Digital Omnivores, Social Media and Social Capital
– Expatriates interactions using Smartphones in Stockholm

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I. Abstract

As a new settler in Stockholm it was a great challenge for me to understand the cultural difference between the city and country I have lived in (Islamabad, Pakistan) and the city I have just moved in. My main focus of the study is to understand how expatriates engage with their Smartphones and Connected devices in the city of Stockholm for establishing and maintaining social relationships. Keeping in view the time displacement theory coined by Putnam, I have tried to analyze and explain different patterns of uses of digital devices mainly Smartphones. The population of study is mainly residents of Stockholm. Natively the population of my report is not from Stockholm or Sweden rather they are from different cultural backgrounds. In this report I have discussed how and on what grounds the social interactions and personal and physically gatherings are eroding, if so. And explained different reasons and various shapes the social interactions have taken place in the form of social media or in the virtual world. I have found out that there is least to say that social capital is eroding. In my opinion social capital is just changing its patterns. On the contrary to this idea, there are researchers who are of the view that such devices have actually helped the social interactions of people in person. In my investigation it is not likely as well. I had tried to carry out my study with the main focus on the group interviews and discussions with different social groups who are living in Stockholm. The social groups are workers, professionals and students in Stockholm from around the world. The time period for this report is from February 2012 to 26th April 2012 but the time period of field observations is from 2nd September 2012 till 26th April 2012. This research is conducted under the auspicious supervision of Per Ståhlberg, Lecturer, Media and Communication Studies, School of Culture and Communication Södertörn University, Stockholm.

Key words

Social capital, Smartphones, Individualization, Socialization, Social Media, Facebook, friends and family relationships
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II. Introduction and Background

Whenever I travel in Stockholm by train, metro or by bus, I observe commuters engaged in a different kind of behavior, which behavior of commuters does not exist in the cities of developing countries. There is no wonder that the characteristics of such engagements among its users have started to grow in a different shape, kind and manner in developing or under developed countries but not of the same level as in Stockholm. Commuters try to utilize the time of travel by reading newspaper, listening to music, playing games or interacting with friends and family over the Smartphone or Connected Devices mostly through social media.

This culture is not limited to Stockholm only I have been to Göteborg, Uppsala and other big cities of Sweden and youth is attached with their Smartphones at the addiction level. The patterns and uses can be different but one thing is common in all of them which is a “Smartphone” that connects the users with the rest of the world.

This field observation reminds me of the famous theory of time displacement. According to which the social capital of new generation is eroding because of the displacement of time. Robert D. Putnam’s (1995) “Bowling Alone: American Declining Social Capital” was a shocking piece of writing that the then president of USA Mr. Bill Clinton invited Putnam to hold a meeting and discuss problems of American declining social capital. Putnam (1995) elaborated on how friends and family system in America is on a decline. He points out that people are not inclined to meet personally and physically as compared to few decades ago. Putnam further argued that mostly people of USA prefer to stay at home and live individualized lives as compared to socialization.

Putnam claims that if we exclude the TV in the lives of individuals they might be inclined to interact personally and physically with each other rather than just staying at homes and watching TV. Interestingly computer and internet was also a major inflectional tool of mass communication in mid 90’s. Computer and internet was the best technology available at the disposal of average users and then came Putnam’s “Bowling Alone” which not only worries the United States of America but also the rest of the developed countries as well. In short he was of the view that viewing television has actually taken a lot of time from the everyday life. And due
to this huge time consumption in front of television means, the people are less inclined doing other physical activities such as social interaction and participation for the political process. He further explained at different levels how use of television has eroded social capital of America.

L. J. Hanifan's 1916 article regarding local support for rural schools is one of the first occurrences of the term "social capital" in reference to social cohesion and personal investment in the community. In defining the concept, Hanifan contrasts social capital with material goods by defining it as:¹

"I do not refer to real estate, or to personal property or to cold cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of people, namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit… (pp. 130-131)."

Putnam defined social capital as "features of social life-networks, norms, and trust-that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (1995, pp. 664-665). According to Putnam it is alarming that in USA people are interacting way too less with each other physically than they did three decades ago.

Individualization is not a new phenomenon in human societies. Critiques have raised the concern that Putnam is not the first one who coined the terminology and discussed about everyday life. Individualization has already been discussed in 1920s when the Middletown Studies raised the concern of a decline of social capital. The different perspective that Putnam brought into consideration was that media consumption can be the cause behind the decline of social capital.

Although Putnam had tried to highlight that TV is the main reason behind the displacement of social capital along with some other factors. And social interactions are on the decline due to increased popularity of TV. But this does not seem supportive when analyzed different recent studies from the media perspective. Only high users of media consumption, whether it’s a TV or

¹ www.wikipedia.org
Internet, had shown inclination towards displacement of social capital among different societies states Moy, P. (p-39).

This seems merely an assumption because people can find some other things to do if there is no TV in everyday life. If I compare the time period of 1995 with the time period of 2012, there are fewer people who actually watch TV. This means even if there is no TV in the lives of people they might not find it interesting meeting people personally due to some other reasons which requires further investigation.

Media gadgets of 2012 are astonishingly amazing as compared to a mere TV, there are new media technologies, Smartphone’s, iPads and Kindle all equipped with internet. Still people are gathering and socializing even the media is so overwhelming as compared to the media of 1995.

The decline of social capital is more noticeable in America as compared to other developed countries. The controversy is there, in November 2009 P. Moy, Dietram A. Scheufele and R. Lance Holbert carried out a research by the title of *Television Use and Social Capital: Testing Putnam’s Time Displacement Hypothesis* have concluded that there is no such displace of social capital in different settings of human societies. And this study is not supportive of the arguments made by Putnam about decline of social capital due to consumption of TV.

With new trends of technology it looks like the social interactions are again getting popularity but in a different way and manner. Smartphones and Social media is enabling societies and cultures of today for more interactions than ever before.

With the invention of Smartphone, a new mass medium, philanthropist, social psychologist and people concerned had raised their major fret about the effects of Smartphone usage in our lives. Smartphone, regarded as a major source of information, education and entertainment in new era is yet to be recognized as a major influential medium of mass communication in many societies. People in third world countries are least bothered because firstly they are far behind in the
technology currently available to the developed countries, secondly people in third world countries have not yet prioritized the time consumed with Smartphone at the addiction level.

Unfortunately connected devices have not yet been much discussed in the circles of media, communication and cultural analysis perspectives. Firstly due to its newness and secondly it has been either neglected or under estimated as a major influential device for media communication and cultural perspectives. Phone studies have always been neglected and the major breakthrough in history was *The Social Impact of the Telephone* (de Sola Pool 1977) notes G. Goggin in his Cell Phone Culture (2006).

On the other side of its popularity I am sure that this must affect most of the aspects of life of an average user as well. It affects in productivity, communication, work, education, social interaction and many other ways of private and professional life. Stockholm is not an exceptional case. It is the most advanced and developed city in the region of Scandinavia. I am expecting that like other developed cities of USA and Australia in Stockholm as well more people are inclined to use the Smartphone to consume media, social networking sites to reinforce the existing social interaction with friends and family.

Data from past research show that if the same trend of growth will continue not only the Smartphone will get over all the feature phones, in near future, but also the media consumption on Smartphone will reduce the use of traditional media as well. Radwanick (2011) states the condition of U.S. in the following words with regard to media consumption on Smartphone and connected devices.

“Now, a growing number of consumers are likely to access a wide variety of digital content across a multitude of devices on a daily basis. With Smartphones, tablets and other connected devices, consumers have become digital omnivores – not just because of the media they consume, but also in how they consume it.”

The new shift is taking place and more people are inclined to use Smartphone than feature phones in everyday life due to interactive applications. According to Kyla Boyse (2010), the
established youth in U.S.A. is more comfortable to use the internet connected devices, social media and Smartphone rather then physically interacting with their friends and family members.

Radwanick explain what are the connected devices; according to her it started with the invention of Smartphone. The level of consumer’s expectations was raised and now consumers have access to most of the digital media on Smartphone once they used to access through their computers. “Now, a new movement appears to be on the rise as new devices such as tablets, gaming consoles, and e-readers – collectively known as “connected devices” – gain popularity and are increasingly integrated into daily digital life”.

A. Research Topic, Aims and Objective of Study

Looking into the different and versatile affects of the Smartphone requires an intensive multidimensional research in the area of media communication and cultural analysis. It is currently not possible for me to touch upon the versatility of the issue at this level. Rather it would be better to stay focused on certain areas. I have chosen to discuss the area of the consumption of the Smartphone with respect to social interactions in city of Stockholm. To narrow it down the main aim and objective of the study is to understand how workers, professionals and students engage with their Smartphones and Connected devices in the city of Stockholm? Furthermore I will discuss is the Smartphone and media technologies that facilitate expatriates to integrate in a new city and country, or is it rather a tool to stay connected with friends and relatives elsewhere?

The topic under consideration is so new and many of the terminologies have not yet precisely been defined in the field of media communication and cultural analysis. Whenever I use words such as eReader, iPad, smartphone etc the red wavy line appears automatically as an indicator that the spellings are incorrect. Practically those words are already there in the field and there is no spelling mistake. It is hard for me to decide which word or term is the most accurate and precise. Through my readings I have found that these terminologies have been defined relatively differently but used more or less for the same meaning or purposes and referring to the same
thing. Therefore for the convenience of my writing I am using the most convenience explanations and words.

In this report, I will try to find the patterns of the consumption of various social media on the Smartphones through focus group study in combination with interviews and field observations. I am expecting that findings will not be much supportive of the idea of linking time displacement with consumption of media. This study will be limited in the area of Stockholm only, and the objects of the study during interview or focus group study are different social groups. The results of this study cannot be generalized on the whole country or other part of Sweden until or unless empirically investigated.

Furthermore in my study I will be specifically narrowing down the different patterns and uses of Smartphones as described by the focus groups. The patterns of uses and gratifications as expected could be different among the community members of different cultural backgrounds. Logically people who have moved in to Stockholm are away from their family and away from their native country and they somehow feel the need of connectivity and link with their friends and family from the country they belong to, along with keeping the social ties with new friends and family system they are having in Stockholm.

It is the instinct of every human being to socialize and in this busy life Facebook and Smartphones have actually helped us to quench our thirst for being a social animal. BioMed Central (BMC) Public Health is an open access, peer-reviewed journal. They have recently published an article written by Dr. Laura Pulkki-Raback, who carried out a research at Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The research work shows that “people living alone are more likely to use antidepressant medication”. It is not hard to establish the connection between better physical mental health and socialization and use of social networks. The study concluded that;

“Living alone might leave a person feeling isolated and slipping into a norm of not socializing and lacking trust of others, perhaps even becoming socially more awkward”

It is not only the loneliness or living alone that could be the cause of depression, but isolation and being cut off from society or not behaving like a social animal makes the depression. I feel
depressed at time but when I keep talking to my friends even on the phone it helps and relieves. In my personal opinion all these social networking sites are actually promising the same characteristics, that you are not alone. Most of the popularity such social networking sites gets is because of this characteristic of not letting you feel alone even living alone, and this is a great feeling for the users.

While talking about specifically Stockholm it is hard to establish a connection that people are getting closer, more socially active by using such technology advanced gadgets equipped with all kind of social media or they are living lives in isolations. And the other factor could be people just prefer to stay at home and interact with everyone just over Facebook as one finds it hard to get the time to see all of the friends or family members in a specified time.

