**NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY**

**I CAN'T STAND LOSING YOU: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF
AFFILIATION MOTIVATION ON POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE OF
FACEBOOK USERS**

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Running head: AFFILIATION MOTIVATION AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

Using the Cognitive Mediation Model (CMM) as a framework, this dissertation examines the impact of affiliation motivation on political knowledge of Facebook users, in addition to the motivation and information processing variables already included in CMM. Affiliation motivation can be defined as the need to establish and maintain relationships. A systematic review was conducted to identify gaps in extant literature, which was followed by the administration of two surveys.

First, the systematic review of academic articles examined motivations associated with political knowledge in extant research. Several motivations were identified including surveillance gratification. However, affiliation motivation has not yet been examined as a predictor for political knowledge. This can probably be attributed to the fact that most of the research was conducted in the pre-social networking sites era. To test the hypotheses, two surveys in India were conducted in an election year in India.

The preliminary survey ($N = 492$) conducted immediately before the election captured participants' historical, civic and current knowledge. Structural equation modeling was used for analysis. While surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation were associated with information processing behavior, the latter did not predict political knowledge. Following this study, the battery of knowledge items was refined and new items were added.

Following the general election, the main study ($N = 1020$) was conducted in two cities in India. The analysis found that surveillance gratification was associated with

attention and elaboration and affiliation motivation was associated with elaboration. Attention to political content was significantly associated with political knowledge. In addition, the moderation analysis demonstrated that affiliation motivation moderates the path from attention to elaboration and attention to political knowledge. Individuals with a strong affiliation motivation are significantly more likely to elaborate on political content when they pay attention to it and they are also more likely to gain knowledge as a result of attention to such content.

Finally, both surveys revealed that surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation were strongly correlated on Facebook. Therefore, the inference is that political knowledge accumulation in a socially networked world is *socially* driven. It can no longer be thought of as a purely cognitive process. Affiliation motivation serves as the primary motivation on Facebook and individuals with a strong affiliation motivation are likely to accumulate more knowledge when they stumble upon and attend to political content on the site.

A third study examining the impact of CMM on political behavior was also conducted using regression analysis. Surveillance gratification, attention, elaboration and political knowledge were significant predictors of traditional political participation, while surveillance gratification, attention and elaboration predicted political activity on Facebook. Limitations and future directions are discussed.

Keywords: Political knowledge, motivations, Cognitive Mediation Model, affiliation motivation, Facebook, social networking sites

Chapter One Introduction

The Internet serves as an important avenue for information acquisition and dissemination. Research indicates that an increasing number of individuals are using the Internet to seek information and to express their views (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Its use is not merely limited to searching for or reading information on party websites. It has transformed into something more inclusive. Individuals can blog, tweet, share stories, update status messages, all of which can lead to the abetment of political dialogue (Chen, 2010). Since citizen engagement is one of the prerequisites for an effective democracy (Barber, 1969), the significance of this development cannot be underestimated.

The Internet has also been examined as a public space which has expanded and modified civic engagement and citizenship (Dahlberg 2001; Fraser, 2001; Wiklund, 2005). Groups or communities of users who have common interests focus on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as tools for change (Thampi & Kawlra, 2011). In addition, these technologies play a significant role in several other aspects of people's lives; their purchasing of goods and services, their employment and education, entertainment/leisure choices, along with their involvement in civic or political affairs (Seale, 2009).

These technologies also reduce barriers in communication and “level the playing field” (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p. 14). Due to the easy access to information and easy dissemination (Dimaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001; Putnam 2000), power has shifted from institutions to individual citizens who make up the electorate. Citizens can form communities or bond with geographically dispersed individuals who share similar interests. During the Arab Spring, citizens in the Middle

East used Facebook, blogs and Twitter to communicate with others within and outside the region (The New York Times, 2011, May 26).

Furthermore, these technologies have mitigated the costs and inconvenience that acted as barriers to political participation. Individuals can donate money to a candidate or party at the click of a button (Kenski & Stroud, 2006) and can register or vote online (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). This provides special help to the elderly or the disabled who do not have to travel to the polling booth to cast their vote (Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Norris, 1999).

Finally, the single most important quality of ICTs is that they provide extensive information on any issue, candidate or topic. No longer is one restricted to the twenty-two minute news segments that present news through the lens of an anchor or reporter (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). Citizens can now personalize the news at convenient intervals and search for news that interests them the most (Westen, 2000). The huge volume of political sites allows news to be available round the clock, which enable users to control the type of news they receive (Davis, 1999). Furthermore Kenski and Stroud (2006) emphasize that the hyperlinks and search engines enable users to delve deeper into an issue.

However, the rise of new technologies almost always leads to concerns about negative effects (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009) and ICTs have not been an exception. Issues raised by scholars range from the importance of access to the inequalities of access (Hoffman & Novak, 1998; Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001; Katz, Rice, & Aspden, 2001; Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). Research shows that demographic factors such as age, gender, education, income, and ethnicity (Bucy, 2000; Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009; Loges & Jung, 2001; Rice & Haythornthwaite, 2006; Wilson, Wallin, & Reiser, 2003) are crucial determinants of

access. In addition, Wei and Hindman (2011) highlight the fact that informational use of the Internet is associated with a greater knowledge gap than is access to the net. For a vast number of people mere access has ceased to be an issue; it is what they do online that is of prime importance. They (Wei & Hindman, 2011) articulate that education, a proxy of SES, is the only factor that predicts informational use of the Internet and that "the usage divide is more evident between SES segments than is the access divide of the Internet" (p. 132). Consequently, the knowledge gap is far greater among the Internet users than among traditional media users.

Scheufele and Nisbet (2002) and Norris (2001) further argue that most citizens who access the Internet to obtain information or to make a donation are already engaged and motivated, thereby implying that the information-rich continue to get richer (Brundidge & Rice, 2009), while the disenfranchised are left behind (Norris, 2001). Delli Carpini (2000) reiterates this point and affirms that the greatest impact will be on citizens who are already motivated as it makes their involvement easier (Johnson & Kaye, 2003)

Nonetheless, some scholars point out that these media offer users many benefits and features that enhance availability and usability (Hoffman & Kornweitz, 2011). This has become more feasible now due to smart phone technology, which has transformed the mobile phone into a "sophisticated computer-like device" (Campbell & Kwak, 2010, p. 541), thus allowing constant connectivity. A review of literature shows that the general impact of Internet technologies on the political landscape will primarily be positive (Dong, Toney, & Giblin, 2010; Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Tian, 2011; Vitak, et al., 2011; Wang, 2007). However, the Internet is not a monolith and the technologies that it has given rise to are quite diverse that range from voice calling and photo sharing to blogging

and social networking. This dissertation will focus on social networking sites, especially Facebook, as a platform.

Significance of Study

While extensive research has been done on *what follows* the political use of Facebook or the *effects* of political Facebook use, such as civic engagement or political participation (Vitak et al., 2011; Yoo & Gil de Zuniga, 2014; Zhang et al., 2010), there has hardly been much research on *what drives* users to consume political content on Facebook. This study seeks to examine the factors that lead to political use of Facebook. In the pre-SNS era, scholars from the Uses and Gratifications paradigm have identified motivations or psychological orientations that lead to media consumption (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Rubin, 1994). Motivations such as surveillance, escape, entertainment, etc. have been identified to trigger media consumption. Then there are scholars such as Eveland (2001a), and colleagues (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003), who have focused on motivations exclusively from the standpoint of political knowledge. Though the findings from this body of research are enlightening, they might not completely explain the motivating factors that are associated with Facebook use. This study attempts to fill this gap. It uses the Cognitive Mediation Model (CMM; Eveland, 2001a) as a theoretical framework to examine how motivations such as surveillance gratification and the need for affiliation might drive political content consumption on Facebook, which would subsequently be associated with political knowledge and participation. By applying CMM to Facebook, the study attempts to extend the model conceptually. As technologies evolve and patterns of news consumption change, it necessitates some modification in theory construction as well as application. Hence, the application of CMM to SNS like Facebook will greatly enhance its theoretical strength and scope. In

fact, other theories that were conceptualized during the traditional media era such as agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) have successfully been applied to a social media context (Bohannon, 2012; Guo, 2012; Jacobson, 2013; Meraz, 2011). In a social network, an individual does not consume news in isolation; he gathers the news information from his contacts and is hence exposed to associations among news items made by them. Consequently, the application of agenda-setting theory to social networks has necessitated the introduction of new variables, thereby rendering it more complex than originally intended. In a similar manner, the application of CMM to Facebook may make it imperative to include new variables that are relevant to a social network, while re-examining existing ones.

This study introduces *affiliation motivation* as a key variable and attempts to assess the impact of this motivation on Facebook users' political knowledge. Affiliation motivation refers to the motivation to bond with others. Since Facebook is a "relationship-oriented" network, this study asserts that affiliation motivation is associated with users' political knowledge and participation. Yoo and Gil de Zuniga (2014) have already shown that Facebook use is associated with civic and current knowledge. While their study is helpful in understanding the phenomenon, it does not provide a rationale for it. This study suggests that affiliation motivation is the crucial factor; it predicts consumption of political content on the site, which is then associated with political knowledge and participation.

By adding this variable to CMM, this dissertation enhances the model conceptually. It incorporates a 'social' aspect, which is characteristic of an SNS like Facebook and without which the study on knowledge accumulation on Facebook will not be complete. While prior studies on CMM (e.g., Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004) have included other motivations such as guidance or need for cognition, those could

generally be thought of as 'cognitive'. In the era of social networking sites, it is not only the 'cognitive' aspect but also the 'social' aspect that plays a role in media consumption (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Therefore, the inclusion of this variable helps to provide a more complete picture.

Furthermore, this study gathers its data from India, which is an understudied population. While prior research based on US samples has helped researchers glean important insights, they only convey a part of the story. In their seminal work, Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) have pointed out that nearly 96% of survey respondents in top publications are citizens of Western liberal democracies. They refer to this population as WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic). In fact, a large number of these studies base their findings on responses given by the first year undergraduate students in American universities. In order to remedy this bias, Henrich and his colleagues (2010) recommended "expanding sample diversity" (p. 49). This point of view is supported by many others, including social media scholars. In their review of Facebook research, Caers and colleagues (2013, p. 995) remarked, "It is striking how many articles are based on samples of US students, often with low numbers of respondents. With millions of users worldwide, research on Facebook should be taken one step further, expanding research to multiple countries and settings and integrating research findings." Though there have been some attempts made by researchers in Asia to study the use and impact of social media in different parts of the continent (Kim 2008; Kim & Lee, 2011; Lee & Oh, 2013; Skoric & Kwan, 2011; Skoric & Poor, 2013), India has largely been ignored. Therefore, by soliciting data from India, this study hopes to provide a more complete picture. Even though this dissertation uses a sample comprising college students, the

fact that it is drawn from a different context ought to shed some more light on this topic.

Finally, in contrast to the US, where the educated segment is politically engaged (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), the educated section of the Indian population tends not to be. Past data indicate that the poor, rural and minorities vote (Election Commission of India) whereas their more educated and urban counterparts do not. This illustrates the fact that every political phenomenon in the US cannot easily be generalized to other populations, thereby highlighting the importance of studying other samples and their unique contexts. This study investigates Facebook use among the Indian youth and argues that social media might act as a game-changer. The dissertation contains the following sections – it defines political knowledge; explains affiliation motivation; articulates the importance of social networking sites (SNS); provides a background of India and delineates the development of the Internet in the country and Facebook use among the Indian youth; presents and explains the Cognitive Mediation Model followed by the method and results; and concludes with a discussion of the impact of motivations on political knowledge and behavior.

Chapter Two Political Knowledge

A politically knowledgeable electorate is crucial for a democracy to function effectively. *Political knowledge* can be defined as “the range of factual information about politics that is stored in long-term memory” (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p. 10) and can be acquired through formal education, political talk, and consumption of traditional media and the Internet (Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002). In fact, a combination of these factors can be most beneficial. Purportedly, political knowledge is the highest among educated citizens who are exposed to both print and television news (Wade & Schramm, 1969; Norris, 2000). Others (Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Kenski & Stroud, 2006) speak of the advantages of the Internet when it comes to seeking news online. The Internet allows individuals to seek information at any given time, solicit different perspectives of an issue and delve deeper through the use of hyperlinks.

Political knowledge helps individuals understand their interests, promotes support for democratic values, facilitates political participation, and deters individuals from alienation of civic life (Galston, 2001). Habermas (1985) pointed out that merely increasing the aggregate knowledge of a society is not as important as is its equitable distribution among all members of the population (Converse, 1964). Considering that India comprises culturally and linguistically distinct groups of citizens, the importance of proper dissemination of knowledge cannot be undermined.

Furthermore, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) suggest that there are three factors that citizens should know about politics: “the rules of the game, the substance of politics, and people and parties” (p. 65), wherein the “the rules of the game” stands

for institutions, structure and processes of the government, the “substance of politics” constitutes political facts and conditions surrounding important domestic and foreign affairs issues, and a knowledge of “people and parties” enables the citizenry to understand where government representatives and leaders stand on issues.

In a similar vein, Barber (1969) states that political knowledge involves an understanding of “what government is and does” (p. 38). While the first attribute examines the basic structure of the government, such as separation of powers, majority rule, and civil liberties, the second focuses on processes and issues. The citizenry is expected to have knowledge about the issues, the alternatives proposed, and the consequences of the alternatives. In order to have such a nuanced understanding, it is imperative that citizens exhibit the ability to not only discriminate among various actors and arguments but also be able to use abstract concepts to organize political ideas and thoughts (Neuman, 1981), both of which are determined by the level of their political sophistication.

Then there are a number of factors associated with the individual that might aid or impede one’s attempt to learn from the news. Education, prior knowledge and interest can all function as predictors of political knowledge (Price & Zaller, 1993; Tichenor, Donahue, & Olien, 1970). Tichenor et al., (1970) articulated that socio-economic status impacted political knowledge such that high SES individuals acquired political information faster than low SES individuals thereby leading to an increasing knowledge gap. In order to better understand attributes that can widen or close the knowledge gap, scholars suggest that three causal factors ought to be studied- “transituational deficits,” “differences in distribution of motivation,” and “imposed and true ceilings” (Ettema & Kline, 1977, p. 22).

