



## The Social Networks as Softwar Tool: "An Analysis of the Societal Security's Implications"

الشبكات الاجتماعية كأداة حرب نامية: "تحليل لتداعيات الأمن المجتمعي"

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### Abstract

According to the American professor of Harvard University "J. Nye", Soft power: "is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments", a concept that caught fire and went on to define the post-cold era, it comes from the attractiveness of country's culture, political ideals, and policies, what "Nye" calls a country's primary currencies.

And under the pressure of changing international order, "societal security" has become closely linked to national security, today securitization of societal security takes place as a reaction to new generation warfare, and with the increased impact of social media, is gradually changing the dynamics of soft power around the world, as (Face book) provide great resources of data, "new world power is information".

The study seeks to analyze and evaluate the impact of the social networks on the societal security, and the structure of this research paper consists of two main parts, firstly it discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework of societal security, while the second part will present: The Social Networks as a means of softwar and its issues on the security, then finally concluding the results of the study.



**Keywords:** softwar; securitization; societal security; social networks; identity issue; societal challenges.

### ملخص

وفقًا للأستاذ الأمريكي بجامعة هارفارد "ناي"، القوة الناعمة: "هي القدرة على الحصول على ما تريد من خلال الجاذبية بدلاً من الإكراه أو المدفوعات"، وهو مفهوم أثار الكثير من اللغط في حقبة ما بعد الحرب الباردة، وتأتى ذلك من جاذبية الثقافة السياسية للبلد. المثل والسياسات، ما يسميه "ناي" العملات الأساسية للبلد.

وتحت ضغط النظام الدولي المتغير، أصبح "الأمن المجتمعي" مرتبطًا ارتباطًا وثيقًا بالأمن القومي، واليوم يتم إضفاء الطابع الأمني على الأمن المجتمعي كرد فعل على حروب الجيل الجديد، ومع التأثير المتزايد لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، يعمل على تغيير الديناميكيات تدريجيًا من القوة الناعمة في جميع أنحاء العالم، حيث يوفر (فيس بوك) موارد كبيرة من البيانات، "القوة العالمية الجديدة هي المعلومات".

تسعى الدراسة إلى تحليل وتقييم تأثير الشبكات الاجتماعية على الأمن المجتمعي، وتتكون بنية هذه الورقة البحثية من جزأين رئيسيين، الأول يناقش الإطار النظري والمفاهيمي للأمن المجتمعي، بينما يعرض الجزء الثاني: الشبكات الاجتماعية كوسيلة للقوة الناعمة وقضاياها ذات البعد الأمني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحرب الناعمة؛ التأمين؛ الأمن المجتمعي؛ الشبكات الاجتماعية؛ قضية الهوية؛ التحديات المجتمعية.

### Introduction:

One of the main aspects of communication is "the social networking services" such as (Face book, Twitter, Whatsapp, YouTube, LinkedIn). And social networking is a site that focuses on enabling the building of social relations among people; whom make connections for business purposes, sharing information and videos. The cyberspace has become, an essential part of the contemporary information society especially that



social networks have paved the way for multi-way communication which allows anyone to create, share and disseminate news and information.

Social networking sites can be used as a soft power instrument, by the dissemination of fake news which causes a lot of rumors trading and more complex issues at the societal level as identity, coherence, inclusion etc. The study seeks to answer the following question:

*How does social networking impact on societal security?*

### **1: An Analytical and conceptual grip on "Societal Security"**

The concept of "societal security" has been elaborated by different schools of theory of international relations.

#### **1-1: "Societal Security" theoretically**

There's a common agreement that the first author to put forward the need to incorporate "societal aspects" into the "security notion" was "Barry Buzan", he explores diverse types of relations which are formed by the state with other actors in the security domain, he questions to what extent threats to "societal security" come from within or outside the state. (B. Buzan, 1991, p 123).

The introduction of a societal sector in the security concept was welcomed by other scholars, as one of the attempts to widen the borders of the security notion but at the same time the essence of the societal aspects of security was not elaborated sufficiently.

A group of scholars from the "*Copenhagen school*" (Review of International Studies, 1996, pp 81- 93). in the breakthrough study identity migration and the new security agenda in Europe. (O. Waever, B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup, 1993, p 42).

During the cold war era the "societal security" was taken over by "national security", thus security of society was fully dependent on interstate relations, after the end of the cold war research on societal



security reflected ongoing transformations in world affairs, a graving number of new nation-states and new types of relations between different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, as a result of which the identity issues and respect for human rights including minority rights became the core of academic deliberation.

As “B. Buzan” and “O. Waever”, and “J. De Wilde” described it: “. in Europe, Societal Security is mainly about nations and nation like ethnic groups, minorities, religions and Europe sometimes is perceived in nation-building terms”. (Seventh framework programme European Union, 2012, p p 8-10).

Societal Security was **de-securitized** (Contexto Internacional, 2019, p 211) in order to allow society and social groups to take control over their identity with non-military means. Nowadays securitization of Societal Security takes place as a reaction to new-generation warfare such as in Ukraine and Syria increased flows of migration and consequences of regional and sub-regional conflicts.

### 1-2: Definition of “Societal Security”

There is no single objective definition of Societal Security, its conception comes closest to the notion of society as “the community of people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws and organizations”, some authors equate “societal security” with the security society at the level of the nation state at large.

Societal Security relates to the capability of a society to preserve its essential characteristics in the face of variable circumstances and despite the potential or actual threats. (Hough, 2004, p 106).

It exists when communities of any kind identify a threat to their survival as a community. (O. Waever, 2008, p 582).