Social media is a next big thing for the next generation, and Smartphone has made it more easily accessible through such small gadgets on the go. My point of discussion will be mainly revolving around the same themes of social media, social interactions and consumption of Smartphones and connected devices by the different social groups or non local people of Stockholm. Has this actually increased the quality of communication, could be a next research in the field. This is not a question of good or bad communication as well. However I will try to answer that has the usage of Smartphone and connected devices made it easier to interact with friends and family and reinforcement of the existing relationships.

There is also a debate about various uses of Smartphone than just a social media and connected devices. There are certain groups of people who are using Smartphones just as a need. Not for social media but as a need for other necessities of everyday life. People in metropolitan cities like Stockholm would want to know more about their whereabouts then merely staying connected with friends and family. They might be interested to know the schedule of the metro system and busses and weather reports to put cloths accordingly, and still some use the Smartphones because it helps them to locate their desired destination in a new city and it helps them with directions.

However, I choose to focus on the discussion of my focus group. These focus groups are based in Stockholm for different reasons. The focus group study will help me to understand the different differences, similarities and patters of usage of Smartphone and social media by these
people of versatile cultural backgrounds. This will further enable me in analyzing and describing how these patterns are interlinked with social capital and social interactions of people within the group and with other people around these social groups.
III. Theoretical context and Past Research

In this chapter I will be discussing previous research works, which is related to my report. I will discuss similar research theories based on or closely related to social capital and which will help me to build up my case. I will try to correlate relevant literature in relation to the topic of Smartphone’s social capital and with a touch upon cultural perspectives. This is very important and a strengthening point for my report to discuss how the matter in the field had already been discussed and contested. The comparison and a light will be shed categorically during different time periods in past. Special emphasis is given to various time span and various media technologies to compare and contrast how the matter of social capital had already bee discussed in relation to various other mass media in the history. The comparison throughout my report will be from print to electronic media and then leadings towards the new mass media technologies (digital media) which are connected devices and Smartphones.

B. Wellman (2002, p-152) had discussed at various places the debate between increase and decline of social capital and social interactions. Wellman looks the different perspective of the scholars who are of the view that “Immersive nature of the internet may be so compelling that internet users neglect their family, friends, relative and neighbors”. Contrary to that Wellman is of the view that due to popularity of the internet, people are becoming more social.

In a research by Wellman the statistics collected and presented were carried out in 2002 at that time no such social media was on the rise globally as 10 years later. I used the word globally because a certain kind of social media existed in 2002 in the name of hi5, Orkut and MySpace but none has achieved a global repute. There are many who are still unaware of the names of those social networking sites but in 2012 Facebook have become a global phenomenon.

In the support of the social interactions Wellman (p-152) states;

“People mostly use the internet to maintain connection with existing community members, either by adding internet contact on to telephone and face-to-face contact or by shifting their means of communication to the internet” (Wellman and Quan-Haase 2002).

He called for such phenomenon as “networked individualism” or “individualized networking”. To support this argument Wellman (p-154) is of the view that communities before the invention
of internet had started to formulate similar interest groups. That was just the internet age which made the boundary line more clear. 10 years later the boundaries are more defined. People are living in their own circle with people they are happy to be with; sometimes they call this a bubble.

X. Cai (2005) conducted an experimental research in USA to determine how much time is being displaced by the students when the computer is removed from their everyday life. For one day he arranged an experiment and subjects were asked not to use computer on that day and they were then observed how they utilize their time. The findings of the research shows that giving up computer use did not affect the other part of media consumption. Furthermore Cai pointed out “there is no difference in time shifts between heavy and light users” (p-9). Finally this study does not support to the fact that use of computer takes away the time being used for consuming other kind of media in everyday life. This also means that use of a new media does not become the influential role for decline of social capital of the subjects.

Gilles Pronovost (2002) conducted a research from Canadian perspective on the subject matter of internet and time displacement. The findings of the study concluded that there is no big difference of the time being displaced when the subjects use the internet. Furthermore this study states that the people, who like to spend the time on TV, spent more or less the same amount of time in front of the TV when they have added internet in their daily life (p-40). It is obvious from G. Pronovost, that no matter if there is an addition of a new technology in an average user’s life the time being used for existing media consumption is the same. However, those who are long-term users (heavy users) they have subsequently reduced their time consumption of the traditional media or the social interactions.

W. Lee and Eddie C. Y. Kuo (2002) have conducted a study on the subject of internet and displacement effect. The researchers have analyzed the time displacement due to internet use keeping in view 6 variables and they have come to conclusion that time displacement has nothing to do while consuming the internet as a medium of communication. They are also of the view that increase in time consumed for internet has reduced the time being used for watching
TV but at the same time this has not affected the time being used for meeting with family members, social activities or social interactions (p-11-13).

K. Subrahmanyam and P. Greenfield (2008, p121) in their research had examined the interpersonal relationships of the adolescents keeping in view their online communication. They have revealed that the users of online communication have used such ways “primarily to reinforce existing relationships”. The Authors have also shown that online communications have actually increased the number of offline activities.

Wellman (p-155) describes a table taken from National Geographic Survey of 2000 that people who are connected via internet pay more visit to their friends and family members who live within 30 miles as compared to those who are not using internet. Further to this argument (p-156) Wellman argues that “high speed Internet access supports both neighboring and long distance community”. The interesting phenomenon which Wellman (p-156) highlights is that the residents of Netville who just moved in keep the contact with their previous neighbors, in his words “internet help them to maintain their pre-move level of contacts”.

P. M. Valkenburg and J. Peter (2007, p-1170-1182) in their article, Online Communication and Adolescent Well-Being discussed various issues relating to the online communication and well being. The authors are of the view that online communication with strangers has not played influential role for adolescents well being however communicating online with existing friends has shown some positivity in the everyday life.

Social websites are meant to interact with social friends and family members. Sometimes the users are reinforcing the existing contacts and sometimes they come across people of similar interests with whom they would like to be friends. Becky Yerak, a reporter of online newspaper Chicago Tribune (2011), pointed out that many fields are entering the age of innovation after the emergence of Smartphones and growth of social media.

D. Miller (2011) in his Tales from the Facebook studies the stories of 12 different people who have one thing in common, which is, all of them use Facebook. Despite various accounts of the
usage of Facebook, Miller appreciates the efforts made by the founder of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg in the words that he wanted to make Facebook as a “necessary household for everyone”. The keen observations and the interviews by Miller had shed light on the socialization factor of everyday person whether it’s a business man, a religious person or just an aging person who uses Facebook to get away from his constraints.

What Miller discusses about getting away from constraints, I believe the same was the point of discussion by Janice A. Radway, about her romance readers who just wanted some time of peace and pleasure with happy ending and wanted to get away from the worldly problems, tensions or worries.

Miller had tried to elaborate that associations like family, friends and relationships are rebuilt and reconstructed by using Facebook. Facebook has been the major source for almost every type of users to interact with others and no one is living an individualized life on Facebook. Everyone wants attention, a relationship and attachment, personal or private even in professional life and for the growth of business as well. Miller tried to establish the connection that social relationships and social interactions had been declining for the last many decades. In short Facebook has brought the people together even over great distances.

While discussing the time displacement the authors has shown their concern that there is not much connection with the time displacement and the usage of internet by these adolescents. The Authors critically analyze the view of others (e.g., Kraut et al., 1998; Nie, 2001; Nie, Hillygus, & Erbring, 2002) that using internet or the computer has not played much role for the displacement of social capital. Valkenburg and Peter further quote Kraut et al. (1998) arguing that "by using the Internet, people are substituting poorer quality social relationships for better relationships, that is, substituting weak ties for strong ones" (p. 1028).

But this seems the case of internet, when there is no data available that which ties are weak and which ties are strong and which social relationships should be considered as quality relationships and which are not. Wellman (p-157) challenges the above statement in the following words;
“Rather than weakening community, the Internet supplements existing face-to-face and telephone contact. Heavy Internet users have a greater overall volume of contact with community members”

On the other hand Wellman (p-159) seems supportive to the argument that due to these networks, there is a kind of individualism which has been on the rise. People have found other friends of similar attributes and this helps them to discuss and talk about the similar topics. I cannot clearly define here whether Wellman means to the online communities which have emerged after the proliferation of internet or not but no one can deny the facilitation internet had rendered for these online communities. For example homosexual or alike communities were hard for people to find in pre-internet era.

As the aims and objectives of the report are multi dimensional therefore I further would like to touch upon certain very closely related topics for bridging the gape between. In the four sub sections I will try how Smartphones, a part of media in every day life is used and consumed like all other kind of media. I have tried to touch upon how the shifts have taken place in the different stages of history from print to electronic media and from electronic to digital media. There is also a section which states how the sociology of the mobile phones have been discussed and contested and finally there are fewer ideas about how the mobile phones have been domesticated before I present my case of how the Smartphones are being used for social interaction in the city of Stockholm.

A. Media and Everyday Life

While going into the details of what role media play in every day life of individuals it is much better to look through the various stages of evolvement of media in past. I have found various traces of media and everyday life and engagements of consumers of media with it. These traces of evolvement will help me to build up the relevance of my study. Because in my opinion the media has just changed its shape during various years in history but the attachment of consumers with media and how they interact with it has not much changed.
For example Janice A. Radway (1983, p-203) discussed how media is so influential in the life of an average house wife. She notes that what users (readers in her case) are missing out of their real life. She asked a question to a romance reader that why does she like to read the romances and her interviewee replies that this gives them “escape” and relaxation. One woman remarked with a note of triumph in her voice: “My body may be in that room, but I’m not”. According to Radway, readers see their romances reading as “a legitimate way of denying present reality that occasionally becomes too onerous to bear”.

There is a very fine line which requires further explanation that which part of the connected devices is “escape” and which part is “tethered”. Turkle, explains that these technologies have tied its users very tight, that there is no escape from it; this is the first part of adopting the technology and its novelty, which keeps its users always on and always connected with the rest of the world. There is no doubt that now all the connected devices promise 24 hours connectivity and push notifications\(^2\) keep users telling that they have to check this and that.

On the other side there is a novelty of social media itself, there is no escape from it too. The applications and uses of Smartphones are virtually taking its users to a land where they feel comfortable to be and where they can interact with people of same interests. It gives them pleasure being in world which is far better than real world around them. As internet promises its users safety and security which means no user is participating in any kind of activity physically, this is just a discussion and a virtual world where they can come and go at their own will and if there is a problem at times of privacy there are options available of being anonymous.

According to Radway (p-204-205), the romance readers are more delighted to read it because they wanted an escape from the world they are living in. The reader wanted to spend time in a world where they knew there is always a happy ending. This soothes the mind of the readers and gives them pleasure and a relaxing body as well.

\(^2\) In Smartphones there is a facility called “push notifications” means whenever a new activity occurs on any of the subscribed application installed on Smartphone it prompts the users to catch the attention and requires actions.
The same can be considered about the user of the other type of mass media as well, that people would want an escape in everyday life. People wanted to live in a world where they actually can live a happy life where they are the hero where they can build their own avatar and where they can create the life they want. The phenomenon is complex and requires further empirical investigation in different areas to fully understand where these users are leading. The interesting for me like all others is to know is there any end to such feelings in specific time period of everyday life?

This does not seem to be a new phenomenon of attachment with some kind of media, Hermann Bausinger in “Media Technology and Daily Life” (1984, p-344) explains with some examples that if in a certain day a newspaper is not published and not delivered to its readers, they will certainly register complains for not having a newspaper. The author further states;

“This is certainly not wrong, but is this, a question of the missing content of the newspaper, or isn’t it rather that one misses the newspaper itself? Because the newspaper is part of it, reading it proves that the breakfast-time world is still in order – hence the newspaper is a mark of confirmation.”