Despite the advent of the 24-hour news channels and the resultant deluge of information surrounding the 21st century individual, the fact is that many still remain uninformed (Mindich, 2005). So the salient question is this: what are the factors that encourage some people to acquire news information, but not others? Kwak (1999) asserts that motivations play an important role. Motivations are “cognitive representations” of what one wants to achieve in a certain situation (Wentzel, 2000, p. 105) and drives the individual to participate in activities that might lead to the desired outcome (Kunda, 2000). In fact, motivations were thought to be the salient attribute responsible for variation in knowledge levels within a population (Elenbaas, et al., 2013). Motivated individuals tend to attend to political information when they stumble upon it; they are also more likely to spend more time processing this information when compared to non-motivated ones (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Hence, when the influx of information increases, motivated individuals tend to use the situation to their advantage (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970).

While political scientists examine interest in politics as the driving force behind the effort to gather news information (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Ettema & Kline, 1977; Holmes, 2004; Genova & Greenberg, 1979; Luskin, 1990), communication scholars are more concerned with gratifications for specific media use. Indeed, Uses and Gratifications research (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972; Payne, Severn, & Dozier, 1988; Ruggiero, 2000) suggests that motivations like surveillance, entertainment, social utility, escape etc. result in goal-oriented media consumption, with surveillance being the primary motivation directing news media consumption (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003; Levy & Windahl, 1984; McLeod & Becker, 1974; Rubin & Perse, 1987). Katz et al., (1973) highlighted that surveillance motivation

served as the driving force for consuming news media and it stemmed from "a more basic need to develop one's cognitive mastery of the environment" (p. 513). But if viewed through a bifunctional lens, surveillance and enjoyment happen to be the two most important motivations for consuming media content (Katz et al., 1974). Other Uses & Gratifications scholars (Pietila, 1969; Schramm, 1949) have supported this dichotomous view, drawing on the differences between the two. They argue that while surveillance inherently feeds the informational or educational need of the individual, the other incorporates the escapist tendency on the part of the viewer. In the relation to Facebook, this dichotomous view would probably still hold but with one crucial difference- affiliation, along with surveillance, would serve as an important motivation for media consumption on the site. Surveillance gratification still serves the same function as it did in the era of traditional media, which is to monitor the environment. Affiliation motivation fulfills their need to form and maintain relationships. It is this need that compels users to cognitively engage with their friends' posts rather than the content itself. Of course, this does not imply that in the era of traditional media individuals were devoid of the need to bond and connect. It was equally important then but did not play a role in the consumption of media.

Furthermore, some scholars believe that participating in an activity for the sake of satisfaction, rather than for a goal-oriented purpose, can lead to a better learning outcome (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Motivations that users bring with them for media consumption can subsequently determine the effects (David, 2009). If individuals read a news article on Facebook and comments on it because it has been posted by a friend, they might actually learn more from it.

In order to get a clearer picture of motivations studied in relation to political knowledge, a systematic review of journal articles examining motivations was

conducted. Search terms such as “political knowledge,” “uses and gratifications,” “gratifications sought,” “motivations” etc. were entered into Communication and Mass Media Complete and Academic Search Premier databases (see Figure 1 for full list of search terms). In addition, web searches were conducted on Google Scholar. Studies that specifically examined motivations as antecedents to political knowledge were included in the review. In order to facilitate comparison, only quantitative studies mentioning *p* - values were included. The publication date ranged from 1978 onwards, with the most recent ones having been published in the year 2013.

The following search terms were used in various combinations:

Uses and gratifications, gratifications*, motives, motivation*, surveillance*, need for cognition, affiliation*, communication*, social*, social network*, mass media, SNS, Facebook, Twitter, political interest, interest in politics, political knowledge, predictor*

Figure 1. List of search terms entered in databases.

Figure 2. Flowchart for systematic review.

The systematic review (Figure 2) began with more than 700 studies. After sifting through the studies, only 17 studies were found to meet the inclusion criteria, all of which had used survey data. The majority of the studies were conducted in Midwestern United States, two in Europe and the remaining two in Korea. The sample sizes ranged from 210 to 1902. Ten studies relied on cross sectional data,

while one consisted of a mix of panel and cross sectional data. The remaining were panel studies. The number of motivations examined varied among the studies; some (e.g., Genova & Greenberg, 1979) examined a single motivation, while others looked at a few. The following motivations have been discussed:

- 1) surveillance/need for orientation/need for information/information acquisition.
- 2) political interest.
- 3) communication utility/social utility/anticipated interaction.
- 4) entertainment/recreation/diversion.
- 5) need for cognition.
- 6) guidance.
- 7) need for evaluation.
- 8) behavioral involvement.
- 9) escape.
- 10) boredom.

Fifteen studies (Table 1) focused exclusively on traditional media consumption (radio, print and television), one examined both traditional media use and general Internet use and the remaining study gathered data from a social networking site (Twitter). While many motivations have been discussed in these studies, the review indicated that the need for affiliation has not been highlighted as a motivation for political knowledge. Perhaps that can be attributed to the fact that most of these studies have examined traditional media as a context, where surveillance motivation or a similar need triggers news consumption. Among these studies, only one pertains to social media (Twitter). As the following chapter elucidates, Twitter and Facebook are quite different in their affordances. Facebook is a “relationship-driven network” (Kim, Hsu & Gil de Zuniga, 2013, p.502) where attention to the news can be

explained by one's need to connect with 'friends'. This study takes an in-depth look at affiliation motivation and its association with political knowledge.

Table 1. Systematic review of journal articles

Author/date	Journal Title	Country	Sample	Type of Study	Motivations	Media	Significance
Gantz (1978)	Journalism Quarterly	USA	$N = 543$	Cross-sectional	Diversion/recreation and information acquisition;	Radio, print	Both significant
Genova & Greenberg (1979)	Public Opinion Quarterly	USA	$N = 253$	Panel	Political interest;	Radio, print	Significant
			Median = 18-30 years				
McLeod & McDonald (1985)	Communication Research	USA	$N = 589$	Cross-sectional study;	Surveillance, communication utility;	TV, print	Both significant
			$M = 41$ years				
Luskin (1990)	Political Behavior	USA	N not mentioned	Cross sectional	Political interest	Print media	Significant
			$M = 44.9$ years				
Horstmann (1991)	European Journal of	Germany		Panel (3 studies);	Political Interest,	Radio, print,	Political interest.
	Communication			First two were national,	Need for information	TV	significant
				third was a local sample			Need for information NS
Vincent & Basil (1997)	Journal of Broadcasting	USA	$N = 1209$	Cross sectional	Surveillance	TV, print	Surveillance significant

	&Electronic Media		Median = 23 years		Escape		Others NS
					Boredom		
					Entertainment		
Kwak (1999)	Communication Research	USA	<i>N</i> = 421	Cross sectional;	Political interest,	TV, print	Both significant
			Median = 40 years	telephone interviews	Behavioral involvement		
Eveland (2001)	Communication Research	USA	<i>N</i> (1985) = 512	3 separate samples	Surveillance	TV, print	Significant
			<i>N</i> (1986) = 567				
			<i>N</i> (1996) = 299 (WI)				
			Mean, median not				
			Reported				
Eveland (2002)	Journalism & Mass	USA	<i>N</i> = 480	Cross sectional	Surveillance	TV, print	Significant
	Communication		Mean, median not				
	Quarterly		Reported				
Eveland, Shah & Kwak (2003)	Communication Research	USA	<i>N</i> (1999) = 3388	Panel	Surveillance	TV, print	Significant
			<i>N</i> (June, 2000) = 1902				
			<i>N</i> (Nov, 2000) = 1315				
			Median = 45-54 years				
Eveland (2004)	Political Communication	USA	<i>N</i> (Study 1) = 1555	ANES	Communicatory Utility	TV, print	Significant
			<i>M</i> = 47.21 years				
			<i>N</i> (Study 2) = 210				
			For the panel study:				

			N (wave 1) = 146				
			N (wave 2) = 97				
			M = 44 years				
Beaudoin & Thorson (2004)	Communication Research	USA	N = 378	Cross sectional	Surveillance		NS
			M = 45.06 years		Anticipated Interaction	TV, print	Significant
					Guidance		NS
Liu & Eveland (2005)	Journalism & Mass	USA	N (pre election, 2000) = 1807	Panel	NFC, Political interest	TV, print	NFC non significant
	Communication		M = 47 years	ANES 2000 and 2004			Political interest significant
	Quarterly		N (pre election, 2004) = 1212				
			N (post election, 2004) = 1066				
			M = 47 years				
Kim & Kim (2007)	Asian Journal of	Korea	N = 217	Cross sectional	Surveillance		Internet is significant for surveillance,
	Communication		M = 16.3 years		Guidance		social utility,
					Social Utility		guidance
					Entertainment		Social utility most strongly

David (2009)	Journal of Communication	USA	2 surveys	2 panels-respondents	NFC	TV, print	Significant
			$N = 1684$, $M = 42$ years	selected countrywide	Need for evaluation		
			$N = 2183$, $M = 44$ years	Electronic Dialogue &	Surveillance		
				Healthcare Dialogue	Social Utility		
				Projects	Interest		
Elenbaas, et al. (2013)	Political Communication	Netherlands	$N = 1127$	Panel	Political interest	TV, print	Significant
			$M = 49.50$ years	online questionnaire			
Lee & Oh (2013)	Journal of Communication	Korea	$N = 306$	Cross sectional;	Need for Orientation	SNS (Twitter)	Significant for heavy users
			$M = 33.44$ years	Online surveys used			NS for light Twitter users

Measurement of Knowledge

In order to measure individuals' political knowledge, political scientists use three main types of factual questions (Jennings, 1996). The first category comprises questions that test citizens' textbook knowledge of the government and identification of key figures and political parties, such as the identity of the Vice President, the party holding the majority in the House of Representatives, the Speaker of the House, and so on. The second category is knowledge of current events or "surveillance" facts – facts that are likely to change depending on policy, for example, "Last year, Congress passed a law requiring the federal government to balance its budget within 5 years. What is this law known as?" The third category consists of historical issues that are relevant to a nation's collective memory and allow citizens to place current events in perspective (Jennings, 1996). An example of that would be, "What does the Civil Rights Act of 1964 promote?"

Even though scholars have traditionally used surveys to assess a citizen's knowledge of politics, a couple of factors can render this method to be somewhat problematic. First, a single item cannot capture an individual's knowledge level adequately (Mondak & Davis, 2001). They point out that there are four behavioral states that knowledge questions are supposed to identify – informed, partially informed, misinformed and completely uninformed. When an individual answers a question correctly, it could be that he/she knew the subject matter (was informed). Or it could very well be an educated guess (partially informed) or a correct blind guess (uninformed). Therefore, Mondak and Davis (2001) state that if an uninformed individual guesses correctly and another incorrectly, their scores will differ due to chance, not because of a difference in knowledge.

Second, traditional surveys are usually not administered when citizens make political decisions, that is, during election time. Hence, these questions cannot capture the factual knowledge individuals acquired in order to reach that decision (Prior & Lupia, 2008). In fact, Prior and Lupia (2008) note that those who did administer knowledge questions during this period found that the percentage of individuals answering questions correctly increases as the election draws closer. They declare that after the voting period is over, it may be “cognitively inefficient” for the latter to remember these facts (p. 179). It is likely that individuals sometimes forget information that they previously were aware of (Lodge, Steenbergen, & Braun, 1995). These issues could be rectified by administering surveys with multi-item scales during election time. Mondak and Davis (2001) reiterate that using multiple items can weed out such problems; they insist, “an uninformed student who guesses on each question will answer some items correctly, but the uninformed student will receive a lower score than the partially informed student, and the partially informed student will fare worse than the fully informed student” (p. 203).

Mondak and colleagues (Mondak, 2000; 2001; Mondak & Anderson, 2003; 2004; Mondak & Davis, 2001) have also discussed at length the wisdom of including “Don't Know” (DK) responses while measuring political knowledge. Mondak (2000; 2001) points out that political knowledge surveys should follow best practices in educational testing and discourage or exclude DK responses. He states that DK responses invite, “a guessing response set in which respondents’ scores vary as a systematic function of personality traits” (Mondak, 2001, p. 205). Because some individuals are more likely respond to a question based on a guess, the difference in knowledge scores may depend on their “propensity to guess” and not on actual knowledge. However, through their experiment, Sturgis, Allum, and Smith (2008)

demonstrated that DK responses do not conceal any partial knowledge and that the forced-choice method that Mondak spoke in favor of did not statistically fare any better. They recommend that knowledge questions continue to include “Don’t Know” as part of the response set.

Complying with their suggestion and to reduce the chance of error as cautioned by Prior and Lupia (2008), this study uses two surveys with multi-item scales, both of which were administered around election-time. Furthermore, following the recommendation laid out by Sturgis and his colleagues (2008), the knowledge questions in both the surveys included “Don’t Know” as a response item. Finally, prior work on political knowledge has, for the most part, focused on capturing current knowledge. Civic knowledge has largely been ignored. However, Yoo and Gil de Zuniga (2014) have found that political use of Facebook is associated with both types of political knowledge. Therefore, this study examines both types of knowledge. Finally, an extensive search on political knowledge among Indians revealed a recently published study by Kuotsu (2016), who had used a battery of current knowledge topics to capture political knowledge. The respondents were asked to identify public figures and institutions and answer questions related to current issues. Though the surveys conducted for this dissertation predates Kuotsu's (2016) study, the type of questions asked are not dissimilar.

The following chapter discusses affiliation motivation, the new independent variable, which has been added to the Cognitive Mediation Model.