“Waever” highlights the candidates for additional sectors such as gender and religion. It concerns the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats. (Hough, 2004, pp 106-123).

This security is threatened when “societies perceive a threat in identity terms” (O. Waever, B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup, P. Lemaitre, 1993, p 23). Societal Security is the new dimension that meant to bridge the gap between state security and human safety. (Report CRN- Workshop, 2004, p 19). “Societal security” is concerned about threats to a society’s identity “if a society loses its identity will not survive as a society” (Waever, B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup, P. Lemaitre, 1993, p 23).

It deals with the perception of threats and the society’s reaction to the real or perceived threats to its identity and cohesion. Both types of threats to its identity could be real or only perceived ones, but as long as they generate a reaction or contra-reaction are parts of the proxy-determinants in analyzing the societal security, in the same manner, determinants of societal security could be internal (intra-societal factors) or external, bilateral, multinational, sub-national or regional factors). (I. Chifu, 2009). Through the societies have their own unique identity, but there are networks of different types of relationship that have impact on groups, and also the state.

## **2. “Social Networking” challenges:**

The usage of online “social networking website” is growing rapidly, millions of members of these websites publicly articulate mutual “friendship relations” and “professional relations”, (Face Book and Twitter) are some examples of these new technology approaches.

### **2-1: “Social networks” .... definition and development**



The term “social networking sites” and social media sites have already been loosely and widely used in press articles, press releases from the sites, and the features of such sites are rapidly evolving. Social networkings are web sites that allow people to stay connected with others in online communities.

Historically social networking sites started before social media sites:

(A.Vala, O. Rohani, S. Hock, 2010, pp 41-53).

- *Classmates.com* (1995).
- *SixDegrees.com* (1997).
- *Friendster* (2002).
- *Myspace.fr* (2004).
- *Face Book / Meta* (2004)
- *YouTube* (2005).

“Social networks” influence and affect societal security; availability of the internet has substantial input on our daily life, which became online! We communicate, look for information, we express ourselves, support or protest against some issues. “J. A. Barnes” introduced the term “Social networks” which helps to understand the behavior of people in large and complex societies. (J.C. Mitchell, 1974, p 279).

According to this British Scientist “Social networks” is composed of points (representing people / groups) “some of which are joined by lines”, which indicate which “people interact with each other”. (J. A. Barnes, 1990, p72).

For “Barnes” networks can be used as an analytical tool, which allows us to understand what happens (our expectations). (J. A. Fuhse, 2009, p 52). So, there are at least two actors linked by direct, symmetric or





intermediary relationship, if it takes at least two for a social network to be built, then not all social media are social networks. We should differentiate between the two concepts:

➤ ***Social Media:***

“Social Media” / “2.O”: define activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. “Social media tools use the wisdom of the crowds” to collaboratively connect online information. (Bryer, pp 73-79).

➤ ***Social Networks:***

Have several characteristics which include creation of a public profile within a defined system, the ability to connect with others and user-generated-content. (W. Mossbergu, 2013, pp 315- 358).

The advent of social media has revolutionized the capacity of digital platforms to connect people, allowing their constant interaction and cooperation, bringing their voices to a broader public, it's assumed that social media play a key role in diffusing information and the claims of political groups. (A. Caleraro, 2018, p 782). Politicians has been possible since the advent of the internet, however diffusing information through social media makes control over this process even more difficult than is with traditional media.

## 2-2: “Social networks” as a means of soft power

Today with many different variations, social media is in the highest level of its history. Socialization in cyber social networks takes more place than the intensity of real-world social activities. In order to understand the influence and the wide spread of social media we must analyze its features which make it powerful:

- ***Accessibility:*** makes it more preferable for users.



- *The spread of social media makes it very appealing.*
- **Interactivity:** *Multiple parties can socialize in social media in an efficiently interactive way.*
- **Reach:** *there's unlimited access to materials in the internet and social media users can decide their communication ways, audience and who can reach to their messages. (A. Caleraro, 2018, Ibidem).*

All these characteristics have made social media more preferable and advantageous to the majority of individuals, social groups, and societies today.

Social networks affect various levels of security, on politics it plays a role in facilitating the mobilization and coordination of social movements like in (Arab Spring), it's also used for supporting protests performed by social movements, where social networking are used to decentralize the diffusing of alternative info to create adversarial positions. (V. Tapriyal, P.Kanwar, 2012, p p 28- 29).

At the societal level some social groups by using social networks can unfold important information such us (Attitude, beliefs, values, motivations), offline relations between different groups can find expression on social networks which became as source of measuring different aspects and trends of societal security and social cohesion. (A. Calderaro, and Kavada, 2013).

There's another potential societal problematic, the "identity issue" that endanger the social group in its values and social norms, traditions symbols, linguistics and arts, societal identity can be threatened by a large number of factors, we can summarize the major societal threats in: (Z. Ozolina, 2016, P 126).





- **Cultural cleansing:** limiting important institutions, cultural symbols that are significant for the group's identity.
- **Ethnic cleansing:** Violence, crimes, deportation of members of a society by another society.

Though societies have their own identity, but also there are networks, that have impact on society.

### **Conclusion:**

The "societal security" concept explains how society can be protected from potential risks and threats, and it is concerned about threats to a society's identity, in other words societies are constituted by a sense of social identity.

This research paper concludes that Social networks affect directly national security, and this threat includes stirring sectarian strife, fighting cultural identity and stirring up internal conflicts. Finally, we suggest the following recommendations:

- Intensifying the supervision of what is published on social networks platforms and deleting all sorts of security threats, such as (extremist ideas, rumors and publications that incite to strife).
- Exploiting social networks platforms to spread awareness that contributes to achieving societal security.

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