The other examples of Bausinger (p-344) about watching television which is a woman’s view;

“He (her husband) comes home, hardly says anything and switches on the TV. Although this is a direct expression of his psychic state, which is again habitualized and routinized, the specific semantic of the everyday comes in: pushing the button doesn’t signify, ‘I would like to watch this’, but rather, ‘I would like to hear and see nothing’.”

Vincent Miller (2008, p-388) calls for such phenomenon as personal individualization which he termed as a process;

“a process in which communities and personal relationships, social forms and commitments are less bound by history place and tradition. That is individuals, freed from the contexts of tradition, history
and under globalization, space are free to, and perhaps forced to, actively construct their own biographies and social bonds.”

And this technology will be getting more and more advanced to facilitate and to provide such facility of staying connected to their friends and family members instantly and on the finger tips just a single click away while they are on the go, However Bausinger (p-345) argues that;

“simple tools do not signify technology in a more refined sense. But is there not a level of development from which technology stands opposed to the everyday, and cannot therefore be easily integrated with it?.....certainly only a special investigation, evaluating all the material, could establish to what degree ... beliefs were not merely reflexes of a conservative skepticism, vis-à-vis new technical means, which was well established and penetrated right into the aristocracy.”

In Why youth Heart, D. Boyd (2007) quotes a typical users’ differences form a real life and living a life in a virtual world. In an answer to a question one of her Interviewee replied that what different thing she is doing in her everyday life and how they are affecting the social interactions in the fowling words;

“Not really, not very, But I am thinking about breaking up with my boyfriend. I don’t want to have sex anymore but I would like to have a boyfriend. My character has boyfriends but doesn’t have sex. They help her with her job. I think to start fresh I would have to break up with my boyfriend. Rhonda is emotionally tethered to her game; technology enables a new access to a medium in which she can see her life through a new filter, and possibly begin to work through issues in a new way”.
B. Shifts from TV to Mobile Privatization

It is very interesting to note how every kind of media, in the history have become a part of every life. Similarly this is also interesting to note how Smartphones have got immense popularity among the masses due to its novelty features. One of them is the availability of every kind of media on Smartphone. Stephen Groening (2010, p-1332) pointed out that the new media technologies have enabled TV to be viewed on mobile phones through internet. In mobile phones this is not only the TV which attracts most of its subscribers but playback facilities and share at will on social media facilities makes the TV viewing more entertaining on Smartphones. Groening further provides the references from Benjamin and explains that it is clearly noticeable that there is a shift and transition from the TV age to the age of mobile phones TV viewing. This is leading to a privatized or individualized life of the users, he further quotes;

“…in short, what Benjamin describes in these passages is a form of what Williams, in his book Television: Technology and Cultural Form (2003) calls ‘mobile privatization’.

To strengthen his argument Groening (p-1336) points out, that initially the cellular phone technology was adopted due to its two main characteristics for example “mobility and secrecy”. “These characteristics have made the mobile phone as a favorite tool for those who involved in financial transactions”

These mobile phones have stopped actually being mobile phones or a telephonic device Groening notes (p-1338). In 2012 there is more into it than just being a telephonic device. There is a need of research to find out what percentage that uses the mobile phone as a telephonic device and what other uses are there in this device. Currently there is no data available but I believe more than ¾ of this mobile phone is not being a telephonic device.

Sherry Turkle (1996, p-56) in one of her essay “Virtuality and Its Discontents” quotes an anthropologist, Ray Oldenberg, who is of the view that due to advancement in the social and cultural setups things are changing their patterns and those which once used to be a quality of
something is no more a quality and people have derived their own ways of delight and leisure in his words;

“great good place”—the local bar, the bistro, the coffee shop—where members of a community can gather for easy company, conversation, and a sense of belonging.

This is because these places are common gathering places for the person we are acquainted or we are friend with and they are knitted with each other at the same place. Not only the company of each other but also the place and its surrounding create an atmosphere which could never be created anywhere else. Now days, we see the coffee shops the bars and all those places in modern shape but they are just selling commodities and server no better purpose, except for commoditizing goods and not a place for interactions or a place to spent some time together.

This clearly states that a shift is taking place among societies and people who used to get together. People are less inclined to socialize in person as they used to be some decades ago. It is hard at this point to state or nominate certain reasons behind this phenomenon but certainly the media has played its role, whether it was in the form of TV and in new generation in the form of Smartphone and Social Media or its mean point is somewhere else.

C. On the Sociology of Mobile Phone

At this point we should be clear that how different media have been treated in different cultural perspectives in history. And how all kinds and types of media have been domesticated. Due to such privatized and individualized interaction with the mass mediums not only the consumers are comfortable with it but also the media is changing its shapes to make it more comfortable for every day life.

S. Bengtsson (2006, p-119) refers to the modernity that it has changed the way we used to think about the home, she is of the view that symbolic spaces of everyday life especially in home has much been altered by the use of state of the art technologies. However she notes that this is due to everyday media usage habits. She further argues that (p-120) due to such modifications in
everyday life the boundaries between private and public spheres are diminishing. Further to support this argument that now due to prevailing virtual and state of the art technologies there is only a thin line between private and public spheres of everyday life especially when it comes to the utilization of new mass media.

McGuigan (2005, p-45) in *Towards a Sociology of the Mobile Phone* is of the view that “use of mobile phone is an immensely significant social and cultural phenomenon”. That’s how he begins his article and the stress was laid on sociological and cultural importance of mobile phones in 2005. In 2012 mobile phones have evolved during the passage of time very rapidly. The technology has emerged and new kind of mobile phones has entered in the market by the name of Smartphones and the technology does not cease here. We also have tablets and other devices all termed as connected devices.

McGuigan (2005), on the importance of mobile phones and how they can change the political scenario at such a great level, begins with a quote, from Howard Rheingold stating:

“On January 20, 2001, President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines became the first head of the state in history to lose power to a smart mob. More than 1 million Manila residents, mobilized and coordinated by waves of the text messages, assembled at the site of the 1986 “People Power” peaceful demonstrations that had toppled the Marcos regime (Rheingold, 2002, p.157).”

McGuigan (p-52) further explains a case study of IT worker Darius. The case study revealed that social and family relations are maintained by a tech guy by using the mobile phones. On the other hand McGuigan (p-52) elaborates the case study of a plumber which reveals that the mobile phone is very helpful in maintaining the relationships between the customers and run day to day business. McGuigan further exclaims a very shocking fact that mobile phone has become “a prosthetic, an extension to the body”. In one way this statement is supporting to the McLuhan theory of the extensions of the man.

Keeping in view the theory of McLuhan in which he states that it’s not the contents of the media which should be the focus of the study but the medium itself proved very right when we observe
the mobilization as described by McGuigan (p-52). This is the mobilization which has created such kind of atmosphere when we feel a kind of insecurity and imperfection in ourselves without keeping our mobile phones with us. It has really become a part of our body to carry along all the time and everywhere. McGuigan (p-53) states that “mobile is a means of protection and a bonding device for friends and family”. McGuigan explains that the mobile socialization does not end here. It helps to maintain the business relations and public relations as well therefore he quotes that if the “internet is about globalization then the mobile is about localization”.

McGuigan (2005) is of the view that there is no doubt that mobile phone is a “stimulus to growth and modernization in developing countries”. Mobile phones in any country have extended and “increased the volume of communication” but the question is “does it actually improve the quality of communication?” while talking about the Smartphones McGuigan call them “all-purpose mobile communication devices” linked to internet provides its users “novel services” such as videos, songs, social media video calls TV and almost every media one needs at one place.

D. Sociology of Mobile Phone in different Cultures

Scott W. Campbell (2007, p-346) is of the view that in today’s life if no one is using a cell phone probably they are living in minorities. Even though the growth is massive in the technology and in the consumption of mobile phones but the research area is “relatively small with compared to others pervasive communication technologies” (Campbell, Rice, Katz, 2003). Campbell also notices that the size color and different physical aspects are more charming for female users of cell phone while the functions and features are a source of interaction for male users of mobile phones in different cultures. Campbell further quotes Katz and Aakhus they are of the view that “technology does not determine what an individual can do; rather, it serves as a constraint upon possibilities”.

About the popularity of the mobile phones (Campbell, p-350) notes that even the poor countries which are struggling for survive have the rapid growth ratio of mobile phone adoption. And regarding the usage of the mobile phones, there are similarities among youth in different
cultures. Campbell further refers to the studies of Oksman and Rautiainen (2003) and Katz and Aakhus (2002) that “teenagers mostly use mobile phones to develop and maintain social networks resulting in their own communications cultures.” He further notices that there is a relatively difference of the perception of the mobile phone as a means for facilitating social relationships. However the point here is that mobile phone is at all used as a means for facilitating social relationships.

About the sociology of the mobile phones McGuigan quotes Plant (2002, p-54) that in different countries the utilization of mobile phones is observed differently. For example in United States of America people keep a difference between public and private boundaries while using the mobile phones. In other countries like Japan people are mixing up their private business or work life together while using mobile phones. Campbell further supports this argument by stating the study of Mante (2002) that “Dutch participants were less willing to let their work lives interfere with their personal lives”. Campbell quotes Katz et al. (2003), that the findings from different cultural backgrounds “may indicate an international mobile phone culture and/or universals or near-universals in the perceived role of communication in our lives.”

Gerard Goggin (2009) looks at the Apple iPhone as a “fascinating instance of adaptation, especially as it relates to digital cultures.” Goggin is of the view that this theme is on the rise in Australia and he explained the “active role that people play in the orchestration and use of culture”. He further states that “the gambit of the iPhone is that the mobile phone itself will be decisively remade, and through this that media culture will itself be reformed”.

IV. Material and Methods

A. Review of Research Methods

Attachment of the masses with media has become a basic ingredient of everyday life. It has been studied, discussed and contested since its inception. Starting from the early age of cinema when parents and philanthropist have raised their concern about its effects on children and then from the various ages of development of media. This remained the key concern of scholars to evaluate and discuss various angles of different kind of media with relation to human societies. More interestingly all kind media had been analyzed, assessed and discussed in a traditional way. Observational studies, field experiments and focus and individual interviews are common for analyzing such attachments of people with particular mass media.

Janice A. Radway employed the “intensive ethno-graphic interview” (p-56) for the interpretation of her romance reader’s culture (print media in that particular case). It took her a long time to give detailed information about the background of her interviewees. Her expressions of the observations and answers to the long session of interviews were extended over a long period of time as compared to my report. She had employed observational methodology to analyze the behavior of romance readers in different situations. The best in her methodological observations was that she interviewed different groups of people to get to some conclusions. Her groups consist of ranging from the writers to distributors, from the sellers to the readers. This methodology gave her more insight and in depth knowledge about what she was going to explore and discuss.

In another similar kind of study relating to users attachment with particular means of media and communication, Boyd, Danah. (2007) argues that she collected data during her “two-year study of United States-based youth engagement with MySpace” by “participant observation” and “deep hanging out” alongside qualitative interviews. She notes that to grasp the actual essence she had been observing for countless hours analyzing the profiles of people on such social networking sites. At the same time she keep on moving from online to offline world of the
participants to get to discuss the in depth knowledge about the social networking sites and users interactions with social networking websites.

On the other side observing current users of Smartphones, could be an interesting discussion.

Joachim R. Höflich (2005, p-163) in his *A Certain Sense of Place*, Mobile Communication and Local Orientation argues that when the telephones come out of the mere household it has become difficult to analyze or develop a methodical approach for an observational study. He takes the other studies as a leading role for his study, the author further explains that;

“There are already a number of inspiring studies, such as Rich Ling’s research about the use of the mobile phone in restaurants and in public spaces, the ethnographical studies by Ito and Okabe about Japanese youths’ use of the mobile telephone, as well as those by Fortunati and Murtagh about the use of the mobile phone during train travel. This study understands itself as a part of the above-mentioned research, albeit one trying to achieve a more profound articulation of the observed phenomena”.