Chapter Three Affiliation Motivation

The modified model also includes the *need for affiliation or affiliation motivation*. This is one of the most primal needs of human beings (McClelland et al., 1976; Shipley & Veroff, 1952) and can be described as the motivation to “form friendships and associations; to greet, join and live with others; to cooperate and converse sociably with others; to love; to join groups” (Murray, 2008, p. 83). Sometimes referred to as interdependent orientation (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001), it can be described as the proclivity to “enjoy being with friends and people in general; to accept people readily; to make efforts to win friendships and maintain associations with people” (Jackson, 1984, p. 6). Human beings with a high need for affiliation aspire to be well-liked by others (Watson & Barone, 1976), maintain harmonious relationships with others (Murray, 1983) and are willing to subordinate their personal desires or wishes in order to conform to a larger group (Vernon, 1969). These individuals form their identity in relation to their social groups, and hence are apt to behave in ways that enable others to evaluate them positive light (Martin, 1984). In doing so, they tend to refrain from indulging in behavior that might invite disapproval or from making comments that might seem divisive (Exline, 1962). Not only do such individuals try their best to avoid conflict (Langner & Winter, 2001), they prefer activities that require cooperation and collaboration over individual skill and ability (Yamaguchi, 2003).

Furthermore, these individuals strive hard to be considered a part of the group (Martin, 1984). They will readily forfeit benefits and opportunities if these present a risk of making them stand out in the group (Yamaguchi, 2003). The desire of being accepted is so acute in these individuals that it often arouses feelings of anxiety of

being either negatively evaluated or rejected (Boyatzis, 1973; Mazur, 1989). An experiment conducted by Byrne (1961) illustrated this fact well. The findings revealed that individuals with a high affiliation need exhibit a higher level of anxiety than their low-affiliation counterparts when peers rate their likeability.

In addition, Hill (1987) has found that social incentives predict the need for affiliating with others. Individuals with high affiliation motivation are more inclined to make conversation (McAdams & Constantian, 1983) and tend to participate more in small group discussions (Gifford, 1981), while those with a lower affiliation need are wary of social interaction (Geist & Hamrick, 1983). Therefore, in the context of Facebook, it might mean that individuals with a high need for affiliation will be more inclined to make contact and interact with others in a harmonious manner. Therefore, it is likely that they may refrain from making comments about political content that might alienate their friends online.

Also, while it is closely related to the need to belong, the need for affiliation is not synonymous with it (Rose, 2007). The need to belong is thought to represent a universal human tendency to build and maintain positive relationships with others, without which an individual's well-being might suffer. On the other hand, the need for affiliation describes their personality. Individuals differ in their motivation to establish and maintain relationships, but those who have a more pronounced need will be more successful in fulfilling their need to belong (Rose, 2007). In this study, individuals with a more pronounced need to establish and maintain relationships will likely engage in more activity on Facebook. A meta-analysis conducted by Wilson and colleagues, found that the "most common internal motivation discussed in the literature was users' desire to keep in touch with friends" (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012, p. 209). Seidman (2013) found that this need to be a "major motivator

of Facebook use" (p. 404). This was supported by Li and Chiou (2013) who argued that individuals' affiliation motivation triggers their use of SNS. Li and Chiou's (2013) experiment using the Stroop task showed that online social networking is very closely associated with meeting affiliation needs. That is because SNS offer a platform which can help meet this need- by enabling users to converse, share details of their lives, express opinions, gather information and influence others (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Therefore, Haferkamp and Kramer (2009) conclude that this need is the most important motivating factor for individuals to use social networking sites.

Affiliation Motivation and Culture

Research shows that affiliation motivation is not really connected to one's cultural background. While one would expect individuals from collectivist cultures to exhibit a higher affiliation need, research does not support this assumption. In a cross cultural study of American and Chinese students, Xu and colleagues (2012) found that American students (who come from an individualistic culture) exhibited a higher affiliation need than their Chinese counterparts. Hofer and Busch's study with German and Cameroonian samples convey a similar story (Hofer & Busch, 2011). The scholars found the Germans (an individualistic culture) to exhibit a higher level of affiliation motivation than the Africans. In yet another study (Steinmatz, Park, & Kabst, 2011), the need for affiliation among the two groups investigated (Koreans and Germans) were found to be nearly the same, reiterating that individuals from a so-called collectivist culture do not necessarily possess a higher affiliation need than those from individualistic cultures. The evidence is quite conclusive -- affiliation motivation is not culture-specific. It is personality trait that exists in all humans, regardless of cultural background. While Indians are thought to be more collectivist

than individualistic, recent research on the Indian youth revealed that they are autonomous and independent (Gadekar, Krishnatray, & Gaur, 2012), traits that are reflective of individualism (Markus & Oysermen, 1988). Regardless of the boundary between collectivism and individualism, affiliation motivation will always be present.

The next chapter articulates the importance of social networking sites, especially Facebook, which serves as a platform for news consumption and is a context for this study.

Chapter Four Social Networking Sites

Though social networking sites (SNS) have become ubiquitous today with millions around the world using them, the technology had a humble beginning in 1978 with the creation of the Bulletin Board System. The earliest bulletin board was called Usenet. It inspired the 'Groups' feature paving the way for Yahoo Groups or Google Groups. Subsequently, Geocities, which was the first social networking site was born (www.digitaltrends.com). They can be defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Their unique affordances, coupled with the fact that they are free for all users, provide a platform for personal as well as political use.

Facebook and YouTube are thought to be important platforms of the social networking world (Gaines & Mondak, 2009). So is Twitter, the micro-blogging site, which boasts of 310 million monthly active users (company information). Twitter users can post updates within 140 characters, accompanied with a hashtag (#), which helps to identify the topic of reference. Odden (2008) found that the primary reason for Twitter users to maintain a presence on this site was to share interesting information with others. Based on their study that employed big data analysis of Twitter, Java, Song, Finin, and Tseng (2007) have argued that sharing information and news reports were among the top two (out of four) major types of tweets. In fact, Twitter is thought to be an important forum for disseminating and *discussing* news: indeed, it is the latter that lends Twitter a position of significance. It is the discussion

that takes place around the news event that brings the event close to home, giving users an opportunity to engage with the news (Bruns & Highfield, 2012).

In comparison, MySpace and YouTube are predominantly file-sharing sites, while Facebook is inherently a “public forum for socializing” (Gaines & Mondak, 2009, p. 218). Started in 2004 at a Harvard dormitory, Facebook now lists more than a billion users (company information). A typical user has more than 320 friends on average and maintains a profile where he/she lists information such as birthday, religious beliefs, political affiliation, dating preferences and so on (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011). The site offers several unique features- users can view a friend’s activity on their newsfeed, post or comment on someone else’s post and upload photos or video clips. Users are also notified when their contacts comment on or *like* a post (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). The content of these posts vary, and differ from user to user (Gaines & Mondak, 2009). Apart from connecting with family and friends, users can also engage in many political activities, like becoming a fan of a candidate, recruiting supporters for a cause and so on.

Like Facebook, MySpace is an online networking site where users can create their profile, upload links to the blogs, post photos and connect with other individuals across the globe (Goodings, 2012). However, unlike Facebook, which is more information oriented and emphasizes connections among people, MySpace caters more to entertainment. In contrast, YouTube is predominantly a video-sharing site (Tolson, 2010), where users can upload, download, share and comment on videos (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). Moreover, YouTube users are not required to disclose personal information to access videos allowing them to remain anonymous (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013).

As social networking sites become more popular among a variety of demographic groups, there is an increasing research interest in investigating uses and effects of this new platform for discussion, networking, and information gathering (Glynn, Huge, & Hoffman, 2011). Social networking sites serve to fulfill surveillance (Pew Research Center, 2011) as well as social interaction or opinion sharing needs (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2008). They encourage a multi-directional flow of interaction and their use significantly increases civic participation (Zhang, et al., 2010). Civic participation includes engagement in community activities through non-electoral means such as volunteering, raising money for a cause, etc.

In addition, social networking sites can play a significant role in encouraging political engagement. Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, and YouTube channels now have become a necessary part of the campaigning arsenal for many politicians (Glynn et al., 2011). For ordinary citizens, some researchers believe that SNS can lead to feelings of vicarious participation: users might feel that *friending* a political candidate is akin to casting a vote for them (Hoffman, Jones, & Young, 2011). Thus social networking sites increase citizens' motivation to engage with politics, by both promoting political discussion and offering an opportunity for communication and expression (Papacharissi, 2004). Xenos, Vromen, and Loader (2014) have also argued that political use of SNS impact traditional political participation, especially among the youth. Their data was derived from three advanced democracies (US, UK and Australia), where social media was found to be a key factor responsible for youth engagement in politics.

Furthermore, SNS users are usually connected to a large and heterogeneous network of contacts, and as a result of which they might be exposed to divergent views (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). Scholars have argued about the impact of

network heterogeneity but most concur that it has largely positive consequences. Mutz (2002; 2006) asserts that it promotes increased tolerance and understanding of diverse views but leads to political ambivalence and hence lowers participation. She argues that though SNS acts as an appropriate platform to discuss and deliberate on issues, they do not necessarily encourage participation. However, others disagree and point out that heterogeneous networks are associated with increased participation in a public forum (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Nir, 2011) and do not deter turnout (Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2002). Nor do they decrease involvement in campaign activities (Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2002). Hence, network heterogeneity can be thought to have a positive impact on an individual's political participation.

In addition to political participation, it appears that network heterogeneity influences political knowledge. A diverse network allows individuals to absorb differing views, and these "crosscutting" discussions are associated with an increase in political knowledge and for altering past patterns of social behavior (Klofstad, Sokhey, & McLurg, 2013). Therefore, SNS usage has a two-pronged benefit-- it improves knowledge and elicits participation among individuals who use these sites. In fact, several studies have shown that SNS users tend to be more politically engaged than the average Internet user. In a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2013), the researchers found that SNS users are significantly more engaged with political process than the average Internet user. Kim, Hsu, and Gil de Zuniga (2013) supported this finding and illustrated that greater SNS use is associated with increased civic and political participation. Another study conducted by Pew Research Center found that Facebook and LinkedIn users boasted high levels of political engagement but after controlling for gender and education, Facebook came out on top. LinkedIn

users are generally older and more educated and therefore more likely to attend rallies and vote in elections, but Pew Research Center (2010) found that Facebook users- compared to the average Internet user- are more likely to vote, to convince someone else how to vote, and to attend political rallies or meetings. This can probably be attributed to the fact that Facebook users rely on socially curated news (Emmett, 2008). News comes from family and friends rather than from organizations (Mitchell & Rosenstiel, 2012). Users select news content that is purported to be of interest and post it on their *wall*, making them “producers”¹ of news (Bruns & Highfield, 2012, p. 128), and enabling them to serve as “informants, investigators, collators, and compilers, and revisers and extenders of political information” (Perlmutter, 2008, p. 110). This attribute elicits a sense of agency among the users by allowing them to be in control of the information (Sundar, 2008). Furthermore, the site has a number of features such as posting, commenting on the content or tagging friends in the post that make it conducive for sharing news (Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2015). Indeed, Facebook has now become one of the world’s leading referrers to news links, which reveals the importance of sharing content within the network. Highlighting this fact, Baresch, Knight, Harp, and Yaschur (2011) have found that around 49% of users share links, out of which 21% comprises news links.

On the other hand, Facebook has also been accused of encouraging *slacktivism* (McCafferty, 2011; Reardon, 2013) or *clicktivism* at the cost of activism. Slacktivism, a portmanteau of the words ‘slacker’ and ‘activism’ (Breuer & Farooq, 2012), includes activities like clicking a *like*, copying and pasting status updates to share information about a cause, joining a social network group in support of a cause, signing an online petition etc. Scholars concur that individuals who are not motivated

¹ Portmanteau of the words ‘producers’ and ‘users’

enough to effect real change engage in such activities (Budish, 2012; Reardon, 2013). *Slacktivism* comes last in the hierarchy of commitment, responsibility and effort of political activity (Pena- Lopez, 2013). They belittle these activities that do *not* translate to full blown action; individuals get involved in these acts because of the feel-good element (Klafka, 2010). In fact, these activities veer individuals away from real world activism. They think that they have done their part by joining a Facebook group and hence are not inclined to take part in traditional participatory activities that can indeed affect political outcomes (Christensen, 2011). He adds that these activities trivialize the real issue and make individuals feel good when they have not accomplished anything (Christensen, 2011).

It is therefore evident from previous research that clicking the Facebook *like* button is not considered to be an attribute of participation. The convenience factor and feel-good element that they bestow upon the individual make them immensely popular but they cannot be considered any more a component of participation than is reading about politics.

Mobile access to SNS and Facebook

Social networking via mobile devices has become extremely popular around the world (Ozturk & Rizvanoglu, 2011), especially in parts of Asia (Jeffrey & Doron, 2012). It is particularly true of India. Out of a total of 462 million users, around 350 million access it through their mobile phones (Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2016). Access to cellular phone technology allows users to integrate their social networking activities into their lives on a more immediate basis (Ozturk & Rizvanoglu, 2011). While early research on mobile social networking showed that this access helped in social surveillance -- enabling users to keep an eye on the activities and interaction of their contacts (Farnham & Keyani, 2006) -- in recent

years mobile technology has become more sophisticated. For example, mobile access now allows individuals to stay abreast of the news as it occurs along with others' reactions to it. When an event of worldwide importance occurs, users can immediately view the network's reaction and post their own links to supplemental stories (Forlano, 2010).

Mobile social networks differ from the desktop versions in that they offer additional features that not only support one's social life but also have implications for political engagement. One such benefit is 'positioning' (Johansson, 2008). With their mobile device, users can specify their exact location at any time and generate a list of most frequented places or their most favorite places. This feature also allows users to localize photos, that is, when users take a photo with their phone it situates the photo location on a map (Johansson, 2008) and allows users to upload it instantaneously on the site. Friend locator is another distinguishing feature of mobile Facebook (Beach, et al., 2008; Johansson, 2008; Melinger, et al., 2004). It allows the user to locate friends who might be nearby. Users can also update personal status immediately and tag accompanying friends (Johansson, 2008). During Arab Spring, some of these features were used to guide the protests and aided communication among the protesters (Pollock, Bailey, & Macdiamid, 2011).

