the way society and Facebook alike obscures the choice between social connectivity and privacy of using the platform, the onus is on us to trace the unfolding of events and available information with regards to how Facebook turns a profit and uses individual users' information then we have some of the relevant information at hand to decide for ourselves whether or not this is something we wish to choose. If one does choose to use Facebook for the form social connectivity it offers, then one does so freely.

However, some people have greater access to information and resources to comprehend its significance. They live in different political climates and experience different levels of physical power asymmetries. Given that the general obscurity of how Facebook operates, many people might not realise that there is a choice they are being asked to make – never mind that it is a choice between social connectivity and privacy. Moreover, one is nudged towards such a choice in a way that does not really require understanding of the nature of the 'contract' one enters into. Perhaps they have a sense of what using a SNS will entail but do not further explore those consequences. So, given the choice is not explicitly clear, one may feel that one was forced to make such a choice. Moreover, one could feel that the cost of one not being on a SNS, that the lack of popularity for alternative SNS to the mainstream ones, may result in greater loss than privacy and whilst one may not agree with the rules, one feels one has to use SNS. There may be other values one feels one can only attain by using Facebook and privacy is a small price to pay in comparison. I am reminded of Berlin's apt comment that there are times when "boots are superior to the works of Shakespeare" (Berlin, 1969, p.4). As Facebook and its ilk become part of employment, entrepreneurship, educational, and social spheres, many do not want to lose out on the current windfall. In such cases perhaps one chooses with second order autonomy to participate in using SNS for social bonding or forming social capital for instance but does not choose or endorse the surveillance that goes with it and yet feels one has to make such a choice anyway. In such a case, one may feel as if their choice was forced.

Another person may look at this context and decide that they will opt out of SNS if they cannot have a say in protecting their privacy.

It would seem that a forced choice seems context dependent as to how much emphasis one places on being able to act with autonomy in the first or second order. As I have argued, a combination of the two is essential for one to be able to make a meaningful and free choice. As a part of that meaningful and free choice is the notion of privacy as an enabling condition for autonomy as a way to resist power. This would perhaps align my position with the idea that we are being forced to choose between social connectivity and privacy. But perhaps we are convincing ourselves that we have to choose between these two values because that is how they are framed.

The two values of social connectivity and privacy should not have to come apart and the onus is not just on individuals but on them as a part of larger society to reject such a dichotomy and develop systems that can accommodate to both social connectivity and privacy. Just as choice architecture can affect the choices available to us, we can choose to redesign it to ensure we are presented with better choices. Pragmatically speaking individuals can require some help in these matters and so it is important for resistance to come from the level of individuals as a collective, committed to upholding social goods like privacy. However, what this looks like is again dependent on individual contexts and so is something I cannot expound on here. This is a potential limitation of my analysis and evaluative framework. Whilst there is clearly some wrongdoing on the part of SNS companies because they are being allowed to frame the conditions of their use in ways that render individuals vulnerable to a form of power that borders on domination more work can be done to flesh out what that looks like for specific locales. Moreover, steps towards what oversight and increased regulations of SNS like Facebook are another area which exceed the scope of this report but are rich and necessary places where further research may be done. There is a new type of social contract emerging around all people across the world; it is my hope that we continue conversations such as the ones in this report to ensure the variety of global individual's interests are represented in its negotiation.

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