For this study scholars have preferred to devise an observational scheme to note the uses and actions attached to mobile communication. Their major concern was related to the non verbal actions, so they experimented and observed from a distance. This field observation to analyze the non verbal behavior in my opinion was the best choice, to be more scientifically authentic and valid for such kind of study.

Lee and Kuo had applied the panel participant research method to analyze and assess the time displacement effects in the children of Singapore. Questions related to internet use and interaction with family members and face to face socialization with close friends were asked. They have selected schools on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and then self administered questionnaires were distributed. According to them;

“The self-administered questionnaire covered numerous aspects of the Internet, ranging from usage patterns to family communication. For the purpose of this paper, only a limited number of variables relevant to the displacement hypothesis were selected for analyses.”
Wellman, Boase and Chen have selected three different methods to analyze the networked nature of community of Netville and their online and offline behaviors. In the first step (p-155) they have applied the experimental research methods in which they have two communities to compare with each other. The first newly developed community with most advanced Internet and the second was another community which was still using dial up internet. Their findings suggest that, “High speed internet access supports both neighboring and long distance community interactions”

In the second phase of the research they have collaborated with National Geographic Survey 2000. They featured a worldwide web survey and in survey they found out that “frequent contact via the internet is associated with frequent contact with other means”.

In the third study Wellman, Boase and Chen have compared the data from different countries and they have divided this data on the basis of developing and under developed countries. In short they have tried to compare the countries with internet and the countries without internet and analyzed their social interactions. The findings of the study suggested;

“The internet is not a self-contained world. Rather than operating at the expense of the “real” face-to-face world, it is a part of it, with people using all means of communication to connect with friends and relatives”

**B. Study of Connected Devices-Material and Methods**

The selection of material and methodology was a big turning point for my study. Because I am from Pakistan and in my country quantative research methods are preferred. Qualitative research methods in media and communication are always on the second choice. Secondly in Pakistan most media studies are carried out on “effects” part of the media. Ranging from who affects the media contents, what is “representation of media content” and how media contents effects the masses.

Analyzing the media and communication from a cultural perspective is new for me. Throughout the course of my studies I was of the view that as I have studied the quantative research methods before, so I will carry out my research work in the same manner and pattern. It was initially a hard choice when my supervisor suggested the qualitative research methods. He suggested me
some material to go through and I realized after some readings that my research topic is of such nature that quantitative research method will not be good enough to produce the desired results. Furthermore the findings will not be as valid as per the requirements of the thesis report. And there will always be unsatisfactory feelings in the readers mind that some aspects are not touched upon.

To have a better understanding of the questions raised earlier in introduction and review the study about Smartphones and connected devices with relation to the social capital will be carried out in same manner and kind, keeping in view the previous researches in the field.

In this study of Smartphones, connected devices, social media and social interactions I had countless hours in one and half year observing people in Stockholm. These people are not only limited to commuters category but also people outside the homes and office, people who are on the go, in the shopping malls, cultural house, in the parks and in the waiting halls. All of them have one thing common; that they are using the state of the art connected devices and Smartphones. What different uses and gratifications users are getting from using connected devices and Smartphones requires further investigation. However a general understanding is that consumers are engaged in doing versatile activities ranging from anything out of half of the million applications. My major focus is the use of social media and their social interactions with friends and family members supported by Smartphones or connected devices.

Relying only on my personal observations for my discussion will not be sufficient enough to give insight about the connected devices and socialization of the people of Stockholm from different cultural backgrounds. It was preferred to go deeper into the society to get a better knowledge of the social behavior of the people from different cultural backgrounds with respect to their interactions and engagements on social media assisted by Smartphones or connected devices. Then it will be possible to have a good understanding before the meaningful discussion or analysis.

The major foundation of my report is to carry on focus group study. This will help me to discuss and contest the topic more concurrently and vividly. The main convincing point for choosing focus group study was that I do not want to conduct an interview which may lead the respondents according to my desires and wishes, like a controlled environment towards specific
point. With group discussions most of the points will come from the respondents and discussants and they are allowed to discuss about anything at their will. This may lead to some more in depth knowledge of the field and I may come across certain points on which lines I could not think of while conducting an interview.

The data and findings cannot be whole representative of the Stockholm or people from all of the cultural backgrounds. There are a large number of community people from Africa who are settled down in Stockholm. And in my personal observation they outnumbers in Stockholm than people from any other culture. That’s why I feel a lack of discussion of the people from Africa and their views and thoughts. They must have their say but because all of my groups were natural groups and I haven’t disturbed the respondents of the group from the original settings to keep the real taste of discussion. Moreover this also confirms that in my personal capacity I never had the chance to make a group of friends with the people of that cultural background from Africa.

This is also clear from not only my findings but from this limitation as well that in my circle of natural groups. I cannot find a group of people from Africa. It is not only because they are happy and enjoying their social interaction with their own people but at the same time they find it hard to interact and community with people out of their circle as well. The instances of interactions are there; they work, study, and play together in the city of Stockholm. This is a city where there are least problems of racism or color, cast, creed issues but still these are the choices and preferences of every individual to find pleasure staying in contact or in the group of their own people from same cultural background.

There was another turn during the course of my study. I was so excited that I could get a research done covering almost all of Stockholm and my findings can suggest about the population of Stockholm Then I realized it is not that easy to generalize all of Stockholm as one population. There is so much into it and the true spirit of a good research is to be as specific and to the point as one can be. I was much stressed that all the groups I got for focus group studies was comprising of the members who are actually from different cultural backgrounds and none of them is a native Swede. Then my supervisor highlighted that this is actual strength of the
research that my study will focus on people from different cultural backgrounds and who are from different countries and are settled in Stockholm.

I try to discuss the combination of two-three different methodological approaches which may give me a deep insight and more in depth evaluation of the cultural perspectives of the people of Stockholm with respect to their use of connected devices, social media and personal interactions with friends and family members. The main methodology which is a building block for this research work is the focus group study which I will be using as a main discussion point. The rest the interviews and discussion with other people and personal observations will be only helping points for my report.

On the other side I have been observing the phenomenon since I moved into a big, fast passed, advanced city like Stockholm. I have also been discussing the phenomena with many other friends living in fast paced cities around the world. For support and strength of a particular phenomenon if there is relevance I will refer to a particular discussion with particular person who is actually not a member of focus groups.

1. Field Observations
Observing people and place around is not a new phenomenon for settlers who just moved in a new city town or the country. Just as a basic instinct of human being I have started observing people from the very early days I moved in to Stockholm. It was not only a cultural shock for me as a Pakistani citizen not only because of the differences of technology but also how people interact with each other in a certain settings.

In Stockholm I have to commute a lot in public transports for work, study shopping and all that which has enabled me to closely observe the commuters behavior when they are on the go. My observations are not limited to commuters. I have been to shopping mall big queues outside the university expedition, and many of other places of public common interests.

I have not many chances to interact with native Swedes and how do they behave interact within a house or family system. I have not much of the first hand knowledge in the bedroom culture and in house close family meetings because of my personal limitations of not being from the same society. I have a language barrier and I find it real hard to get into the real Swede families and diffuse into their system to have the close field observations in that settings. However my
observation also includes how Stockholmians are interacting with their small gadgets and connected devices at the work place and other social gatherings.

2. Focus Group Study

After the field observations I felt confident to go for the more important part of the research which is a hybrid focus group discussion and interviewing. I already had certain knowledge and various points were raised by people while discussing and certain points were highlighted by the masses which I will be using during my interviews and focus group study.

It is suggested by previous studies of similar kind that the focus group should be a pre existed group for better understanding and good analyses. I feel lucky in this regard that I already have three existing focus groups for the discussions and interview.

1. First group

(Which I will hereafter refer as working/labor group)

This group is comprised of people from different countries and that is of working as a labor class. Their income is of medium level and all of them are working in a non-IT based company. Computer and internet is not at all required for the job. The group member comprised of five people Ulrika from Finland, Jupin from Thailand, Emad from Libya, Svetlana from Serbia, and Raja from India. Among these group participants three of them are iPhone users one is Samsung user and the last one (Raja) is using some model of HTC.

Respondents from this group seem very formally interacting with each other. Their interaction with each other is only limited to work and during the time period I had worked with them I haven’t heard anything from any of the workers except related to work. I haven’t had much of the personal information about their social life in their own circles but it appears that within group they are only concerned with the work. As far the technology is concerned, the respondents are using Smartphones but they are not very well aware of the technology or the detailed uses of the gadget. As I can feel most of them are using Smartphone just because they have seen others in their own social groups using a Smartphone. None of the participants use any extra social networking sites on
Smartphones and they are not very familiar or used to the social media and social networking sites. Hardly two of the participants from this group have the computer at homes and I haven’t asked them much about the uses of the computer at their homes.

2. Second group
(Which I will hereafter refer as student group)
This is the group of four people who are master students at Södertörns högskola and Stockholm University. The respondents are the young generation with latest technologies. Money to these group members matters as they are not working but full time student. Requirement of using a Smartphone or a connected device by this group apparently seems different as compared to the other groups.

Participants of this group are again from different cultural backgrounds such as Eric Clark from USA, Aiko Takemura from Japan, Muzafffer Alta from Turkey and Jia Xu from China. One group participant is male and three are the females. Everyone has 2-4 years work experience prior to taking up the master courses. So these participants have the knowledge of the job as well and they knew how to use the state of the art technologies and get help from Smartphones and connected devices to help and improve their process of studies in Stockholm. None of the group member is married and has most of their immediate family members back in their native countries.

3. Third Group
Participants of third group (which I will hereafter refer as IT professional group or tech geeks) are highly qualified professionals. Natively they are from Pakistan, these are six respondents all are male, Kashif Siraj 30, Master in Computer and System Sciences, Rizwan Aziz, 34 Masters Degree in IT, Jaam Kausar Abbas, Masters in Information and Computer Security System, Dildar Ahmed Khan 34, Masters in ICT and Entrepreneurship, Bilal Ghumman (he was not initially the participant of group discussion so his age and degree is not known yet, however he is working in a Software company so most expectedly he is a Software Engineer) and Amjad, Masters in Computer and System Sciences.
They have the knowledge and information of all the latest technologies because their major in their masters was the IT. These participants are working professional and have acquired their masters from Sweden in the field of IT approximately two to three years ago.

Everyone in this group is a tech geek; everyone is using Smartphone and other latest technologies to facilitate their everyday life. Not all are similarly active on social media but the main purpose of everyone for having a Smartphone is to stay connected with their friends and family in their native country. In Stockholm their social interactions are limited to their own community people and they are less in interaction with people around from different cultures in Stockholm which is limited to work or necessary interactions.

Before I move on to the narration of the interviews it is much better to highlight the yard stick for my interview and group discussion, the questions, which I have raised in the aim and objective of the study. The fine line to be noticed is that respondents and group participants were not asked any of the research questions directly but they were asked questions to lead different situations and to a specific point of discussion and sometimes different questions closely related to the aim of the study were asked.

The discussion with the groups was all planned. I have a set of question which I printed out for each group and I planned to start the discussion with an introduction of the gathering and then to start asking different motives of coming to Sweden of every individuals. And why do people prefer to come to Stockholm for the purpose of study or work? Then I planned the discussion to lead more specifically towards the usage of mobile technologies and shifts and transition and trends while adopting a Smartphone and what could be possible motives behind it. And how people use different type of social media on Smartphones connected devices or their computer/laptops.