Mobile SNS access has some limitations too, most notably the screen size of the device. While the mobile device market is saturated with devices boasting of different screen sizes, none of them can compare with the desktop in terms of ease. Typing on the mobile keyboard can become cumbersome. In addition, the resources in a mobile phone are also limited compared to the desktop (Villalba, 2013). Nonetheless, the limitations are outweighed by the benefits and mobile SNS including, mobile Facebook, continues to find followers.

Reasons for Studying Facebook as a Platform

This study focuses on Facebook for a variety of reasons, which include affordances of the site as well as demographic characteristics of users. Facebook is different from all other SNS. It is a “relationship-driven network” (Kim, Hsu, & Gil de Zuniga, 2013, p. 502), which helps to “facilitate social relationships” (Pempek, et al., 2009, p. 236). It is a network based on interpersonal relations, dissimilar from blogs or online forums where membership is based on a particular interest or hobby or perhaps, partisanship. For example, SNS like YouTube and LinkedIn connect individuals who are interested in music-sharing or professional networking, which is very different from Facebook, where the primary goal is to have a social connection (Kim, Hsu, & Gil de Zuniga, 2013). They point out that users are more interested in participating in activities that are espoused by their friends, thereby implying that the need to maintain relationships will be more pronounced on Facebook than on other SNS.

Furthermore, Facebook makes it imperative for users to reveal their identity, which in turn, impacts their communication and behavior. Since it is a “nonymous” network (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008, p. 1818), individuals behave differently here compared to those settings where they can remain anonymous (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006). This attribute distinguishes Facebook from a very similar SNS, Orkut. Unlike Orkut, Facebook makes it mandatory for users to display at least part of their real name; rendering little possibility for an individual to remain anonymous. Even on Twitter, users need not disclose their identities and because of this, their motivation to use the site is different from that for using Facebook (Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2009). Furthermore, Kwak, Lee, Park

and Moon (2010) add that while Twitter resembles speaking to or sharing news with the masses from a podium, Facebook is more personal and replicates interpersonal communication.

Third, Facebook is the most popular SNS in India (Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2015). Two out of three social media users in India access Facebook everyday (Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2015). Of these the largest following (49%) is in the age group of 18-24 (Figure 3), which is the age group that this study attempts to investigate. In fact, almost 90% of the Indian online population is less than 35 years old (Savodnik, 2012) and they “use social networking in the real, true sense of the term—to grow their network in a social manner using whatever platforms are available to them. That doesn’t mean just the people they know. They are eager to connect with anyone they find interesting or (they) have something in common anywhere around the world” (Pring as cited in Savodnik, 2012, para. 7).

Figure 3. Age profile of Facebook users in India.

In a 21-country study (that included India) conducted by the Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, 2012), findings show that those below 30 and possessing college education are significantly more likely to use social networking sites like Facebook, than those who are older or without a college degree. In fact, 45% of users in India have also been found to engage in political discussions or share their political views on these sites. This indicates that a large proportion of users are already using Facebook for political purposes.

The 2014 election was called India's first "social media election" (www.ndtv.com). The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 282 out of the 543 seats in Parliament (a landslide by Indian standards) and attributed part of its success to its intelligent use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter (www.ndtv.com). Facebook use was critical because of two reasons: first, the Indian electorate has never been younger and BJP was able to reach out to this segment through Facebook and Twitter, and second, statistics (Election Commission of India data) show that in the last two decades voter turnout among urban Indians has been lower than those residing in rural India.

Although urban Indians are more educated and usually better off than most of their rural counterparts, they often refrain from voting. An appropriate social media use was a powerful way of harnessing their support (www.ndtv.com). In conclusion, social media such as Facebook have become very important in the political landscape of India. It is being used not only as a channel for communication and expression but also as a forum for participation. The following chapter provides a detailed overview of the study context and elaborates further on the use of social networks among India's young citizens.

Chapter Five Study Context

Home to more than one billion people, multiple religions and over 1600 languages, India consists of 29 states and seven Union Territories. From the time of independence in 1947, the political system has been based on a parliamentary democracy with characteristics that are similar to the American model of federalism. The current government, formed by the Bharatiya Janata Party, and headed by Mr. Narendra Modi came to power in 2014.

Freedom House (2013) declares India to be a “free” country giving it high rankings in civil liberties and political rights. The economy has transitioned from one that was based primarily on agriculture to one that is service-oriented, with more than 50% of the GDP now being drawn from the service sector. As the world’s largest democracy, “India meets the broader definition of an ideal democracy- political and civic freedom, popular sovereignty and political equality” (Diamond & Morlino, 2004, p. 27). Indians also tend to have a strong sense of national identity (Yao & Haggard, 2016), probably due to their colonial history (Anderson, 2006).

Since the introduction of market reforms in 1991, India has become the world’s largest economy by nominal GDP, and it is the third largest by purchasing power parity (International Monetary Fund report). Despite these advancements, India continues to be beleaguered by acute poverty, corruption, and malnutrition among the poor. It has a flourishing multilingual media, nonetheless, which provides the necessary impetus to political engagement among its citizens.

State of Democracy in India

A study examining the state of democracy in India conducted by the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), a think tank based in New Delhi, revealed the opinions of citizens regarding the effectiveness of democracy in the country. This followed a similar study that had been conducted in 2005. The respondents were asked questions pertaining to their satisfaction with the democratic form of government as it were (Figure 4), preference for democracy or authoritarian form for government, trust in institutions, important issues that they would like the government to address (Figure 5), access to public education etc.

Figure 4: Results of the poll depicting citizens' satisfaction with democracy (2005 vs 2013)

46% of the people polled were found to favor a democratic form of government, while 11% preferred an authoritarian form of government. Trust in non-elected institutions had increased marginally since 2005, whereas trust in the national

government had fallen since then. This factor is significant and possible one of the reasons for the then government to be voted out of power. In addition, respondents identified education and employment as the two most important issues for the government to address.

Figure 5: Identification of important issues to be addressed by the government (in percentage)

Traditional Media in India

Traditional media comprise print media, radio, television, and cinema. However, Indian cinema has largely been devoid of any political use and hence will be excluded from discussion.

The first major newspaper in India, *The Bengal Gazette*, was printed in 1780, while the country was still under the British rule. It was followed by *The India Gazette* (1781), *The Calcutta Gazette* (1781), *The Madras Courier* (1785), and *The Bombay Herald* (1789; www.preservearticles.com). There are more than 85,000

publications being circulated in the country, with Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar and The Hindu acquiring the highest readership numbers (Press Council of India).

Radio broadcasting started in 1924 as a result of a private endeavor. In 1932, the government of India, which was then under British rule, took over the reins and designated it as All India Radio (AIR). Subsequently, it was placed under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. In 1947, AIR had only 6 broadcasting stations in 1947, AIR now boasts of around 400 stations broadcasting in 23 languages and 146 dialects (allindiaradio.gov.in). AIR adopts a three-pronged approach in its programming- a) a national channel broadcasts issues of a national character and significance, b) a zonal service broadcasted from the major cities (New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta etc.) and c) regional service broadcasted from individual stations catering to the issues and interests of each area (allindiaradio.gov.in). The regional language broadcasts help to reach out to people in every nook and corner of the country, thereby eliciting some engagement from them.

Television was introduced in 1959 (Fursich & Shrikhande, 2007) and was predominantly a government mouthpiece in the early years. With the emergence of the state-owned channel, Doordarshan in 1972, the situation marginally improved and the offering became a bit more diverse. The programming at this stage consisted primarily of educational and entertainment based shows.

In 1991, the television network was deregulated and it ushered in an era of cable network in India. From a humble two-channel network, the country moved to having hundreds of channels boasting of news, current affairs and entertainment programs and the Indian consumer now had plenty to choose from (Batabyal, 2010). Roy (2011) elaborates that between 2000 and June 2010, a staggering total of 268 'news and current affairs' channels had been registered to broadcast news programs

for some or all of a 24-hour period. For the Indian consumer, this translated to tremendous access to news and information around the clock.

The Internet in India

The Internet arrived in India in 1992. From then to now, the number of Internet users has grown to more than 462 million (the second largest user base after China), increasing the penetration rate to 35% (Internet World Stats). Today the Internet has emerged as a new medium for information delivery (Satpathi & Roy, 2011), is “largely unrestricted” (Freedom House, 2013) and holds the promise of strengthening the democratic system and making it more inclusive (Grossman, 1995).

The country has seen a steep rise in the number of social media users as well. Verghese (2011) reports that social media users in India are growing in leaps and bounds and more individuals use SNS than email. In fact, in 2010, Facebook became the most popular social networking site, challenging Orkut’s dominance (Verghese, 2011) and two out of three Internet users in India access Facebook or Twitter every day (The Economic Times, 2013, May 4). However, factors like low Internet penetration in rural areas, illiteracy, poverty, and lack of infrastructure have impeded a more widespread use of the Internet and social media in India.

On the other hand, a key factor that has abetted social media adoption has been the widespread use of mobile phones. The phone became commonplace in 2003, when the average cost of a call from a mobile phone dropped to less than one rupee for 30 seconds (Jeffrey & Doron, 2012). It made the technology available to even the poorest people and that year saw the number of phones went up from 13 million to 33 million (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2005). The cost of talk time and the phone continued to fall steadily since then and by 2005 the average cost

of a phone was less than Rs. 2000 (approximately 30 USD), making it affordable for a poor laborer (Jeffrey & Doron, 2012).

This development is highly significant as numerous Indians access the Internet through their mobile phones. According to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), *seven out of eight* users in the country accessing the Internet through their mobile phones. In fact, mobile phones are considered to be the “main driver of Internet in India” (Times of India, 2015, November 14). The latest report released by the Internet and Mobile Association in India (IAMAI) suggests that college-going students comprise the largest segment of active Internet users and one of the main reasons for Internet use is accessing social networking sites. This was of considerable significance as 2014 was an election year, and the campaign period witnessed intense activity in the online realm. Facebook’s Katie Harbath, the Global Politics and Government Outreach Manager, stated, “Facebook is really the key place of the conversation that is happening” (www.economictimes.com). During the campaign period there were around 227 million posts, comments, *likes* and shares on the general election.

Facebook Use among the Indian Youth

Gadekar, Krishnatray, and Gaur (2012) explored the reasons for Indian college students' Facebook use. The findings revealed that relationship maintenance and "getting regular updates about current affairs" (p. 144) were two of the most cited motives. Commenting on others' posts, interacting with friends and posting status updates and web links were some of the frequent activities that the students engaged in. In addition, they also reported uploading photos and videos. The scholars (Gadekar, Krishnatray, & Gaur, 2012) concluded that the respondents were well familiar with all the features of the site, having used it since their teens.

Finally, Gadekar and colleagues (2012) also gleaned an important insight into the personality traits of the Indian college-going youth. Using Wang and Mowen's (1997) separateness-connectedness self schema scale, they found that the sample showed a strong tendency toward separateness, which included the attributes of autonomy and independence. Autonomy and independence in this regard would be aligned to the trait of individualism in the individualistic-collectivistic scale (Markus & Oyserman, 1988). This attribute is interesting in light of the fact that Asian cultures are generally thought to be collectivistic (Hofstede, 1983).

Nonetheless, through five studies, Savani and colleagues (2008) have highlighted that Americans and Indians differ distinctively when it comes to the concept of free choice. Americans are more likely to view actions, whether their own or others', as motivated by choice. Indians are less likely to do so. They are also less likely to make choices that are aligned to their personal preferences. The uniqueness of the Indian student sample stems from these reasons- as members of an Eastern culture, the Indian students have some attributes that differentiate themselves from Westerners (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). More specifically, as Savani and colleagues (2008) have demonstrated, Indians differ from Americans when it comes to thinking about free choice. Finally, while the American population has always been individualistic, Indians are thought to be a mix of both, with young Indians displaying a tilt towards individualism. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that both collectivism and individualism manifest themselves in the mature adult population, but the young adults' behavior marks a slight departure from this mix.

Impact of Facebook and other social media on general election 2014

The importance of the last general election in the context of India's politics cannot be understated. This happened to the first time in over twenty years that a party came to power with an absolute majority. The election was conducted in nine phases from April 7 to May 12, 2014 and witnessed a record turnout of over 66%. Most political parties invested tremendous resources on social media campaigns (Khullar & Haridasani, 2014). BJP's strategy in this regard was noteworthy. A formal agreement was signed among the BJP, Twitter and telecom companies to distribute the party's tweets (Kalra, 2014). For its part, Facebook launched an election tracker ahead of the election in 2014 so that events related to the campaign could be tracked in real time (www.ndtv.com). Arvind Gupta, national convener of the BJP's Information Technology cell stated, "Technology has been in BJP's DNA. We have always used technology very effectively, whether to give information to supporters or to make information available faster...the young and the educated India are all online. The aspirational India is online. They all want to understand what is going on. It helps us to directly keep in touch with the voters. It is a two-way tool" (Krishnan, 2015, para 5).

Numerous journalists and political analysts have lauded the BJP's nifty use of social media, including Facebook. Not only was the party able to engage the youth, its program of economic development resonated deeply with the first time voters, who comprised 15% of the vote bank (Rukmini, 2014). This is especially important as voters (young and old, alike) indicated economic development to be the most important issue as the 2013 CSDS study (Figure 5) showed.

In fact, the findings of the CSDS study were telling. While faith in democracy was in general high, trust in some institutions had declined by a few percentage points. This can possibly be attributed to the Congress government which had been in power before the general election of 2014. A Pew study (Pew Research Center, 2014) conducted weeks before the election clearly articulated the dissatisfaction with the Congress government. 63% of respondents irrespective of gender, age and area of residence favored the BJP. This factor coupled with the participation of young voters, Internet penetration and mobile phone access by large sections of the population turned out to be key predictors of BJP's success (Ahmed, Jaidka, & Cho, 2015). Undoubtedly, social media have become a major tool for communication among political parties like BJP and citizens (Barcla, 2015). Even for social activism and civic engagement, social media proved to be equally salient. They helped to garner popular support for the anti-corruption movement that spread across India in 2011 and other online protests that took place (Kalbag, 2010). According to Indian and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), most of India's online population were young and urban – a segment that has traditionally been quite detached from politics. But prior to the election IMAI predicted that social media like Facebook and Twitter would change that phenomenon and enable the urban youth to become "the newest vote bank with the power to shape Indian politics" (IAMAI, 2013).

The growing Internet penetration and increasing social media use have helped to attract more users and solicit their involvement, emphasizing that these new technologies are especially conducive for large federal democracies (Gibson & Ward, 2002), like India. Therefore, their impact on the Indian citizen's political engagement warrants a scrutiny.

Chapter Six Conceptual Framework

This study attempts to identify the relationships between motivations (surveillance and affiliation), information processing behavior (attention and elaboration) and political knowledge, using the Cognitive Mediation Model. Eveland (2001a) and colleagues (2003) have examined surveillance as a motivation for attention to and elaboration on the news media and subsequent knowledge gain. The Cognitive Mediation Model (CMM) posits that “greater attention to the news and elaborative processing of news content should both lead to higher levels of learning from the news” (Eveland, 2001a, p. 567). Attention influences learning because it is a necessary condition for processing the news. Any information has to be attended to in the first place, before it can be integrated into one’s knowledge base. Without attention, no learning would take place. In the revised model proposed here, *attention* is operationalized as paying attention to political posts on Facebook and reading a post on political matters etc. Since one’s attention is most focused while reading (Finn, 1985), reading was included as a measure of attention.

On the other hand, *elaboration* is the function of connecting new information to prior experience, knowledge, or events. Also termed as “active reflection” (Eveland, McLeod, & Horowitz, 1998), elaboration requires “mental focus given to the news or even to particular types of stories (such as campaign stories) in the news” (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003, p.363). It involves thinking about and reflecting on the news (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2002) as well as discussing it with others (Shah, Cho, Nah, Gotlieb, Hwang, & Lee, 2007), all of which enable information processing.

The Cognitive Mediation Model (Figure 6) argues that mere exposure to news items do not produce learning; information-processing behaviors, triggered by

motivation and elaboration do. A clear path connects surveillance gratification to attention and elaboration, which are then associated with political knowledge.

Surveillance represents the proclivity to monitor the environment by reading or listening to the news (Shoemaker, 1996). During election years, surveillance involves scrutinizing election campaigns and positions taken by the candidates; in non-election years this represents studying the condition of the economy and the activities of public officials (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003).

The viability of this model has been demonstrated in a variety of political contexts: in non-election years, election years and off-election years (Eveland, 2001a).

Figure 6. The Cognitive Mediation Model (Eveland, 2001a).

Since it was first articulated, numerous scholars have extended the model and applied it to different contexts (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Ho, Peh, & Soh, 2013; Jensen, 2011). Going beyond surveillance needs, Beaudoin and Thorson (2004) also incorporated anticipated interaction and guidance as gratifications sought. *Anticipated interaction* involves obtaining information that would help individuals in conversing with others (Payne, Severn, & Dozier, 1988) while *guidance* refers to obtaining information that enables individuals to make decisions (Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977).

Eveland, Shah, and Kwak (2003) suggested including the *need for cognition* as a motivation. The term was first used by Cohen, Stotland, and Wolfe (1955) and developed by Cacioppo and Petty (1982). According to them, individuals with a high need for cognition would “engage in and enjoy thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982, p.116). This need drives individuals to obtain information concerning issues; those with a high need for cognition like to engage in thinking and reflecting on issues (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

As the Cognitive Mediation Model evolved, some scholars modified the role of *attention* in the model. Eveland, Marton, and Seo (2004) have removed attention from the model while others (Jensen, 2011) distinguished attention from elaboration. Ho et al., (2013) found that interpersonal discussion acted as a mediator between attention and knowledge and the latter was positively associated with behavioral intention.

Therefore, a look at the literature shows that several modifications have been made to the model since Eveland (2001a) presented it. However, it must be noted that these were made based on findings that were acquired from a traditional media

context. The feasibility of CMM in a social networking context, especially on a platform like Facebook, is yet to be explored.

Eveland (2001a) and colleagues (2003; 2004) have demonstrated that surveillance gratification is positively associated with attention and elaboration. This leads to my first hypothesis:

H1: Surveillance gratification will be positively associated with a) attention to and b) elaboration on political information on Facebook.

Furthermore, as Eveland (2001a; 2002) and Eveland and colleagues (2003; 2004) have shown, attention will be positively associated with elaboration.

H2: Attention to political information on Facebook will be positively associated with elaboration.

While Eveland (2001a) and his colleagues (Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003) have pointed out that individuals with surveillance needs will proactively seek information, the same cannot be said of those who are simply browsing a social networking site with the primary intention of connecting with their friends. These motivations govern completely different aspects of human activity and extant literature on motivations do not connect the two. While the former is inherently content-driven, the latter is completely relationship-driven. Individuals with surveillance motivation peruse the news to learn from it while those with affiliation motivation read the news to maintain relationships with their friends.

This modified model (Figure 7) posits that affiliation motivation to maintain relationships encourages SNS users to read the news content posted by their friends and family, even if that content was not actively sought. They are more likely to read

or watch news recommendations from significant others than an external source.

Skoric and Poor (2013) sum it up succinctly. Their study reveals that if a friend sends a message, it boosts one's interest in the cause and his/her inclination to respond.

“Pre-existing trust in the other person allows for motivation to participate and contribute” (Skoric & Poor, 2013, p. 199). This leads to the next hypothesis:

H3: Affiliation motivation will be positively associated with a) attention to and b) elaboration on political information on Facebook.

Furthermore, as Eveland (2001a) originally hypothesized, both *attention* to the news content and *elaboration* on that content would be associated with increased knowledge. That leads to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Attention to political information on Facebook will be positively associated with political knowledge.

H4b: Elaboration will be positively associated with political knowledge.

Figure 7. Modified Model.

Even in the pre-SNS era, research on blog use has shown that both social and information surveillance motivations predict the use of blogs (Greuling & Kilian, 2014; Kaye, 2005; Leung, 2009; Trammell et al., 2004). In fact, Kaye (2005) found the need for affiliation to be the primary motivation for accessing blogs, a finding that is supported by Papacharissi (2002) in her research on political blog use. Kim and Johnson (2012) have also argued that surveillance and expression/affiliation motivations simultaneously play a role in political blog use; individuals seek information on political matters and aspire to express this information to like-minded others. However, contrary to Papacharissi (2002), affiliation motivation in Kim and Johnson's (2012) work is seen as the need to connect with politically like-minded people, such as Democrats connecting with other Democrats, and Republicans with their own kind. In contrast, it is the psychological need for affiliation that is examined in this dissertation.

A recent work (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009) has examined surveillance and affiliation motivations in the context of social media. YouTube is a prime example. YouTube users are motivated by both surveillance and social motivations to access the site (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). In fact, they appreciate the social aspect of YouTube because it allows them to "watch, share, and discuss videos they like with family and friends" (p. 330). The social aspect or affiliation predicates the act of viewing and sharing videos, which in turn fulfills information-seeking or surveillance needs. The same can hold for Facebook. Affiliation motivation will make individuals log on to the site, which in turn will be associated with attention to and processing of political content and subsequent knowledge accumulation. Though affiliation is certainly the overarching motivation for the use of Facebook (Karimi, et al., 2014) this need or motivation will vary among individuals. It is likely that some individuals

will possess a stronger affiliation motivation than others and it will moderate the relationship among attention, elaboration and political knowledge. Individuals with a high affiliation motivation will be more likely to elaborate more when they pay attention to political content on the site. They will also be more likely to display knowledge gain as a result of attention to and elaboration of this content. Hence my last hypotheses are:

H5a: Affiliation motivation will moderate the relationship between attention and elaboration such that individuals with a high affiliation motivation will display a significantly stronger relationship from attention to elaboration, compared to those with a low affiliation motivation.

H5b: Affiliation motivation will moderate the relationship between attention and political knowledge such that those with a high affiliation motivation will display a significantly stronger relationship from attention to political knowledge, in comparison to those with a low motivation.

H5c: Affiliation motivation will moderate the relationship between elaboration and political knowledge such that those with a high affiliation motivation will display a significantly stronger relationship from elaboration to political knowledge, compared to those with a low motivation.

Two surveys were designed to test the hypotheses. The preliminary study captured participants' historical, civic and current knowledge while the main study examined civic and current knowledge only. In keeping with the suggestion given by Mondak and Davis (2001), both surveys were conducted in 2014, an election year.

Chapter Seven Preliminary Study

Conducting a smaller survey was necessary before investing considerable time and resources on a full-fledged survey. The objectives were to test the questions, anticipate problems that might arise on the field and address them before embarking on the main survey. The surveys were approved by NTU's Institutional Board.

Method

Sample. A convenience sample of 500 undergraduate students, aged 18 to 25 years from the city of Ahmedabad in the Western state of Gujarat was sought. The eligible students were surveyed from April 3- 17, 2014, immediately before the Indian general election, which took place in May. A data collection agency, Taleem Research Foundation, was hired to conduct the survey. Six members of the staff visited three universities in Ahmedabad and solicited their permission to conduct the survey during class time. They distributed hard copies of the survey to Facebook-using students aged between 18 and 25. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were told that they could withdraw from this study at any time. The refusal rate was less than 2%. No gift or monetary reward was given to participating students.

After data cleaning, there were 492 usable surveys. The sample had 60.4% males and the mean age was around 21.6 years ($SD = 2.11$). Around 84% were Hindus, 5.7% were Muslims, 6.3% were Jains and the remaining comprised Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs and others. Gender and religion were controlled in the analysis. The majority of participants were enrolled in an undergraduate program. 75% of the participants reported spending an hour per day on Facebook.

Measures. Since this is a Facebook study, participants were asked to respond to

the Facebook Intensity Scale (FBI; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), which examined the importance or centrality of Facebook in their lives. It comprised a battery of six Likert statements, such as, "*Facebook is part of my everyday activity*," "*I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook*," "*Facebook has become part of my daily routine*," and so on ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .71$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$).

Political Knowledge was measured through a battery of four multiple-choice items that were created to measure participants' knowledge of the political process, such as, "*The members of the Lok Sabha (Lower House) hold office for a term of_____*," "*The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by_____*," "*The first Prime Minister of India was_____*," and "*Which party formed the government in Delhi after the 2013 Assembly polls*," etc. The incorrect answers and 'Don't Know' responses were coded as 0 and the correct answer was coded as 1 (Appendix A).

Seven Likert statements measured respondents' *surveillance gratification*. These were adapted from Towers (1986) and Eveland, et al., (2003) e.g., "*Facebook helps me to be more informed about current events*" and "*I can find interesting or unusual news stories on Facebook that are not available in the mainstream media*" ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .73$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$). The responses were captured on a 5-point scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

Affiliation motivation was tested through six Likert-scale statements adapted from Hill (1987), for example "*I feel like I have really accomplished something valuable when someone else 'likes' or comments on something I have posted*" and "*I think I get satisfaction out of contacting others on Facebook more than most people realize*," "*Just being on Facebook and finding out about other people is one of the most interesting things I can think of doing*" etc. ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .65$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$). The responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Four measures were used to capture *attention* to political content on Facebook. These were “*I read posts on politics that I come across on Facebook,*” “*I pay attention to posts on politics that I come across on Facebook,*” “*I pay attention to photos of political candidates/leaders on Facebook,*” etc. ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .85$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$). The responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Three items for *elaboration* to capture reflection on political content on Facebook were adapted from the work of Eveland, et al., (2003). These were – “*I often find myself thinking about political information that I’ve seen on Facebook,*” “*I often tie what I see on Facebook news to ideas I’ve had before,*” “*I often try to relate what I see on Facebook news to my own personal experiences*” ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .79$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .66$). The responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Principal component analysis was conducted to test the unidimensionality of the measures and the factor loading for each construct was more than 0.50 (Appendix A), as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010). Constructs were then assessed for internal reliability, using Cronbach’s alpha. A variance inflation factor (VIF) check was also conducted on SPSS to rule out multicollinearity issues. Allison (1999) recommends a VIF value of less than 3 and the check revealed values of around 1, thereby demonstrating that the variables were not collinear. Pearson's correlations were also conducted to examine the bivariate relationships between the variables (Appendix B).

Analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 21.0 was used for analysis. SEM takes a confirmatory approach to data analysis, which means that it can be very useful for inferential purposes. Moreover, it accounts for measurement error,

incorporates both unobserved and observed variables in statistical estimates and identifies the direct and indirect effects. Complex estimations can be simultaneously performed, making it useful for this kind of analysis.

Six model fit indices were used to assess goodness-of-fit: model chi square (χ^2), relative chi square (χ^2/df), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). For GFI, CFI and TLI, the range lies between 0 and 1, with values above .95 indicating a close fit (Kaplan, 2000). For RMSEA, a value of .05 or lower indicates a very good fit (Arbuckle, 2003). χ^2 should not be significant in well-fitting model, however to attenuate the sensitivity to sample size, the χ^2 value is divided by the degrees of freedom. Bollen (1989) suggests that χ^2/df value should fall between 1.0 and 5.0 to signify a good fit.

Results

Before estimating the proposed structural model, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed. This helped to assess the robustness of the measurement model based on the fit indices - $\chi^2 = 287.3$, $df = 227$, $\chi^2/df = 1.27$, CFI (.98), TLI (.98), GFI (.95) and RMSEA (.02). For the structural model, the fit indices showed good model fit- $\chi^2 = 336$, $df = 271$, $\chi^2/df = 1.24$, CFI (.98), TLI (.97), GFI (.94) and RMSEA (.02).

Hypothesis 1 posited that surveillance gratification will be positively associated with a) attention to and b) elaboration on political information on Facebook. The path from surveillance to attention was significant ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$) as was the path from surveillance to elaboration ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was fully supported.