Although I have certain knowledge about the technology difference of Smartphones and feature phones but still I was interested to know that how do respondents from different cultural background perceive it and how they have the understanding of Smartphones. It was also
planned to know from discussant groups that how it is important to have a Smartphone or connected devices and how it helps?

To get more detailed knowledge and understanding of sociology of individuals in each group and how they satisfy their basic need of socialization, I plan to raise questions and problems related to their native country. For example how they miss their country. By living abroad, do people feel home sickness? How is the social life in their native countries and how their social interactions were supported in the past? It was also important to know how people follow events in their native countries and how Facebook or other social media help them to interact and keep up with social integration.

To get to know more about every individual’s engagements with their own Smartphone I plan different questions for example what they do in their spare time or how they plan to workout, gym, sports or outdoor activities? The questions related to media consumption were planned to ask also and the usage of Smartphone in a big city like Stockholm for the purposes of information about local transport, immigration related matters, tax declarations, how it helps work or education and how do respondents in each group get help from Smartphones for local news.

There is a possibility that people from different cultural background who have moved in Stockholm would naturally want to stay in contact with their old friends and family through online or social media networking. It is obvious that everyone wanted to stay in contact and for that connected devices are very helpful and adding social media on to connected devices makes it perfect gadget for them.

C. Narration of the Focus Groups

Discussion with all the groups took place in the last week of March and first two weeks of April according to the place and convenience of everyone.

1. Working Group

To arrange the discussion with the working group was not a big task. I had a chance to work with these people last year and it was such a nice experience of working with multicultural versatile
group of people. There are many different aspects and angles of this group which should be taken into consideration.

Everyone in this group is from different country either they speak their native language or the Swedish. There are many respondents in this group who do not speak English so Swedish language has become a major common language to communicate. That is where I learnt to speak Swedish. Mostly respondents are not very much literature they have just formal schooling. Work, work and more work seems like their main motive of being in Sweden that’s what I can realize from their conversation and that’s why I call them a real working class or laborers.

Everyone meet and greet every day if not when they arrive to work then there is a break time around 09:00 and everyone is there and then they have a lunch time from 12:00 till 13:00 and most of the colleagues gather on a table they talk on various topics from the world politics to how is it like to improve their earning and living in Stockholm. And one day the topic of their discussion was Smartphones and their social interactions and social media in Stockholm triggered and catalyzed by various triggers as suggested by the focus group studies.

After approval from their boss and from the authorities concerned I went to meet with them in the first week of March. Firstly I visited them around 09:00 in the morning when it is only a “fika” (Swedish word means break, or coffee time) for them. Secondly I visited just after another day during lunch time. The language barrier was a lot to communicate with them and to understand at the level of explanation to what they are saying. In this interview I was straightforward and asking direct questions. Because of not very much affluent with the Swedish language I adopted a very simple short way for the discussion.

The respondents of this group have not been using the technology for very long period of time. According to many respondents they have adopted using an iPhone or other Smartphones because they see people using such technology in Stockholm. The initial reasons for adoption of Smartphones for many of the respondents are not because of the technology. For them it was just good to use the latest state of the art technology especially when they can afford it either by direct buy or just on installments. Respondents from this group firstly bought a Smartphone have realized or learnt from their friends that how they can benefit themselves from using such
technology. It seems like working group wanted to use it either a status symbol or just a gadget because everyone in Stockholm is using it and they don’t want to be left behind in any way.

2. Student Group

On 26th March Aiko Takemura, MA student at Södertörns högskola dropped a message on Facebook for get to gather for an Indian food in the city in the coming week. It was expected the five students including me will go out for lunch Moa Ranung, Aiko Takemura, Eric Clark, Ruoyu Carnbrand and I. I picked up this opportunity of get to gather and decided to utilize the time for my research purposes. This was pre existed group of students.

I invited everyone at my place and offered that I can prepare Indian food for them and we can utilize the time for discussion on my topic of research for which everyone agreed except Ruoyu Carnbrand because of her busy schedule.

The gathering took place on Sunday 1st of April, Röntgenvägen 5 Huddinge, unfortunately Moa Ranung due to her sickness could not come. All the aspects and questions raised earlier were discussed in a very natural environment over the lunch and tea. I used two iPhone for recording of the discussion, on one phone it was the video recording but the phone was just placed on the table and the video recording application was running to record it properly. On the other phone just in case of emergency I was recording in the application of “Voice Memos”.

The group participants were two and the average age of the group participant are 30 and they belong to student group has 3-4 years work experience. Aiko is from Tokyo, capital city of Japan; Wikipedia Encyclopedia defines Tokyo with respect to technology as “huge, wealthy and fascinating metropolis brings high-tech visions of the future”. Aiko visited Sweden and Scandinavia firstly in 2009 and adopted the iPhone 3GS during her first visit, just because of the fascinating feature of Wifi and 3G; this type of internet at that time was rarely available in any other feature phones she states. She came to Stockholm for pursuing her education in August 2010, and since then she is living in Stockholm with a good travel history in Europe and back to her native country.

Second participant of student group discussion interviews is Eric Clark; he is also an MA Student of Media Communication and Cultural Analysis. He is from Manhattan, New York and
had a work experience of around 5 years in different multi-cultural environments. He arrived in Stockholm in the month of August 2010 specifically for the purpose of studies. And he picked up Stockholm or Sweden not only because the education was free but he was more motivated by the course itself. His story of adopting a Smartphone is not relatively different as compared to many and which is, he got the phone for free. He is using Blackberry before he moved in to Stockholm. And he uses the phone for taking pictures around in the city, use twitter and mainly for emails. For him the Smartphone had helped him for timely access to emails, twitting and pictures he takes. According to him sharing of every picture or social media annoying, so he only enjoys taking pictures and keeping them to himself.

Two more participants were picked up from Stockholm University who also represent the student groups and who are from different cultural background. The criteria for selection of these two participants was based on the grounds that this is a natural pre-existing group.

During my course of MA, in the second cycle we had the option to pick up the courses at our own will from different universities and I have picked up three courses offered by Stockholm University at the Film Institute and there I met a different group of people from different cultural background. Another group of students was picked from this setting. One Turkish girl named Muzaffar Alta, she is the youngest of all group participants being 23. She is a student of two years Master Program of Cinema Studies at Swedish Film Institute. Muzaffar came to Stockholm in August 2010 for the same purpose of education and her main focus of the study was the course she had selected. The other participant of this group is Jia Xu, 27, from Shaoyang, China. She is using a feature phone but at the same time she is a user of iPad so she had almost everything on her iPad which she carries with her while going to school.

3. **Pakistani Professional Group**

On the first week of March I requested some of the Pakistani professionals to gather around on a lunch during the weekend. Upon my request 6-7 people agreed to get to gather. One participant was called upon for work due to which he couldn’t come and one participant due to some other engagements couldn’t come.

The discussion with this focus group was carried out in very simple and natural way and everyone given their consent for their names and particulars to be mentioned in my report.
Everyone preferred to discuss in mother tongue i.e. Punjabi except for one who is used to speak Urdu and this is considered normal in Pakistan if one friend talk in Urdu and the other in Punjabi. The discussion was started with simple introduction of purpose of gathering and introduction to the subject matter.

Because the environment was so natural, I did not followed the conversation according to my set questions on the ground that if there is something more needed to be discussed I can gather these people around one more time with out any extra efforts. All the discussion was carried out by the participants only at certain points when the conversation was going too far away from the topic I have to keep the discussion in line with my research strategy.

After the first discussion I felt that there was not enough material on the subject of socialization and social media. Another meeting was arranged second weekend of the April. Second session with this group was more fruitful because the conversation turns out to be a hot topic among the discussants. Back and forth many versatile views were expressed and exchanged. Second session of discussion was more amazing. It was not started with any introduction of my purpose of gathering. It was just normal discussion and at the end one participant was so surprised that he participated so naturally and he didn’t know that what was this all about.

D. Differences and Similarities between the Groups

1. Duration of Stay

Respondents from students group are mostly in Stockholm for more or less 2 years, respondents from the working group have a long and versatile staying history in Stockholm. Emad is the most latest in the group who moved in Stockholm for the last 4-5 years. And Svetlana is living in Stockholm for over 25 years. The respondents from the IT professional group moved in Stockholm little longer than the students group. All of the respondents from the IT professional group ended up here in Sweden 4-5 years ago only for the purpose of education and after completing their education they found a job so they had decided to stay in Stockholm. So the duration of stay for the working professionals is little bit more than the student groups but their stay is little less than the respondents of labor group.
As long as the question is how long they are going to stay in Stockholm, the respondent from the student groups seems to be leaving as soon as they will finish their education. The respondents from the labor group are staying here for the work and they can stay here as long as the working conditions and environment is suitable for them to work and stay here. They are of the view that they love it here and don’t want to go anywhere else for work. The respondents from the IT professional group are here to gain some experience with IT companies and they are of the view that after gaining some experience they might move somewhere else. Here there are two types of categories; one are those who would want to go to American or Canada for work, the other category of people are those who want to move to East Asia or similar countries to work closer to their own country.

2. **Purpose of Stay in Stockholm**

The purpose of the group of staying in Stockholm can be determined from the name of group. I haven’t come across during the discussion that if any of the group respondents would want to stay in Sweden for any other works other than they ended up here. IT professionals are here as long as their job is in Sweden and they are open for the option if they get another opportunity they might consider moving out.

3. **Age**

Respondents from the labor group are versatile with respect to age; the youngest is the Emad 32 and eldest is Svetlana who is in her late 40’s. The average age of the respondents from this group is 39.5. The student’s age group is the youngest age in average. The average age of the respondents from the student group is 30. And the age group of it professionals is little more than the student group. Most importantly to be noticed is that they ended up here because of the education and they have recently started their professional carrier in Stockholm. The average age of this group is 32.5.

4. **Income**

Respondents from the labor group have no other source of income but this job. At average they are earning around 12000-13000 SEK (after tax) per month. Respondents from students groups have limited income resources. Mostly are dependent upon their little savings, income from their home or the little part time job there are doing. Respondents from the IT professional group are
having a high income level in these three groups. At average they are earning 18000 -20000 SEK (after tax). Student group have no responsibility to support any one else in their family. Almost everyone in the working class group have to support a family here or in their home country. The respondents from the IT group they don’t have their family right now but still they are of the view that some portion of their money either they have to save or to send back home to their family in their home town.

Respondents from Students groups are having the Smartphones or connected devices they have purchased all at once, and same is the case with the IT professional groups but the respondents from the labor group they have acquired the Smartphones mostly on installments from different telecom operator.

5. Family

All the respondents from student group are unmarried; some are dating and or living with their significant others. Most of the respondents from the IT professional group are married, and only a few are unmarried. As long as the respondents from the working class are concerned almost everyone is married. Either they have their better half from their own home town and in one case Emad is having his wife from Sweden when he is natively from Libya.

6. Education

Respondents from the labor group have minimum education, some have only school or hardly had finished their high school. None of them is willing to acquire more education as they are happy and are of the view that they can earn their living without going to school so this education is enough for them. Respondents from the student group are in the process of completing their Master Degree very soon, everyone is studying 2 years master program and they are in their final semester of course and in June 2012 mostly probably they will be finishing their degree. Respondents from the IT professional group have already completed their Master Degree in Sweden and they are hired by IT companies after completing their education. Only one respondent is still working on his thesis to finish but he got a job in the company prior to completing his research work.
7. Gender

Two respondents from the labor group are male and three of them are female. In students group one respondent is male and three are females and from the IT professional groups, all are male. I had two different sessions with this group so in one day there were five respondents and in the next session there were four respondents.