Hypothesis 2 indicated that attention to political information on Facebook will be positively associated with elaboration. In Figure 6, the path was significant ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$). Hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated that affiliation motivation would be associated with a) attention to and b) elaboration on political information on Facebook. The path from affiliation to attention was significant ($\beta = .17, p < .05$), as was the path from affiliation to elaboration ($\beta = .40, p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was completely supported.

Hypothesis 4 asserted that attention to and elaboration on political content on Facebook would be positively associated political knowledge. However, attention to political knowledge was not significant ($\beta = .09, p > .05$) and neither was elaboration to political knowledge ($\beta = -.15, p > .05$). Hence, this hypothesis was not supported.

However, as Figure 8 shows, the correlation between surveillance and affiliation was strong and significant ($r = .63, p < .001$). The VIF value between the two variables was 1, clearly suggesting that surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation were not collinear. Therefore, the correlation between the two motivations is noteworthy.

Figure 8. Full structural equation model for the preliminary study (controlled for gender and religion, $N = 492$); to keep the diagram neat, the respective indicators for each latent variable are not shown.

The purpose of the study was to test the hypotheses and to investigate the impact of surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation on the dependent variables. While some similarities with prior studies (e.g., Eveland, 2001a) were noted, the analysis yielded a divergent finding as well. Surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation predicted attention and elaboration. Attention was positively associated with elaboration but neither attention nor elaboration predicted political knowledge. While the non-significant relationship between attention and political knowledge was rather surprising, the lack of a relationship between elaboration and political knowledge was not completely out of the ordinary. Prior studies conducted by Eveland and colleagues (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004; Eveland, Seo, & Marton, 2002) too had found no association between elaboration and knowledge. They argued that it could be due to the nature of knowledge questions which did not need

elaboration to yield correct answers. Another factor could be the lack of prior knowledge. Without the necessary prior knowledge, elaboration that occurred was not "particularly useful or relevant and thus did not encourage increased factual knowledge" (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004, p. 103). This study also examined affiliation motivation as a new independent variable. It was significantly associated with both attention and elaboration, thereby revealing that individuals with an affiliation motivation tend to pay more attention to and mull over on political content on the site. The correlation between affiliation motivation and surveillance gratification was also strong and significant, suggesting that these two variables are highly related on Facebook.

There were a few limitations to this study: first, of the four knowledge questions, only one each pertained to current knowledge and historical knowledge. This could have been problematic, as traditionally, political knowledge questions comprise either a mix of civic and current knowledge or focus exclusively on the latter. The fact that the paths from surveillance and affiliation to attention and elaboration were significant, yet those from the latter to political knowledge were not, suggests that the knowledge items used were not able to capture it. Second, the sample size ($N = 492$) was rather small preventing further analysis like a moderation check. Moreover, the sample was drawn only from a single city, which could reflect idiosyncratic results. Keeping these issues in perspective, the main study was developed and executed.

Chapter Eight Main Study

The objectives of the study were to locate the associations among motivations, information processing behavior and political knowledge. The main study rectified the issues faced in the preliminary study.

Method

Sample. The sample ($N = 1020$) was drawn from four universities in the Western and Northern Indian cities of Ahmedabad and Lucknow respectively. The staff from Taleem Foundation (6 in Ahmedabad, 10 in Lucknow) sought permission from the faculty members to administer the paper and pencil survey during class time. The purpose of the study was indicated to the students. The refusal rate in Ahmedabad was 5%², while in Lucknow it was around 2%. No gifts or incentives were given to participating students. The survey was administered from August 10 to September 3 in Ahmedabad, while in Lucknow it lasted from September 1-25, 2014.

The sample consisted of students ranging in age from 18 to 26 years ($M = 20.56$, $SD = 2.19$), of which 67% were males and around 88% were Hindus. Over 65% of the students were enrolled in a Bachelors program and 22% were in a Masters program. Age, gender and religion were controlled in the analysis. Around 82% of the participants reported spending an hour each day on Facebook.

Measures. Similar to the preliminary survey, participants in this survey were asked to respond to the Facebook Intensity Scale (FBI; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), which assessed the importance or centrality of Facebook in their lives. It comprised a battery of six Likert statements, such as, "*Facebook is part of my*

²The refusals came from students who were not comfortable answering a survey in English.

everyday activity," "I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook," "Facebook has become part of my daily routine," and so on ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .81$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$).

Political Knowledge was assessed through twelve multiple-choice questions, comprising civic knowledge and current knowledge questions. This was different from the preliminary study in two ways; first, the battery of questions was larger and second, a combination of several current and civic knowledge questions was used. For example – "The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by _____," "The power to decide an election petition is vested in the _____." The current knowledge items tested the respondents' knowledge of the events of the day. Some examples are: "Of the following political parties, which party won the most seats in the 2014 election?," "Which neighboring country did Narendra Modi visit recently as his first foreign destination since he became the Prime Minister?" etc. Correct answers were coded as 1 and incorrect answers and 'Don't Know' responses were coded as 0.

Surveillance gratification was assessed through eight Likert scale statements with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .77$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). These statements, adapted from Eveland et al., (2003) were: "I can obtain immediate knowledge of important political news events on Facebook," "Through Facebook I can learn more about issues that affect people like myself," "I can find interesting or unusual news stories on Facebook that are not available in the mainstream media," etc.

Affiliation motivation was captured through six Likert scale statements adapted from Hill (1987). They had responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .72$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$) A few examples are, "One of the most enjoyable things I can think of that I like to do is just going through my

newsfeed to see what others are doing,” “I think I get satisfaction out of contact with others more than most people realize,” “The main thing I like about being on Facebook is the contact with others,” etc.

Attention was assessed through four Likert statements using a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .88$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$). Three of these were adapted from Eveland, et al., (2003), while the remaining were created for example, *“I read posts on politics that I come across on Facebook,” “I pay attention to posts on politics that I come across on Facebook,” “I pay attention to political photos on Facebook,” etc.*

Elaboration was assessed through four Likert statements using a 5-point scale ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .77$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .68$), adapted from Eveland and colleagues (2003). These were: *“I often find myself thinking about political information that I’ve seen on Facebook,” “I often tie what I see in the news stories on Facebook to ideas I’ve had before,” “I often try to relate what I see in the news stories on Facebook to my own personal experiences,” and “I rarely spend much time thinking about the political information that I read about on Facebook.”*

Principal component analysis was conducted to check the unidimensionality of the measures, followed by a reliability check. Finally the VIF check was conducted on SPSS to test for multicollinearity among the variables. The VIF values were as follows: (a) surveillance and affiliation (1), (b) surveillance and attention (1), (c) attention and elaboration (1), (d) political knowledge as outcome variable and attention (1.39) and elaboration (1.39) as IVs. All the values were less than the threshold of 3, which demonstrates that they were not collinear. The PCA and Cronbach's alpha values were satisfactory too (Appendix C). Pearson's correlations were conducted to examine the bivariate relationships among the variables (Appendix

D). Furthermore, as the FBI mean differed between the samples, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine if this difference was significant. There was no significant difference found between the preliminary study ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.70$) and main study samples ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.81$); $t(1510) = -1.58$, $p = .11$.

In addition, a series of T- tests were also conducted in order to compare the means for surveillance gratification, attention, elaboration and political knowledge between the high affiliation and low affiliation subgroups. Significant differences were found for all the variables. There was a significant difference between the low affiliation ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .77$) and high affiliation ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .64$) subgroups for surveillance gratification; $t(1018) = -13.61$, $p < .001$. There was also significant difference between the low affiliation ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .87$) and high affiliation ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .82$) subgroups for attention; $t(1018) = -7.82$, $p < .001$. For elaboration too, the difference between the low affiliation ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .75$) and high affiliation ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .73$) was significant; $t(1018) = -8.35$, $p < .001$. A significant difference between the low affiliation ($M = 7.93$, $SD = 2.66$) and high affiliation ($M = 8.83$, $SD = 2.79$) subgroups for political knowledge was also found, $t(1018) = -9.16$, $p < .05$.

Analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (using AMOS software version 21) was performed to analyze the data. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement model. The model showed good fit, based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations of close to or more than .95 for CFI and GFI and less than .05 for Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($\chi^2(df) = 711(484)$; $\chi^2/df = 1.47$; CFI = .97; TLI = .96; GFI = .95; RMSEA = .03).

Results

The full SEM results showed a good fit of the model with the data based on

five fit indices ($\chi^2 (df) = 1301 (602)$; $\chi^2/df = 2.16$; CFI = .94; TLI =.92; GFI = .93; RMSEA = .03). χ^2 should not be significant in a well-fitting model, however to attenuate the sensitivity to sample size, the χ^2 value is divided by the degrees of freedom. Bollen (1989) has suggested that χ^2/df value should fall between 1.0 and 5.0 to signify a good fit.

Surveillance gratification was significantly associated with attention to political information on Facebook (Figure 9; $\beta = .60, p < .001$) and elaboration ($\beta = .14, p < .05$). Hence H1 was supported. Attention was significantly associated with elaboration ($\beta = .53, p < .001$), thereby supporting H2.

Hypothesis 3 posited that affiliation motivation would be positively associated with attention and elaboration. It was not significantly associated with attention ($\beta = .01, p > .05$) but was positively and significantly associated with elaboration ($\beta = .24, p < .001$). Hence H3 was partially supported.

Furthermore, attention was positively associated with political knowledge ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) but the path from elaboration to political knowledge fell below significance ($\beta = -.18, p > .05$), thereby partially supporting H4. Finally, similar to the preliminary study, the correlation between surveillance gratification and affiliation motivation was strong and significant ($r = .71, p < .001$).

Figure 9. Full structural equation model controlled for age, gender and religion ($N = 1020$); to keep the entire diagram parsimonious, the respective indicators for each latent variable are not shown.

Affiliation Motivation as a Moderator

In order to test the last hypotheses (H5a – c), a multi group moderation was done in AMOS. Moderation in SEM is similar to an interaction in regression analysis, but offers numerous benefits over the latter. It accounts for measurement error, which makes the findings statistically more robust. Second, in a subgroup analysis, measurement invariance becomes necessary, making the process more rigorous (Strasheim, 2014). Finally, a subgroup analysis provides insight into the effect of the moderator variable on the exogenous and endogenous variables and on the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Therefore, a subgroup

analysis in SEM can provide a complete picture of the moderation, making it "superior to others" (Strasheim, 2014, p. 31).

A median split divided the sample into two (low and high) subgroups. This was done in order to explore if those with a stronger affiliation needs acquire more knowledge compared to those with a weaker need, everything else remaining equal. Achieving measurement invariance, which checks whether "measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute" (Horn & McArdle, 1992, p. 117), was necessary. Without it, comparison between two groups would be prone to error (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000).

While invariance checks can range in hierarchy from configural to metric to scalar, (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998), for this analysis, metric invariance was sufficient. It tests for equivalence of the factor loadings between items across the different groups (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Hui & Triandis, 1985; Rock, Werts,& Flaugher, 1978; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). However, full metric invariance was not mandatory. Some scholars have argued that comparability is assured when, at minimum, two indicators for each construct are invariant across groups (Byrne et al., 1989; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). They term it 'partial' metric invariance (Byrne, Shavelson, & Muthen, 1989; Davidov, Meuleman, Billiet, & Schmidt, 2008; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

In order to test for metric invariance, multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA; Joreskog, 1971) was conducted. It showed that almost all items were invariant across the two groups and the resultant model fit was acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 1.48$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, GFI = .94, RMSEA = .02). Even though there are two groups, the model provided only one set of fit indices (Byrne, 2009). She states that on AMOS, "Despite the multi group structure, analyses yield only one set of fit

statistics for overall model fit” (Byrne, 2009, p. 209). Following the MGCFA, the full structural equation model was run in order to determine the difference between the two groups. The model fit was acceptable ($\chi^2(df) = 1262 (816)$, $\chi^2/df = 1.54$, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, GFI = .93, PCLOSE = 1.00, RMSEA = .02).

For individuals with low affiliation motivation ($N = 512$), attention was positively associated with elaboration ($\beta = .50, p < .001$). However, neither attention ($\beta = .09, p > .05$) nor elaboration ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) was associated with political knowledge. For those with high affiliation motivation ($N = 508$), attention was positively associated with elaboration ($\beta = .56, p < .001$) and with political knowledge ($\beta = .18, p < .05$). However, the path from elaboration to political knowledge was non-significant ($\beta = -.19, p > .05$). In order to examine the moderating effects, the χ^2 difference test between the two groups was conducted with the use of a χ^2 distribution with one degree of freedom. Significant differences were found between the groups especially for the paths from attention to elaboration and from attention to political knowledge. The results indicated that affiliation motivation moderates the path from attention to elaboration. In other words, those with a higher affiliation motivation are more likely elaborate on political content after they attend to it ($\Delta\chi^2 = 108, p < .01$). Hence H5a was supported. Furthermore, affiliation motivation also moderates the relationship between attention and political knowledge. That is, those with a higher affiliation need are more likely to gain knowledge when they attend to political content on Facebook, in comparison to low affiliation individuals ($\Delta\chi^2 = 110, p < .01$). Therefore, H5b was also supported. However, there was no statistical difference between the two groups for the path from elaboration to political knowledge. Hence H5c was not supported.

In the main study, surveillance was significantly associated with attention and

elaboration, affiliation only with elaboration and attention with political knowledge; however, the results portray a different picture for the low and high affiliation sub groups. For the high affiliation group, attention to political content on Facebook was significantly associated with political knowledge, but for the low affiliation group, it was not. This is aligned to findings from earlier studies (Li & Chiou, 2013) that state that individuals with a strong affiliation motivation may gain more SNS use. It is possible that such individuals give more importance to the opinions of their significant others and are therefore, likely to mull over them. In the process, they connect this information to past experiences or prior knowledge, and place it in the context of a broader framework. This phenomenon would then predict knowledge.