8. Country of origin

Respondents from the labor group are from the countries like Libya, Thailand, Chile, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Respondents from the student group are from Turkey, China, Japan and USA. All the respondents from the IT professional groups are from Pakistan.

9. Communication within the Group

Common language for communication between the respondents of labor group is Swedish. Respondents from Student group are communicating within the group in English. And finally the respondents from the IT professional group they speak within the group their native language either Urdu or Punjabi. This was the comfort during my discussion. I felt to communicate with them very freely firstly being from the same culture and secondly speaking the same common language. This has given me more in depth knowledge and understanding on the subject matter.

Interestingly the respondents from the IT professional group are communicating at their workplace in English and they are not strongly required to speak in Swedish contrary to the labor group where it is close to mandatory to speak in Swedish language. The respondents from the student group are taking up the courses which are in English so it is not problem for them to follow through the course or acquire the education in Stockholm.
V. Technical Analysis

I am very relaxed at this point while presenting the analysis of my research based on the focus group studies instead of survey as planned before. I could not be that much satisfied with the results as I am now by adopting this methodology of the study as suggested by my supervisor. As suggested before the aim of the study, to find out different perspective in different cultural groups. This aim would not be satisfactorily obtained through survey or quantative research methods. Now I am certain at this point that my supervisor suggested me very rightly to go for focus group study and qualitative research methods.

There are certain points which were raised by some at different discussions which were beyond my capacity to think or grasp if I was to conduct quantative research. For example the economical factor was totally ignored and neglected by me initially for social interactions and face to face communication and when highlighted by some I have realized that this could have been a missing link in many of the past studies, and that’s why that’s from where I will begin my discussion.

A. Analysis of Field Observation

A very nice concern was raised by some that “whatever happened to briefcase and the stack of papers” during the commuting which of course requires further investigation but one can easily see if commuters are not holding a briefcase or the stack of papers what actually they are holding now a days. Of course a Smartphone, a connected device, gaming machines, MP3 player or just an eReader and the list is growing.

It is hard to determine that whether the commuters purchased a Smartphone smart gadget or a tablet because they are commuting every day and it could be a good companion to carry along and use the travel time. In other words it is hard to establish a connection that having connected devices has to do something with commuting. However on the other side almost everyone who is having connected devices certainly uses it during the time of commuting, is an interesting phenomenon. Have you ever noticed yourself that as long as a train, or metro (bus is an exceptional case) stops many people left and many just hop in. And out of those many who just get in the train or metro as soon as they get a seat or get a comfortable place to stand where they
can keep their balance, a Smartphone a connected devices is in their hands just in seconds. If not it is in their pockets and commuters just prefer to listen to music.

Commuters engaging with Smartphones in Stockholm’s local train (J). In picture on left the respondents don’t want their faces to be shown in my report and in picture on right the respondents didn’t mind taking their picture for the purpose of my report.

A commuter having a connected device and not engaging with it, is something which is not common and requires further investigation that when and where these people have the time to use and interact with connected devices. And why they do not prefer to use it while commuting however the answer is hard to find because it is also hard to find anyone who having a connected device and not using it at all during the time of commuting.

There are a certain percentage of people who engage themselves by reading a book, scrolling through the pages of a news paper or magazine while commuting. Still there is some who are having a connected device but they are with their friends and it’s better to chit chat and still there are a small percentage of commuters who just lean their head on the side look out or close their eyes and relax while commuting.
The proliferation of Smartphones and connected devices and its uses are not only limited to commuting. Even people interact with such devices while just waiting at the bus stop and even sometimes people don’t complain that their train or metro is delayed as long as they have their connected devices with them. There was a young boy anxiously looking around as he has misplaced something holding a phone in his hands and charging cord. Before I could ask him, he asked me if I can help him finding a place to charge his Smartphone as he lost the connection with rest of the world due to low charging.

Touch screen and battery life is the most notable features which mostly people talk about while discussing about the Smartphones especially the iPhone. No one wants to feel disconnected from the rest of the world. But sometimes it is not the connection with rest of the world but the connection is of a human with a device, even if it’s only related to listening to music, playing an offline game\(^3\).

\(^3\) A game which is run only on the device and does not require internet connection e.g. Angry Birds, Temple Run (both have the highest download rates and both games can be played in offline mode)
1. **Connected Devices Speak**

Most of us might have observed that a person sitting next to us is smiling under the lips, is that the amusement of the game, a funny weather forecast or a short video clip on YouTube? Above all in my observations this kind of under lips smiles one gets from other reasons. Does that Smartphone and connected devices speak, do they tell a joke at random times? I am not psychologist and I haven’t carried out the scientific research on the matter but I can clearly notice that the person is most probably connected with friends or family members through Smartphones or connected devices.

Facebook is on the top of the social media networking sites being used on connected devices. And this social media actually speaks through the connected devices. Where always there is someone on the other end. Social media and connected devices help to establish connection with friends and family in other world. The phenomenon is more complex than that, in a short discussion with an anonymous commuter in a train she explained that how Smartphones and social media had brought everything all together, its time saving and convenient for her to open one application and get the news, entertainment, information education and get to know about friends that’s all in average daily life an average person need from media.

**B. Analysis of the Focus Groups**

1. **The Economic Factor for Social Interactions**

In a discussion with a student’s group, Aiko pointed out that this is the money which matters. According to her it was far less expensive to socialize meet and greet and personally and physically interact with friends and family members in Tokyo (her home city) as compared to Stockholm. Why I am discussing the economical factor the first and foremost can be a question a reader may ask? Economical factors are least discussed in the study of media and communication while talking about social interactions and new media technologies in the past.

This phenomenon requires further investigation that whether it is because of the domination of capitalist economical system which is leading to decline of social capital or is it just overall global economic crises which had lead individual users to act more smartly. I have not much expertise about capitalism or the current global economic crises but it is very easy to establish a connection that physical social interactions requires money no matter small or big. The
discussion may lead to the other phenomenon that time is the money and people would not only want to use their money economically but also their time economically as well.

Such are the favorable circumstances which enabled one time investment in the form of Smartphones and connected devices and then use the internet and social media to interact with friends and family members. This way one can not only save the time of physical participation but also can save money in the form of expenses which may occur for social interactions.

Further to the economical factors the proximity of friends and family members on geographical locations could be another factor for social interactions over the internet or by using social media or Smartphones and connected devices. In good old days we had all the friends living in the same town. It was hard to have or keep a friendship with people from far off places, because it was not possible to personally keep in contact with them.

This is not only the expenses of travel or seeing friends, there is something more into it. In a discussion with Pakistani professional group, two of the tech geeks pointed out that they would never buy a Smartphone because it is not worth spending money on it. Further to elaborate the respondent pointed out that how he can get things done with feature phones while spending no other cost. His (Dildar) main purpose to keep an iPhone was to have a quick easy access to this family here in Stockholm and in the native country of Pakistan. But even then he could get hold of everyone by using a feature phone what makes him attracted towards using a Smartphone was the offer by a telecom operator.

Here again it involves the onetime expense of buying a Smartphone, which according to this respondent was not in his budget to afford having an iPhone. But thanks to different packages by telecom operators in Stockholm which offered its users either the Smartphone for free or just for very simple and basic installments.

There comes another respondent (Kashif) who mentions the economical factors in another way. According to him he has a very traditional approach. He is also a tech geek, who studied IT from KTH and uses best of the technology available for the consumers but still using an old feature phone for staying in contact with friends and family. His whole world was changed when he got a “free” iPhone as a present.
When we talk about economical factors for socialization and face to face communication, of course it cost money and at the cost of time. The group discussion took place at the home of Kashif Siraj and he was not feeling well that day. The focus group study was in process in a very natural and comfortable way over a cup of tea. Bilal, a guest, just appeared who was not part of the focus group study. Bilal is a friend of Kashif Siraj and he is also working for Ericsson in Stockholm, he is also another tech geek. He commented that he came to see Kashif because of his sickness. The reason and purpose was told to him of the gathering and discussion and he added that because Bilal is living closer to Kashif that’s why just for such small sicknesses he came to visit him. Otherwise, had he been living somewhere far away, he may not get that much time or spent the money to come and visit him until there is something more important.

Bilal is a Software Engineer who spends most of the time at work and then working out or sports, badminton seems his best sports. He values the “time or money” is a hard question to answer at this point but during the discussion it was realized that he was home alone and was bore and wanted to go out and play badminton for which he just made the reservation at some place to go and play. And he just dropped in to say hello before he go for his sports. The analysis is more complex here. On one side he is feeling bored at home and wanted to kill his boredom by playing some sports on the other side he is of the view that had he been living at some other far places it was rare for him to visit Kashif for just saying hello. I believe it is not the matter of time it is not the matter of money or economical factors; this is the factor of prioritizing and giving preferences of some personal and physical interactions over others.

Talking about the economical and financial aspects of average daily life out of the professional group one respondent is of the view that using a Smartphone is more economical in a way that it provides easy access to applications that you can talk to your family and friends overseas without spending an extra money or recurring cost on it.

According to Rizwan a respondent from IT professional group he recently had a son and his wife lives in Pakistan. It is very important to talk to his wife every day. Although he is having a Smartphone since last couple of years but his story for adopting a Smartphone is interesting. He was working hard during his studies and the income was not enough so he has to plan his income and expenses and maintain a balance between to live here in Stockholm and staying in contact.
with friends and family members in Pakistan. According to him he made a wise decision which helped him a lot in terms of economical savings.

Making calls overseas over a feature phone (GSM) or landline calls costs a lot. And calls through internet telephony are much cheaper as compared to GSM. His main purpose of staying in contact with family is simply solved by a Smartphone, his Smartphone is provided with internet and by using his Smartphone he can simply make calls to his family back in Pakistan at any time which could not be possible without using a Smartphone or connected devices.

2. **Time vs Money**

Another factor which is closely related to the money saving is a time saving factor as well for Smartphone adopters. Rizwan was working before at McDonald in shifts and mostly from 08:00 till 16:00 and often 18:00 and in some cases he has to work late nights. According to Rizwan his family can call him anytime over the internet as he keeps his Smartphones with him always and sometimes it is important and urgent to talk and he cannot wait until he gets back home. There is another factor of time difference between Sweden and Pakistan and he has to keep in consideration the sleeping hours of this family and he don’t want to wait until he gets back home here in Stockholm to call Pakistan when it is already so late in Pakistan.
3. Preferences and Priorities

For social interactions with friends and family and for face to face communication there are many debates in the fields of media and communication. Some (Wellman, Miller, Pronovost) consider that internet and new media technologies, like Smartphones and social media, had actually improved the quantity of in-person or physical interactions and some, like (Putnam, Xiaomei Cai), and others are of the view that new media technologies has actually eroded the social and cultural set up of the life and family system.

The phenomenon is complex and needs further investigation and explanation. In my opinion this requires a long term study ranging from one generation to another. Then someone can be for certain suggesting that whatever happened to social capital. Just suggesting on face value of social interactions as they look and seem it is hard to establish a connection.

There is no doubt that new media technologies have actually played a vital role in changing the shape of social life and social interactions. But no one can say for sure whether societies and communities are headings towards eroding of social capital or social interactions are moving a step further to strengthening the social interactions (Miller).

I think it is time for the debate of social media and communication researchers to be more practical and more concerned about the real reasons behind all these shifts. What I have to report here is the comment of a person I was discussing about the social capital and new media technologies.

Mirza Imran is a 30 years man living in UK and has been using a Smartphone since he landed in London. He is not a part of any of the social groups stated about in my study but one of the discussant from Pakistan with whom like all others I just talk normal but it seems very valid and relevant and important point for my study to mention. According to him we have to think wisely and smartly in our everyday life. This Smartphone or connected devices has nothing to do with social interactions. This is our social setup and our social priorities and preferences which enable us to socialize and gather around. To my surprise he commented that he will “jump off the aero plane if he has to see his girl”.
I believe he is right in commenting like this because he further comments, that “if it is important one will find a way out and if it is not one will find an excuse”. Smartphone and social media are just means of communication they help to communicate and take it further. This is only the wish and will of every individual that to whom they wanted to meet personally and physically and to whom it is okay to just text or call over the phone and then there is a category of friends to whom we just prefer to stay online and keep them in virtual world and nothing physical. The three categories of social contacts and social relationships which I found out are as below. Why it is important to sub-divide these social relationships is because we interact with them differently. These I call them as the modes of interactions and further explanation to such modes of interactions is given as under;

4. Modes of Interactions
In the discussion with almost all of the groups I came to know that people in the city of Stockholm have categorized their friends and family members on the basis of how to interact with them. There is no hard and fast rule for categorization but this is a natural and neutral process. This categorization seems like just an understanding not something physical that exist. Mainly these are;

a) Necessary Interactions
This is a kind of social interaction which is mandatory and there is no way out for an average person. This circle of social relationship and social interactions are as important as the existence of life. As the old saying states no man can live in isolation, either he is God or beast. Social interactions are as much important as life itself. And necessary interactions are average everyday life interactions the most important of all are the colleagues and class mates. If someone is studying or working they cannot avoid being with group of people called either colleagues or the class mates, these interactions are must, formal and everyone plays a social role of such social interactions as and when necessary.

b) Essential Interactions
Essential interactions are those with whom we were born and lived our life, like grandparents, uncles aunts, cousins, parents, siblings and most important is spouse and kids and then the friends. The category of friends is big enough sometimes the siblings are best friends and sometimes class mates and often colleagues can play a role as being the best friends and this is
another circle of social interactions. This essential circle of friends can be only limited to family members and can expand to very large number of friends group.

c) Optional Interactions
Optional interactions are about interacting with people such as far off friends and far off relatives, ex colleagues or ex classmates, the people we travel with everyday from home to work and then back from work to home, shopkeepers we buy groceries from, the person we are just acquainted with and only meet and greet when necessary and sometimes we don’t even care when it is their birthday or anniversary. I would also suggest, that roommates, or people who are living with each other and just sharing a place, are the optional interactions, because there is nothing common in them, just a place for a specific time. These interactions are just making everybody’s life complete. At the same time we can be playing a specific role for someone without realizing it, and as we skip the social interactions with such optional group of people, someone will skip socializing with us in their social settings or gatherings.

After the classification of the social relationships in accordance to their interactions then comes the next step of socialization with every group of people individually or in groups. However there is an interesting phenomenon to note that these groups of people are not separate, they interchange at different places and times and sometimes overlap and intermingle. Sometimes a spouse can be a shopkeeper, one can go to buy grocery and at the same time the spouse is a friend and colleague as well. The important questions is then how we decide to whom to communicate and to what extent one can socialize and interact with each other. However what do they communicate requires further investigation from the part of media communication and cultural perspective.

This is only the “preferences and priorities” of someone with whom one wants to interact. Social media and Smartphones and gadgets alike just facilitate the process of communication for people to interact. So far I haven’t found any instances in which I can clearly state that social media or Smartphones had actually helped to create more relationships. I believe that sex partners, intimate friends, girlfriend, boyfriend or spouse relationships which were found over the internet could be discussed separately, because of their nature of relationship. There is a very famous McKinsey study which suggested that, 1 in 8 of all couples married in the US in 2006 met first online. In my opinion such cases should be considered and discussed separately due to the fact
that it is different from meeting and seeing friends with no purpose of intimacy. There is a fine line to be discussed and clarified that yes very often social media and Smartphones becomes a means of communication between interacting people.

From time to time I have been discussing the matter and situation with people over the phone or internet with people in different countries. How the situation is and how they feel about social interactions and social gatherings in their community culture or circle. Signe Pedersen, 28 from Denmark, states that she does not exist on social media like Facebook and Twitter. This does not mean she has no social life. She still has a social circle, she has a social life and her interactions are as great as of a Facebook user.

However she found her boyfriend online. The fact that she dates and meets him does not at all mean that social media and Smartphone have increased either the quality or the quantity of her social interactions. She is of the view, that if she had found a man next door, her social interactions would have increased, because she needed a man in her life.

But whether attributing to social media and Smartphones have improved the social interaction between people, requires further investigation. Not all are convinced by the fact that Smartphones, connected devices and social media has actually increased the number of social gathering and face to face communication.

Average people divide their personal and physical interactions based on their preferences and priorities, that with whom it is better to meet and see physically and in person and there are certain group of people we just meet at different occasions and still there are group of people we always prefer the face to face communication and then some just virtual communication is enough with some type of people. Exactly as Anaïs Nin in a very famous quote states;

“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

5. Life in a Big City

“Vara som fladdermössen mellan fäglarna” is a Swedish idiom which means “Be like the bat among the birds”. It has its literal meaning, that if bats can fly they are birds even if they were not born in a net and bat is a mammal. Stockholm, or Sweden as a whole, has no adoptability
problems. I haven’t come across a discussion point from any of the group members that someone left Stockholm due to any social interactions problems or not being able to adjust here.

But still there are limitations of the city which affects the social interactions of individuals and friends and family circle. There is a very common understanding about the city of Stockholm and Swedes in common; that they do not intrude or interrupt other people in public or private spheres, unless it is very necessary. And people who are settled here in new city they tend to interact and behave like that as well just as a matter of adaptability and adjustability in a new environment so that they are not offensive or rude to the local citizen and as a key for success to adjust in the new city.

People from different cultural background carry their culture and tradition as well, for some it’s very easy to communicate in a new city and some consider it very difficult depending upon personal and individual choices. For those who are reserved and are not easily convinced to mingle they consider there are many barriers like language, race, gender and religion for them to exchange thoughts and views and for some it is not a big problem.

M, Castells et al (2006) debated about the mobile communication and how it will be like in new emerging societies and they have given consideration to different aspect of life in the following words;

“Are mobile phones expressions of identity, fashionable gadgets, tools for life—or all of the above? Mobile Communication and Society looks at how the possibility of multimodal communication from anywhere to anywhere at any time affects everyday life at home, at work, and at school, and raises broader concerns about politics and culture both global and local.”

Social interactions and social preferences matters by the distance as well. People who are from different cultures and living for various reasons in Stockholm are of the view that they miss being with friends and family circle of their native country. A circle of friends and family members which is still there and the distance has caused not to meet them physically or personally. And Smartphones and social media had helped just being and staying in contact with them and hoping for the time of return to revive all the relationships and all the interactions.
This social need of moving away from native countries has actually taken some friends and family members away from our circle. At the same time these people have found new friends and family members in a new city like Stockholm. Some are strong ties and some are weak and some are long ad some are short. The only factor which makes them strong or weak are the preferences and priorities or individual and on the fact that to whom they wanted to interact and for what purposes.

In Stockholm mostly people from different cultures interact with in each group and seldom out of the group. Turkish people are comfortable staying in contact with all the Turkish friends and Pakistani people would prefer to stay in touch with Pakistani community. There are many preferences and priorities of the individual members belonging to each group. They help, support and encourage each other within the group. They have common holidays and common moments of social life. Every group may be different from other but still few members of one group interact with few members of other groups. It is very uncommon that two groups have actually met together at the same time and place.

The foremost preferences for every individual in new city like Stockholm are the same with those hopes that individual moved in to Stockholm mainly are education and work. Asylum is not the main course of my discussion neither the tourist nor those who just love being here in Stockholm due to environment or other preferences. The social groups of my study are from the same main categories of job and study.

Kashif Siraj, respondent from the IT professional group, is of the view that there is socialization within every individual group. I believe that the general psychic of people from different cultural background is that they tend to socialize and interact with the group of people with same cultural backgrounds and same goes at work place and same is at school and the same phenomenon is observable from the area we live in. According to him these are natural barriers for social interactions with intra cultural gatherings.

Dildar Ahmed Khan, respondent from the IT professional group is of the view that he is married and living in Stockholm with three kids and wife and the way people raise their kids in his home country is different from the cultural perspectives and traditional customs of Stockholm. Sometimes for him it is better to keep distance to save, protect and transform the same culture
and tradition into the next generation of his own. There are certain examples of private matters, most importantly kissing and hugging of couples in public or consumption of alcohol, which people do openly in front of kids is very common here in Swedes of Stockholm. However he is of the view that second generation of people from various cultural backgrounds will be better in position to interact with local people and less distant.

One respondent from the tech geek group has the view, that although there is no concept of religion in Stockholm, there are still people who are Christian and Muslims. Social interactions kept in view, and different perspectives of religion in a new city or country, means that there are certain barriers and hurdles adjusting to a new city. He gives the examples that interactions between opposite sex and consumption of alcohol is not socially or culturally recognized in his country and with this choice you already loose half of the friends circle because there are girls and then half of the circle you lose because they go partying hard.

6. Interactions within Group

Respondents of almost every group communicate and interact within the group members more or less the same way. Contents of communication and the way of communication differ according to situation need and requirements of that role in which every respondent playing a specific role. For example among the group which is working class none of them is using any kind of social media. And everyone is of the view they don’t need it actually. Considering it true may be they never feel the requirement of it and their nature of job and their family circle and from the cultural background they belong to is different from that of the group which is a tech geek.

One more fine line to explain is the interaction of people within the same cultural back ground at different places and different settings. Yousuf Ali (27) living with four other men of the same age from the same country and his communication is limited only to the extent they are living in one apartment. Everyone is concerned about his own business and no one communicates more than required within each other under this settings. However all these four people have their own friends circle in Stockholm and everyone is more social than the place they are living in. Everyone enjoys a good company of different circle of people but not with the people they are sharing the apartment. According to Ali “we are just friends and the only common thing between
us is that we are living at a common place. We never tried to find common interests among us to
grow the friendship and take it to the next level.”

Then there is another example of Viet Hung Nguyen, he is 27 from Vietnam and is another
person living with Yousuf Ali, they are friends only limited to the apartment, he shares the rent
and that’s it. They are Facebook friends communicate with each other when necessary. Luckily
Yousuf Ali and Viet Hung are both classmates and studying tourism at Södertörns högskola.
Yousuf Ali enjoys the company of his own friends circle which he chooses to be with and Viet
Hung enjoys being in the gathering of the circle he would want to be.

The same is the case with professional people. Their friends circle is maintained and carried out
on Facebook, but at the same time, their professional social circle is supported by Linked In.
Bilal Ghumman, an IT professional at Ericsson, thinks it varies from situation to situation, when
to meet and with whom to meet. It seems it is not only the preferences and priorities of the
people for social interactions it also dependents upon different circumstances and different
situations. This requires further investigations.

Bilal the respondent from IT professional group further explain the situation that some of his
friends are not using Skype and they are not on Social networking sites as well but still they are
using Smartphones or feature phones so he has to keep in consideration how important the
relationship is and what are the requirement of the circumstances and how important the matter
is.