Chapter Nine Impact on Political Behavior

Research on political knowledge indicates that it is closely related to political participation; in fact it can serve as a precursor for participation in political activities (Galston, 2001), including voting (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Howe, 2006) and other non-voting participatory activities (Gallego & Oberski, 2012; Johann, 2012). Niemi and Junn (1998) reiterated this idea when they described political knowledge as "a prerequisite to successful political engagement" (p. 9), enabling citizens to achieve their political goals. These findings necessitated an additional analysis exploring the impact of the relevant motivation and information processing variables on political knowledge and the latter's connection to political participation.

Method

The sample and measures for the independent variables (surveillance gratification, affiliation, attention, elaboration and political knowledge) were similar to the previous study. However, the dependent variables were *traditional political participation* (TPP) and *political activity on Facebook* (PAFB). Political participation can be described as "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selections of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take" (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 2). Traditional political participation is more time-consuming than political activity online or on Facebook, and often requires more civic skills. In fact, some scholars feel that online political activity has minimal impact on offline or real world political participation (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Nevertheless, the importance of online political activity cannot be refuted, with some even arguing that online participation has a far-reaching impact on the democratic process (Gil de

Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014).

Five items were used to measure TPP. The answers ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These were: “*I initiate political discussions among my friends/family,*” “*I can convince someone which way to vote,*” “*if needed, I can contact a political leader or a public official,*” “*I can speak publicly about political issues in our country,*” and “*I follow political debates or discussion in the media.*” In order to capture the total number of participatory behaviors a summative scale was created ($M = 15.48$, $SD = 4.07$).

In the second model, the dependent variable was *political activity on Facebook* (PAFB). Four items measured on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) were used to capture PAFB. The questions were: “*I follow a political party or a political leader on Facebook,*” “*I try to persuade others on Facebook to become politically active,*” “*I like to comment on political posts on Facebook,*” “*I like to contribute to political discussions on Facebook.*” A summative scale was created to assess the level of engagement on Facebook ($M = 11.18$, $SD = 3.80$).

Analysis. Pearson’s correlation (Appendix E) was conducted, following which regression analysis was used. For both models, the predictor variables were entered in five blocks- the first block consisted of control variables (age, gender and religion), the second block comprised motivations, the third block had attention, the fourth block included elaboration, and the fifth had political knowledge.

Results

The study used OLS regression analysis to extend the Cognitive Mediation Model to behavior and to assess the impact of the predictor variables on traditional political participation and on political participation on Facebook. Key differences between the models were seen.

As mentioned earlier, Model 1 consisted of traditional political participation (TPP) as the dependent variable. Age and religion were not significant predictors of TPP, but gender was ($\beta = -.11, p < .001$). It showed that men are more likely to participate in TPP than women. While affiliation motivation ($\beta = .04, p > .05$) turned out to be non-significant, surveillance gratification ($\beta = .25, p < .001$) predicted TPP significantly. In addition, attention ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and elaboration ($\beta = .09, p < .05$) were associated with TPP. Political knowledge ($\beta = .07, p < .05$) was also significant in predicting traditional political participation. The full model explained 17.8% of the variance.

Model 2 consisted of Political Activity on Facebook (PAFB) as the dependent variable. Among the control variables, both gender and religion were significant in predicting PAFB. Surveillance gratification was also a significant predictor of PAFB ($\beta = .31, p < .001$), but affiliation motivation was not ($\beta = .05, p > .05$). In addition, both attention ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and elaboration ($\beta = .15, p < .001$) were significantly associated with PAFB. However, political knowledge had no association with PAFB ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$). The full model explained 21.9% of the variance.

	<i>Model 1: TPP</i>	<i>Model 2: PAFB</i>
Block 1: Demographic variables		
Age	.06	.01
Gender	-.11**	-.09**
Religion	-.06	-.08**
ΔR^2 (%)	1.9	1.6
Block 2: Motivations		
Surveillance	.25***	.31***
Affiliation	.04	.05
ΔR^2 (%)	9.7	13.0
Block 3: Attention	.31***	.31***
ΔR^2 (%)	16.9	20.2
Block 4: Elaboration	.09*	.15***
ΔR^2 (%)	17.4	21.6
Block 5: Political Knowledge	.07*	-.05
Total R^2 (%)	17.8	21.9

Table 2. Standardized Linear Regression Coefficients Predicting Traditional Political

Participation and Political Activity on Facebook ($N = 1020$). $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$.

$***p < .001$.

For model 1, surveillance gratification, along with attention to and elaboration on the content and political knowledge all predict participation in offline political activities such as following political debates on traditional media, discussing these events with friends and family or even speaking publicly about an issue. Affiliation motivation had no impact on these activities. However, this model successfully extends CMM to political participation, and garners support for previous literature that postulates that political knowledge will be associated with political participation (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003).

The results from Model 2 were quite similar to that of Model 1. Among the control variables, gender and religion significantly predicted PAFB. Affiliation motivation had no association with this variable. Surveillance gratification, attention, and elaboration all impacted PAFB positively. It suggests that the need to monitor the environment induce users to attend to and mull over political information, which might then encourage users to participate politically on Facebook. This political activity is not necessarily preceded by knowledge acquisition as the non-significant relationship between the two has shown. It is entirely possible that attention to and reflection on political content can encourage users to post, repost, or comment on others' political posts. In a way, this supports Yoo and Gil de Zuniga's findings that the political use of Facebook is a significant predictor of participation (Yoo & Gil de Zuniga, 2014). Although the latter only examined online and offline participation, and not political activity on Facebook, it can be argued that consumption of political content on Facebook can impact PAFB. The following chapter elaborates this point.

Chapter Ten General Discussion

An efficient democracy is predicated on citizens who have access to timely and frequent information. Political content found online have both these features, which can impact people's awareness about political events and issues. However, individual factors such as motivations determine the extent to which learning occurs, if at all (McLeod, Kosicki, & Pan, 1991).

In some ways, the findings from the main study diverged from past CMM research thereby demonstrating that the results are not generalizable across samples. As noted on page 11, past CMM studies have usually collected their data from American samples while this study gathered its data from a different sample. In this sample of Facebook users, surveillance gratification is associated with attention to and elaboration on the political content. On the other hand, affiliation motivation is associated only with elaboration but not with attention. This is in contrast to the findings from the preliminary study that has shown that a positive relationship exists between affiliation motivation and attention. The non-significant relationship in the main study can possibly be explained by the fact that individuals in this sample were probably more inclined to maintain harmony and exhibited a tendency to act in an appropriate manner (Martin, 1984). This could have caused them not to attend to political stories as these are often divisive and can easily alienate one's friends. These factors might have predicted the lack of attention given to political content posted by friends. Furthermore, supporting Eveland (2001) and his colleagues (2003), this study showed that attention is associated with elaboration and political knowledge. That is

to say, individuals who have the need to know about the environment will spend time on news/political content, which will be associated with subsequent knowledge gain.

As expected, the moderation hypothesis found that among individuals with a strong affiliation motivation, attention positively predicted elaboration and knowledge. Among the low affiliation subgroup, neither attention nor elaboration was associated with knowledge. Since individuals with a strong affiliation motivation have a sense of identity that is dependent on their social network (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2011), they are more likely invest more in their networks. Due to this, they are more inclined to accumulate knowledge from their friends' posts, which might not be the case with the latter. Therefore, all else remaining equal, the low affiliation motivation individuals will be less likely to display significant associations between attention and political knowledge.

Elaboration and Political Knowledge

It was also interesting to note that in both the studies, elaboration was not significantly associated with knowledge, repeating the findings from prior research (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004; Eveland, Seo, & Marton, 2002). This shows that the relationship between elaboration and political knowledge is complex and multifaceted, especially on a platform like Facebook. There are a variety of factors like (a) individual constraints, (b) the form and structure of the site and (c) absence of relevant background information or knowledge that could have led to the non-significant relationship. The following paragraphs will illustrate this point.

The Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing (Lang, 2000; 2006) states that individuals have limited capacity to process knowledge. In order to learn from a mediated message, the information has to be encoded, stored and then retrieved at an opportune time. Encoding occurs when an

individual is exposed to stimuli (in this case, news information), some of which is transferred to the working memory. This information is then linked to previously held knowledge (elaboration). Retrieval occurs when this information is reactivated along with connections and associations made with previously held information. All of these sub processes demand the allocation of cognitive resources, and these collectively determine the outcome. If any one of these is characterized by a lack of effort, knowledge acquisition will suffer (Lang, 2000; 2006). Or, for that matter, if an individual is flooded with more information than one can efficiently handle, it could “cause the system to overload and jam” (Severin, 1967, p. 241). Therefore, Rahinel, et al., (2016) have highlighted the importance of structure. If the structure of the news is linear, it would spur thinking and aid elaboration. Facebook is anything but. On the site, one can click on the news article or picture, navigate back and forth, explore the embedded links, read others’ posts or discussions, look at information along the side of the newsfeed-- indeed, there are many distractions that can hamper learning.

The existence of cognitive load (Miller, 1956) can also impact knowledge elaboration. Cognitive load can be defined as "the amount of mental effort required to locate specific information and understand how this information is oriented within a larger information source" (Eveland, 2001b, p. 56). Online text comprising hyperlinks tends to impose more cognitive load than traditional print medium and is probably the reason prior studies on learning from print versus Web have shown that print users tend to recall and recognize more information than Web users (Sundar, Narayan, Obregon, & Uppal, 2008; Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000). Navigating a non-linear structure can abet the feeling of disorientation, with the effect that despite best effort individuals are not able to correctly recall information. Mayer (2005) has demonstrated that if any information is high in cognitive load, learning will be

hampered. Since the newsfeed is frequently accompanied by links and sidebars, one chances upon more information than one can learn meaningfully causing an individual to be disoriented. Due to its form and structure, and constant shifting of information on one's newsfeed and along the side, elaboration can be adversely impacted. Other scholars have also agreed that interactivity and hyperlinks can cause cognitive overload and impede learning (Oppenhaffen & d'Haenens, 2011; Sundar, 2000).

Furthermore, for elaboration to be effective, it must reduce the "arbitrariness of relationships", implying that the background information must also be presented clearly. When individuals do not have sufficient background information available, the elaboration that takes place will not be aid integration of knowledge (Stein, Littlefield, Bransford, & Persampieri, 1984). This is especially true of individuals who attempt to acquire knowledge of a domain that was previously not known to them. They struggle to learn and integrate new concepts (Stein & Bransford, 1979). Eveland, Marton, and Seo (2004) have also articulated this point. They surmised that young adults generally have little personal experience with politics and therefore tend to be less interested in political topics. This impacts their ability to make connections between issues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). Therefore, Stein et al., (1984) argue that they must " often be helped to use previously unrelated aspects of their knowledge in order to create elaborations that help them understand the significance or relevance of events" and increase their knowledge (Stein et al., 1984, p. 528). Since this study did not render any such help, it is likely that the elaboration that had occurred during the survey was nebulous, thereby leading to a non-significant relationship with political knowledge.

Needless to say, the extent to which individuals elaborate on a given issue would also hinge on the importance and relevance of the issue at hand. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) have concluded that individuals process information systematically when the issue is important to them. Involvement helps people to filter the information so that only the relevant news is retained for information processing (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Widing & Talarzyk, 1993). A lack of involvement will result in inadequate cognitive effort. Even when the news is multimodal, less involved individuals will not be sufficiently encouraged to learn from the news. Therefore, it is possible that excessive information, lack of prior knowledge etc. could have a role in play in inhibiting knowledge of young people.

Affiliation motivation and Surveillance gratification

A strong correlation was found between the need for affiliation and surveillance gratification. While it is true that these two motivations govern different areas of human activity, they do seem to be connected on Facebook. It is possible that other motivations (like surveillance gratification), are subordinated to the need for affiliation, which is primary and precipitates all activity on this platform. The predominant reason for users to log onto Facebook is to maintain relationships with friends (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Joinson, 2008; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Saleh, Jani, Marzouqi, Khajeh, & Rajan, 2011; Sheldon, 2008). Users like to view their friends' status updates and posts, peruse photos, locate the activities of their friends and so on. In the process, they are exposed to or discuss the news that their friends post. Thinking about the news in this context is likely to stem from their need for affiliation. Though it is possible that such an individual might also display a high need for surveillance, the act of logging on to Facebook is likely to be triggered by their affiliation need.

The Uses and Gratification literature postulates that surveillance is one of the most cited reasons for consumption of the news (Becker, 1979; McLeod & Becker, 1981); individuals monitor the news so that they can learn about their environment. However, when individuals consume news through traditional media, the viewpoints they are exposed to would be that of their immediate family or friends. On a socially networked platform, the exposure to news content is curated by a diverse group of friends- one reads the news content that their friends post and in the process is also exposed to the views and opinions of others in the network. Therefore, thinking about the news is no longer a private act and can hardly be explained by surveillance motivation alone.

In addition, one's group of friends on Facebook is usually a self-selected pool (Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield, & Vitak, 2010) wherein the information shared will be perceived to be more credible (Kaye & Johnson, 2011; Metzger, Flanagin, & Medders, 2010). Nonetheless, if users encounter information on the site that challenges their viewpoints it is not necessary that they will judge it for credibility or its lack thereof (Kim, 2011). One of the benefits of information seeking on the site is that it is neither linked with seeking validating information nor avoiding conflicting view points (Kaye & Johnson, 2011). When users browse their newsfeed and stumble upon news content, they are likely to do so with an open mind. While the data shows that both the low-affiliation and high-affiliation groups pay attention to political content, it is only among the latter that attention significantly predicts political knowledge. High affiliation need individuals have a greater desire to attend to information posted by their friends, which is then associated with knowledge. Low-affiliation need individuals would not have any such compulsion.