Dildar Ahmed Khan, respondent from IT professional group, further explains that social media
in a busy city like Stockholm is not only a good means of communication between the social
groups. Jam Kausar, respondent from IT professional group, explains this phenomena by stating
an example that if anyone gets a baby in hospital it is not possible for every friend in the circle to
firstly know about it and secondly to convey his congratulations. Social media helps the father of
the new baby to announce the news by uploading a picture or a status update on Facebook. Then
everyone from his circle will know. In this way the friends will save a lot of time texting or
calling to everyone and letting them know, and the father saves a lot of money as well. Just by
putting one thing in status, everyone in his circle gets to know the good news.
On the other side use of social media in such way is beneficial and time saving for everyone in the group because it is not possible for everyone to come to the house of friend who just got a kid, so it is easy to send the well wishes online. And these well wishes and congratulations are supported and assisted by the social media and Smartphones and could represent a digital archives. Then there comes the Smartphones which help everyone to stay connected on such social media websites which was not previously possible when internet connected telephones were not available in pockets.
VI. Conclusion and summary

People may attribute that it was due to such technology they can gather million of people in short time but in history more than millions of people used to gather around for various occasions from big wars to the big anniversaries when there was no print, press, TV, radio when there was no social media when there were no Smartphones or connected devices no cell phone culture and no SMS at all.

Looking through all the advancements in different time period of technology it took a long way to come to the conclusion and summary about the uses of Smartphone and connected devices. The subject matter was complex to explain because it not only involves the social media and interactions of people from different cultural background but also the ever changing the technology around masses. The challenges were not only the people are so versatile to grasp and write everything about them but also the city life in Stockholm is multi dimensional as well. I feel I haven’t actually expressed all what I come across or what I actually planned initially to write about but only picked up certain themes due to limited time, space and resources.

When I started to analyze on the Putnam’s theory and read all the available literature related to new media technology and seeing it through the eyes of different decades of changing media forms. It was a nice feeling seeing the revolution in media and communications technologies and how people actually wanted out of it. The attachment of users is always noticed with media from the very early ages of cinema studies and then Besingers’ Newspapers readings to Janice A. Radways’s romance readers and then the theory of Putnam. With every transformation of new shape of media and with passage of time all these scholars have presented the theme and thought according to their way and suggested different pattern of uses. In one way they are similar because they have presented their choice of media according to their own way and they are different at the same time that it was in different time period and absolutely covering a different medium.

Latest theories seem very contrary to such themes, and the classical literature feels like turning old but actually it is not. It is just changing its shapes and ways among the masses. The literature is as valid and authentic. It can be a true representative of the new media technologies if looked through their perspectives and angles of the authors. In my readings, I have gone through the
various stages and various time span of different media consumption and how people feel attached to it. I can clearly notice all the same patterns among different societies and cultures with very minor differences as noticed earlier.

The perspective of analyzing and describing people from different cultural backgrounds and their attachment with new media technology was of course challenging. Moreover over the analysis of usage of social media seems an inevitable aspect of research in ever changing media field. On the grounds that many of the people I have talked here in Sweden or elsewhere when they move to a new country, a new culture they naturally feel more need of socialization and more need to stay in contact with their friends and family members not only in a new place but also with home town friends as well.

It shouldn’t be a surprise to the readers that from my analysis it looks like everyone is using the Smartphone and everyone is on the social media. There is a certain category of people who actually are not the adopters of the technology and those were not the main concern of my study. I have tried my level best to stay un-partial and not to focus on any technology giants or any specific social media. Even though after trying very hard it seems after investigation that iOS users are ahead of any other platform users in Stockholm. As far as the social media is concerned Facebook is the most commonly used around the city and very popular among every age group for virtual interactions except for the respondents of labor groups. People from the professional group are also using LinkedIn but this is meant for this purpose actually.

It is not like every group is placed and works individually in time they interact with the people out of the circle as and when necessary in society. And that’s what makes them a complete human being and that’s what behavior makes it a complete city to live in where everyone is free to move around and have a free will to have their interactions. All this makes this city a multi cultural environment and better place for learning and growth.

There is also a fine point to be noticed that social media and all the other new forms of online socialization and new media and communication technologies is right now helping masses in finding their old friend no matter in which country they are from. There are many instances in different groups of people who are users of either social media or the Smartphones and other
state of the art latest technologies; they are in the process of finding their school or childhood friends now and then for two reasons.

Firstly the social media like Facebook is gaining popularity and more people are now getting on the platform of Facebook. Secondly in good old days there was no Facebook and there was no digital track record of every friend. Even in the developed countries the same phenomenon is observable but with the passage of time when Facebook or other social media along with new media technologies will be saturated in the masses the number of such instances will start reducing. And there is a possibility when such instances will cease to exist, most probably in the next generation. Because they start using the Facebook as they started going to school. And in extreme cases parents opens up a new Facebook profile by the name of their kids the day they were born.

No matter how much the technology will be advanced or what new gadgets will be there for our new generations. It seems like the trend of using the Smartphones, tablets and the social media is going to last for some time among the masses. It may change its color, shape, design, and range or come up with surprising technology advancements but in near future main idea is going to stay a little longer in the ever changing world or technology.

Looking through the different ages of means of communication this would have been very much interesting phenomenon to compare the commuting of 2012 with the commuting of 2002 in Stockholm. I believe that the phenomenon is so drastically changed that sometimes I feel that why I was not here in 2002. Then I could have been in a better position to state certain points clearly and more logically and with more concurrent arguments. However, I am leaving a wide space and place for the new researchers, or the people who actually have been commuting or living in big city like Stockholm and they have their personal observations about the usage of technology and shifts and transition among the masses in future.

The process of transition and transformation of culture and behavior of people is such silent that it’s hardly noticeable. Only the keen eye can clearly feel the difference but cannot exactly or explicitly describe it until or unless it’s out there and got wide spread popularity. But as the main theorist says that culture is a name of process it is not considered as a commodity.
For the young generation of 2012 it actually does not matter if the news is coming to them through social media, digital media or merely print media. As long as it is authentic and contains interest and it has to do with proximity and any one can prefer to read it. Traditional people are still stuck to the thought of having and reading a news paper on the table of breakfast every morning and for them it confirms the beginning of a day with everything perfect in it. At the same time only the next generation or further the next generation will be in better position to say or predict that the print media is an absolute technology.

For the concept that the world is going to be a global village seems like true when people from such diverse cultures ended up in big cities like Stockholm. But after going through all the different patterns of socialization and interactions of people in different cultures I came to the conclusion that still people are mainly focusing to stay in touch and in contact with the same circle of people they actually belong to.

I don’t know if it is the common language they share or is it the trust factor people share with each other being in the same community but it is there that every individual develop a natural group from the same cultural back ground. Inter cultural marriages have taken place in Stockholm and they are enjoying the happy married life. It will be very interesting to note how couples actually share each other’s culture. And how the different circles of the girl do accepts and accommodates the boy and how the friends and family circle of boy negotiates with the girl.

In my analysis I have mentioned that social interactions and social gathering of friends in the form of “significant others” cannot be treated similarly. Firstly because having a significant other is very important basic human need and for that. One can travel around the whole world. At the same time it is hard to find an instance in which someone had traveled half of the world among the participant groups just to meet and see a friend. Secondly it is important to note that having a significant other is a necessity of every individual even then everyone has to priorities the preferences so in my opinion such social meetings and personal meetings should be treated differently or defined properly.

For student group members their study comes first and for the people who are from the working class, their job and their work come first. Everyone moved in a new city for specific reasons in mind. At the same time for the people who are professionals for them their careers means the
most. Many of the professionals either in the process of finding and dating their significant others or already fixed so for them the new preferences and priorities are the profession and career.

I cannot say for sure but it seems like the people who are here for education purpose if they have to pursue their education at a higher level certainly their most social interactions in Stockholm will at some point be limited to social media only. And it will be very rare if someone move out of Stockholm for pursing higher education and then can keep coming back and forth between the friends circle in Stockholm and a new place, they actually will find new interactions. Its hard to imagine that these people would ever want to come back in the same circle of friends and enjoying the same life as they are now. Their friends will be online and their interactions will be online and if at all they have to come back it will be only for visit and not for the purpose to fit in to the same friends circle as they in now. Everyone will form a new circle in new cities most probably among the same community member they natively belong but the city will be different.

The same can be predicted about the group of people who are working here if they find a better working opportunity elsewhere they would probably move to that new place because their main motive of just being here in Stockholm is to make their fortune and earn their living. If favorable circumstances are available in any other place or just in case the circumstances turn out to be so unfavorable in Stockholm they are always of the view that they will find new places, new friends and new socialization along with the work.

For professional people they wanted to grow in their profession and they are always looking for better opportunities and they are of the view that it’s their career and profession which matters a lot to them. It is not only the profession or the career. It is also a learning process as well for them. They wanted to improve and enhance their knowledge and they wanted to learn from different cultural backgrounds, being in different multinational, multicultural organizations which will of course adds their worth and value in the long run.

What I have come to the conclusion that respondents of every group and within a certain group everyone has his or her own preferences and priorities on which they try to create the whole environment around them. This is environment or the circumstances which enables them to have
friends and family members and all the cultural requirements which every individual need or desire from a certain community.

Due to prevalence of such media technologies versatile people and multicultural environment it is hard to determine or point out one factor that this is time displacement is observable due to such advancements in society. However there are several indicators which should be kept in mind while concluding all this. In my opinion there must be more than just a displacement of social capital in the whole area of population, it can be covered at a large scale study in future.

What I can say at this small scale that something has happened to socialization. There is another factor which must not be forgotten that, with the passage of time we are grown older and our preferences and priorities with the passage of time used to change. And there is a possibility that everyone is of the view that they don’t have much of the friends or family members around them now, as they used to enjoy it before. And they see that everyone in their group is more or less of the same situation. So they don’t need to worry about because the phenomenon is about the change. And possibility is there that people of their age group and their own groups are more or less going through the same transition changes in a given culture.

Mostly people are comparing their socialization according to their own preferences and priority. There is a possibility that things are not like that and their tools for measurement are not correct, only the circumstances have lead people to be that way. For instance 10 years ago respondents from the students group were in school or high school and they were enjoying the big circle of friends as they don’t have it now.

That was the age, when the society and social responsibilities demand from them to play a different role. It would be very nice to go back to the school going children and have a research on the displacement of social capital and eroding of socialization. It is expected that the phenomenon will look differently and it is not badly eroding as we think or as it seem around us. It is not the society culture or traditions under transition with aging point of views of many have changed. And it has shifted the way of thinking and role playing have changed and what society demands from every individual has been changed.
This reminds the study by Lee and Kuo in which they have concluded that use of internet has actually increased their social gathering and their social interactions. May be it will not have effect on the social gathering and social interactions of the people among the groups I have chosen because everyone is very much busy in doing what so ever they are doing but at different age groups it may come to us differently.

The age factor plays vital role in the social interactions of every individual. And the age group I had discussed is such group where they have a lot more to do in their life and the only social interaction and only social relationship which for most of them to keep is the significant others and then very close and small family friends circle of their own.

Sometimes I feel that I must provide a little suggestion how to cross the barriers and hurdle in bridging the gape for better communication or socialization within a group or out of the group. But as this was not the aim of the study. I just had tried to unveil and describe the social interactions and how it is like in big cities like Stockholm.

No matter what philanthropist will keep doing to improve the level of the socialization they can increase the quality and can suggest various ways but they cannot improve the quantity of social gatherings or socialization due to the fact that it all revolves around different aspect of daily life and it is hard to change almost everything around us.

Thanks to social media that it had helped people to socialize virtually but there is a very famous quote which says “Welcome to Facebook, the place where people add you as a friend and walk past you in the street”. Facebook or alike social media has actually provided a platform for people to socialize and this has become an information education and entertainment tool. Still the factor of socialization depends upon every individual’s personal choices not the mediums.

Social media, new media technologies are just tools and gadgets and they will always be. If the social media is helping social interactions or it is just being a tool and gadget, which carries the information could be a different debate.
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