Impact on political behavior

With regard to the impact on political behavior, the results have shown surveillance gratification serves as a positive significant motivator for both models. Perhaps the election period with its heavy onslaught of news propels individuals to look for information. Attention and elaboration are also associated with TPP via political knowledge. This finding is rather meaningful, for it indicates that political knowledge acquired through Facebook can impact such activities as convincing someone which way to vote, discussing politics with friends and family or following discussions in the media. Because youth in India are more likely than older adults to spend time on Facebook (Pew Research Center, 2012), it is possible that spending time on the site will be associated with participatory activities. And since they have mostly been quite disengaged from politics, the importance of this finding cannot be undermined. In fact, the election in 2014 saw young citizens actively participate in the process for the very first time in history of the country. For educated young citizens in India, political information on Facebook can become a catalyst for participation.

With regard to PAFB, the findings have shown that surveillance gratification, attention and cognitive elaboration can motivate users to get involved. However, contrary to previous research (Eveland, 2001a) attention and cognitive processing were not significantly associated with knowledge, though they were connected with following a leader on Facebook, discussing/commenting on politics and convincing others to become politically active. Since these activities are not predicted by knowledge gain, it is possible that partisanship or political affiliation motivate individuals to participate. Facebook could reinforce one's faith in the party or leader,

which would prompt users to encourage their friends to vote a certain way or to follow the preferred leader on the site.

Affiliation motivation turned out to be non-significant in predicting TPP and PAFB. Political matters can be quite contentious and for individuals interested in maintaining harmony, the thought of inviting disapproval from any quarter can serve as a deterrent. Considering the heterogeneity of the network and the diversity of opinions held by one's contacts, it might not be as easy task to openly discuss political issues or to comment on discussions on Facebook. It is likely that due to this reason affiliation motivation had no association with participation.

While some findings were expected, others were not. Evidence from Model 1 suggested that men participate more than women, which is aligned to previous literature on the topic (Chang, 2007; Wen, Hao, & George, 2013). Second, even though Facebook has been berated for giving rise to *slacktivism*, the allegations clearly are not all true. The findings have shown the opposite. The acts of convincing others to become politically active, vote a certain way or speak publicly about issues go beyond the definition of *slacktivism*. One must be sufficiently motivated to partake in these activities and Facebook use seems to bolster these acts of participation. Finally, the results demonstrated that not only do the youth use Facebook as a platform for participation, they are sufficiently encouraged to participate in a traditional setting as well. Given the fact that youth comprise nearly one third of the population in democratic India, this finding cannot be undermined.

In the television era, Putnam (1995) had expressed his concern about time displacement, lamenting that television viewing deters individuals from participating in civic activities; the more time they spent watching TV, the less time they had for civic engagement and political activities. With the advent of the Internet, this

argument has been extended to online realm as well (Bugeja, 2004; Kraut et al., 1998; Nie, 2001). With regard to viewing television, some scholars (e.g., Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994) have refuted this hypothesis claiming that watching the news on TV would help citizens obtain information on important issues that would drive civic and political engagement. Shah, Rojas, and Cho (2009) point out that the effects of media on civic engagement and political participation are dependent on motivations of the audience; if viewers watch a news program with the intention of obtaining knowledge, they will. On the other hand, if they view a broadcast with the intention of passing time they will not be sufficiently encouraged to dwell on the news or be politically engaged henceforth. The moderation analysis suggests that Putnam's concern does not hold true in the era of Facebook. While individuals log on to Facebook to connect with their friends, it is evident that their time on the site is not completely wasted. They attend to and reflect on political information on the site, which subsequently predicts their knowledge of politics.

There are a few theoretical implications of this study. As is typical of a post-election period, there was an abundance of political information available online and on traditional platform when the survey was conducted. Clearly, the users with a low-affiliation need attended to the information but it was not associated with political knowledge. I argue that for such individuals attention to political content would certainly not predict political knowledge during the lull that characterizes a non-election period. In addition, those who possess a strong affiliation streak might benefit the most when it comes to learning about politics from Facebook. It is necessary to look beyond the motivations that have traditionally been associated with political knowledge and explore other factors. A fresh perspective is needed with regard to political knowledge in the context of social media.

Second, the non-significant effect of elaboration on knowledge reveals that elaboration is not always associated with learning. If several disconnected pieces of information are presented simultaneously, one cannot assimilate the information in a meaningful fashion (Miller, 1956; Seller, 1988). In fact, scholars note that an individual can only process two or three “novel interacting elements” at any given time (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003, p. 2). On platforms like Facebook, where various bits of information are presented concurrently in a non-linear fashion, this can indeed present a hindrance. The positive relationship between elaboration and knowledge, as evidenced in previous research, can probably be attributed to news consumption via the traditional media. Stein and colleagues (1984) have also highlighted that the elaborative process differs between those who have prior knowledge of the topic and those who lack it, implying that among the latter little to no elaboration will occur. Therefore, a nuanced look at elaboration is necessary (Stein et al., 1984).

Finally, as Sundar (2008) has highlighted, Facebook users experience a sense of agency when sharing news on the site. Agency can be defined as “the degree to which the self feels that he/she is a relevant actor in the CMC situation” (Sundar, 2008, p. 61). The affordances of the site allow them to post comments and engage in discussions even with their contacts, thereby encouraging them to reflect on the news. Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar (2015) point out these features can motivate users to be more engaged in current events. They further elaborate that as a result of the interaction that occurs as a response to one’s posts, Facebook users tend to have a greater sense of agency than bloggers. On Facebook, the source does not merely transmit information but acts as a moderator, eliciting views and managing the interaction. This social aspect of the self as agency has ramifications for political participation that needs to be explored further.

This dissertation raises some important questions about generalizability. Prior studies on CMM have based their findings on American students and this sample was an exception. While many relationships were replicated in these studies, the path from elaboration to political knowledge was not. It turned out to be non-significant. This relationship ought to be examined in other understudied populations. Furthermore, as the moderation test showed, among those with a strong affiliation motivation, attention will be associated with elaboration and political knowledge. Given the fact that this motivation is very primal, it is very likely that phenomenon can be generalized to other populations.

Limitations and Conclusion

This dissertation has a few limitations that can be addressed in future work. It is based on a convenience sample of university students and any generalization to other groups should be done with caution. While this study examines motivations and political knowledge in a different context than that undertaken by Eveland (2001; 2002) and his colleagues (2003), the fact remains that this was indeed a convenience sample. Second, this study is based on a cross-sectional survey where it is difficult to establish causality. Though Eveland and colleagues were able to demonstrate causality through their work (2003; 2005), this study is unable to state the causal order with certainty. Finally, as is usually the case with knowledge measurement, it is difficult to ascertain if the current knowledge items were completely representative of the events of the day. This also hinders generalizability to an extent.

Despite the limitations, this study contributes to extant literature in a couple of ways. It reveals that affiliation motivation serves as an important motivation for knowledge accumulation on Facebook. It is associated with knowledge gain even among individuals with no or little prior knowledge. Prior research has examined

political knowledge mostly from a cognitive perspective; this study has demonstrated that on Facebook knowledge is socially driven just as elaboration is. Though their work, Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar (2015) demonstrated that elaboration on Facebook is socially driven; users cognitively processed the news while sharing it with their network. In fact, the comments received from friends enabled the user to get a new perspective and also be more involved with that story. The authors reiterated that elaboration should no longer be thought of as a purely cognitive process. This study extends the argument and asserts that political knowledge also can no longer be considered a purely cognitive process. SNSs like Facebook bring a social aspect into play. Additionally, for political knowledge, both civic and current knowledge questions have been incorporated. The study found that both surveillance and affiliation motivations are strongly correlated on Facebook, thereby extending the Cognitive Mediation Model. Future work can examine the impact of affiliation motivation on political knowledge through a panel study. In addition, researchers can investigate and compare the impact of the motivation on news consumption on other SNS such as Twitter. After all, as Gil de Zuniga (2012) has pointed out, SNS remains a “thrilling venue to conduct research in the years to come” (p. 132).

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Appendix A: Preliminary Study

Surveillance (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$)

1. Facebook helps me to understand what is going on in the world. (.65)
2. I like to spend time on Facebook to get information that I can pass to others. (.69)
3. Facebook helps me to be more informed about current events. (.72)
4. I can find interesting or unusual news stories on Facebook that are not available in the mainstream media. (.59)
5. Through Facebook I can learn more about issues that affect people like myself. (.65)
6. I can obtain immediate knowledge of important news events on Facebook. (.63)
7. I use the news on Facebook to give me more facts to backup my opinions. (.60)

Affiliation (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$)

1. Just being on Facebook and finding out about other people is one of the most interesting things I can think about doing. (.58)
2. I feel like I have really accomplished something valuable when someone else 'likes' or comments on something I have posted. (.54)
3. I would find it very satisfying to be able to make 'friends' with whomever I liked on Facebook. (.55)
4. The main thing I like about being on Facebook is the contact with others. (.56)
5. I think I get satisfaction out of contact with others more than most people realize. (.58)
6. One of the most enjoyable things I can think of that I like to do is just going through my newsfeed to see what others are doing. (.57)

Attention (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$)

1. I read posts on politics that I come across on Facebook. (.55)
2. I pay attention to posts on politics that I come across on Facebook. (.65)
3. I pay attention to photos of political candidates/leaders on Facebook. (.69)
4. I pay attention to political videos on Facebook. (.67)

Elaboration (Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$)

1. I often find myself thinking about political information that I've seen on Facebook. (.75)
2. I often tie what I see on Facebook news to ideas I've had before. (.54)
3. I often try to relate what I see on Facebook news to my own personal experiences. (.50)

Political Knowledge

1. The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by _____. (.54)
2. The members of the Lok Sabha hold office for a term of _____ years. (.57)
3. The first Prime Minister of India was _____. (.63)
4. Which party formed the government in Delhi after the 2013 polls? (.62)

Appendix B: Pearson's Correlation for Preliminary Study

	Surveillance	Affiliation	Attention	Elaboration	Political Knowledge
Surveillance	1	.489**	.305**	.380**	-.012
Affiliation	.489**	1	.222**	.355**	-.059
Attention	.305**	.222**	1	.565**	-.002
Elaboration	.380**	.355**	.565**	1	-.053
Political Knowledge	-.012	-.059	-.002	-.053	1

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix C: Main Study

Surveillance (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$)

1. Facebook helps me to understand what is going on in the world. (.80)
2. I like to spend time on Facebook to get information on current political events that I can pass to others. (.68)
3. Facebook helps me to be more informed about current political events. (.68)
4. I can find interesting or unusual news stories on Facebook that are not available in the mainstream media. (.54)
5. Through Facebook I can learn more about issues that affect people like myself. (.62)
6. I can obtain immediate knowledge of important political news events on Facebook. (.68)
7. I use the news on Facebook to give me more facts to back up my opinions. (.58)
8. I use the news on Facebook to see how politicians stand on issues. (.60)

Affiliation (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$)

1. Just being on Facebook and finding out about other people is one of the most interesting things I can think about doing. (.53)
2. I feel like I have really accomplished something valuable when someone else 'likes' or comments on something I have posted. (.59)
3. I would find it very satisfying to be able to make 'friends' with whomever I liked on Facebook. (.50)
4. The main thing I like about being on Facebook is the contact with others. (.56)
5. I think I get satisfaction out of contact with others more than most people realize. (.57)
6. One of the most enjoyable things I can think of that I like to do is just going through my newsfeed to see what others are doing. (.53)

Attention (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$)

1. I read posts on politics that I come across on Facebook. (.71)
2. I pay attention to posts on politics that I come across on Facebook. (.74)
3. I pay attention to political photos on Facebook. (.71)
4. I pay attention to political videos on Facebook. (.62)

Elaboration (Cronbach's $\alpha = .68$)

1. I often find myself thinking about political information that I've seen on Facebook. (.70)
2. I often tie what I see in the news stories on Facebook news to ideas I've had before. (.61)
3. I often try to relate what I see in the news stories on Facebook to my own personal experiences. (.59)
4. I rarely spend much time thinking about the political information that I read about on Facebook.³ (.53)

Political Knowledge

1. The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by _____. (.59)
2. The present Lok Sabha is the _____. (.54)
3. The members of the Lok Sabha hold office for a term of _____ years. (.54)

³Reverse coded

4. The President can dissolve the office of the Lok Sabha on _____. (.56)
5. Arvind Kejriwal is the leader of which of the following parties? (.58)
6. Which of the following constituencies had Narendra Modi as a contestant? (.64)
7. What was the name of the 2013 anti-corruption bill that sought to establish an independent body to investigate corruption cases? (.68)
8. “*Acche din aane wale hain*” was which party’s campaign slogan? (.52)
9. Of the following parties, which party won the most seats in the 2014 election? (.66)
10. Who is the current Home Minister of India? (.58)
11. Which neighboring country did Narendra Modi visit recently as his first foreign destination since he became Prime Minister? (.60)
12. What is the name of the Indian state that has been created recently? (.63)

Appendix D: Pearson's Correlation for Main Study

	Surveillance	Affiliation	Attention	Elaboration	Political Knowledge
Surveillance	1	.559**	.507**	.472**	.097**
Affiliation	.559**	1	.336**	.380**	-.017
Attention	.507**	.336**	1	.532**	.041
Elaboration	.472**	.380**	.532**	1	-.048
Political Knowledge	.097**	-.017	.041	-.048	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix E: Pearson's Correlation for TPP and PAFB

	Surveillance	Affiliation	Attention	Elaboration	PK	TPP
Surveillance	1	.559**	.507**	.472**	.097**	.277**
Affiliation	.559**	1	.336**	.380**	-.017	.194**
Attention	.507**	.336**	1	.532**	.041	.378**
Elaboration	.472**	.380**	.532**	1	-.048	.286**
PK	.097**	-.017	.041	-.048	1	.079*
TPP	.277**	.194**	.378**	.286**	.079*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

	Surveillance	Affiliation	Attention	Elaboration	PK	PAFB
Surveillance	1	.559**	.507**	.472**	.097**	.337**
Affiliation	.559**	1	.336**	.380**	-.017	.230**
Attention	.507**	.336**	1	.532**	.041	.408**
Elaboration	.472**	.380**	.532**	1	-.048	.355**
PK	.097**	-.017	.041	-.048	1	-.032
PAFB	.337**	.230**	.408**	.355**	-.032	1

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).