IRENA POSPISZYL

The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

irenapospiszyl@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0001-9252-9523

EVERYTHING FOR SALE – NET GENERATION RELATIONSHIPS TRAPS

WSZYSTKO NA SPRZEDAŻ, CZYLI O PUŁAPKACH RELACYJNYCH POKOLENIA SIECI

SUMMARY

Adults are anxious about young people's extremely intense and often non-alternative involvement in the virtual world. Research increasingly shows that adolescents are more likely to interact with their peers in social networks than in face-to-face relationships, and many of the behaviors favored by previous generations have been outclassed and replaced by virtual preferences. Jean Tweenge, who studies the specificity of generations since the second half of the twentieth century, emphasizes that this is a phenomenon that has not happened in any previous generation, from the boomers of the 1960s to. However, when we analyze this phenomenon more closely,

it turns out that it was both predictable and inevitable, and yet beyond the adaptation skills of all participants in modern life.

The article deals with reflections on the consequences of living in a world dominated by instant messengers. The article aims to draw attention to the threats and traps posed by the constant presence of Internet communication in the development of modern youth.

Streszczenie

Niepokoi dorosłych niezwykle intensywne i często bezrefleksyjne, zaangażowanie modzieży w świat wirtualny. Badania coraz częściej pokazują że młodzież chętniej podejmuje kontakty z rówieśnikami w sieciach społecznościowych, niż w bezpośrednich relacjach twarzą w twarz, a wiele zachowań preferowanych przez poprzednie pokolenia zostało zastąpionych wirtualnymi wyborami. Jean Twenge, badająca specyfikę pokoleń od drugiej połowy XX wieku, podkreśla że jest to fenomen, który nie zdarzył się w żadnym poprzednim pokoleniu, od boomersów z lat sześćdziesiątych poczynając, przez pokolenie X, pokolenia mileniarsów, pokolenie Z, aż do chwili obecnej. Kiedy jednak bliżej analizujemy owo zjawisko, okazuje się że było ono zarówno przewidywalne, jak i nieuchronne, a mimo to przerastające umiejętności przystosowawcze wszystkich uczestników współczesnego życia. Pokolenie wyrastające w stałej obecności Internetu Jean Twenge nazywa *iGeneration,* generacją interenetową. Częściej jednak znajdziemy określenie " pokolenie w sieci", lub "pokolenie sieci".

Artykuł dotyczy refleksji nad konsekwencjami życia w świecie zdominowanym przez internetowe komunikatory. Celem artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na zagrożenia i pułapki jakie stwarza stała obecność komunikacji internetowej w rozwoju współczesnej młodzieży

Keywords: *commercialization of the self, narcissism, exhibitionist training, emotional exhibitionism*

Słowa kluczowe: *komercjalizacja własnego ja, narcyzm, ekshibicjonistczny trening, emocjonalny ekshibicjonizm,*

Introduction

It is believed that if you are not on Messenger, Tik Tok or Facebook, you do not exist. One journalist on a radio show claimed that this is a common belief among young people. There is something about it. If we look at the popularity of social networks among today's youth, this statement seems not just a metaphor, but a fact. Research by CBOS (2015) showed that 93% of young people used one of the above-mentioned media platforms regular basis, although these studies come from the period when the use of social media was not the main, and in some cases the only available, form of communication between people, as it used to take place five years later, i.e. during the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, when for over a year both learning, social contacts and work in many groups took place remotely, using media platforms. The research of the team from the NASK conducted in 2020, already during the period of online education, shows that teenagers spent on average nearly five hours a day (4.5 hours) online, which of course was mainly related to the obligation to study during the pandemic. However, 21.3% of young people spent 8 hours or more on the computer and online on school holidays and weekends. If we add smartphone use to this, it was revealed that a Polish teenager spends 12 hours a day online. An equally big problem is that a large number of respondents use the Internet in a „problematic" way, that is for too long, without parental control and caution in the transfer of sensitive data (33.6%); – 16.9% of teenagers spend long hours on the Internet at night, of course, also most often outside the control of their parents (Lange 2021).

When asked what they use the Internet for in their free time, – 77.9% said that to communicate with loved ones, and colleagues; – 47.8% indicated social networking; – 6.1% created videos and processed photos, and 2.2% ran their websites. Two-thirds of parents (67.3%) do not use any online parental controls (Lange 2021). The popularity of Tik Tok, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, Messenger, Telegram, Viber, Teams, Zoom, and many others are growing exponentially, and importantly, it is not difficult to use them even technically clumsy. It is hard to imagine social contacts today without using any media platform (Such-Pyrgiel 2012, p 79). This is undoubtedly one of the greatest civilizational facilitations in interpersonal relations. The Internet is

also an invaluable facilitation of everyday life. It is also an important source of knowledge about the world. Finally, it creates a lot of opportunities for community life, it is a source of many pleasures resulting from it.

The society of the spectacle

However, this possibility also has a dark, dangerous side. Our lives are increasingly deprived of an important element of security which is the result of the mutual trust of people who know each other well, the preservation of certain spheres of functioning only to the space of people from the closest surroundings, a sense of privacy, the ability to be with oneself, getting used to loneliness, trust in one's reflections, thoughts and many other. We are becoming more and more community of people whose lives take place in public view. Involuntarily, we constantly participate in public performances and watch the performances of others. No Wonder Guy Debord (2006) calls contemporary generations the society of the spectacle.

So let's take a closer look at the dangers of this public life, one of the most striking features of our modern age.

1. First of all, as already mentioned, the Internet creates a reality devoid of authenticity, staged, and poor in communication which however, imperceptibly invades our lives, which, despite all these shortcomings, we gradually get used to, which we participate and begin to treat it deadly seriously, losing a dangerous sense of distance from this unreal world. The Internet affects only our two senses – sight and hearing, but it is deprived of the entire context in which the face-to-face relationship takes place and which allows us to better understand our interlocutor. First of all, we see the mask he puts on when he wants to present himself to us. We do not see the nervous movement of hands, tension floating in the air, personal habits, space marked by his presence, etc. We notice joy, pride, dissatisfaction, pain, and longing only because the author of the message *instructed* us how to understand his state of mind.

2. This determines another consequence – it maximizes the concentration of attention on oneself, on presenting oneself appropriately to all participants of the relationship, and which is conducive to the development and consolidation of narcissistic personality traits. The popularity of the selfie is the simplest example of this. Today is not embarrassing to take pictures of themselves in all sorts of poses and elaborate facial expressions and then post them online, for no other reason than to emphasize their beauty or to mark their identity. It is true that 40 years ago Christopher Lasch predicted a special development of the culture of narcissism in his famous book *Culture of Narcissism* (1980), but never before has reality provided so much evidence of the validity of his opinion. He was not the only one, another American sociologist Jean Twenge titled one of her publications *Generation Me – Revised and Updated* (2014) presenting similar theses.

3. Thirdly, we are subject to the verdict of judges about whom we know little or nothing, based on criteria known only to them, which require to us constantly improve our self-presentation skills. These judges are, of course, all observers of our images, photos, videos, etc. posted on the web.

4. Fourthly, the Internet creates the illusion of trust in the participants of the relationship. But trust requires two sides. Meanwhile, on the other side, in the network, we have an anonymous onlooker, an observer, and a judge who evaluates our activity according to criteria known only to him. Someone can always join us unnoticed, pass it on, copy and manipulate the message, etc. And despite the fact, that most of us are aware of this kind of danger we are gradually reducing the boundaries of safe social behavior, our ability to control sensitive data abou ourselves, and passing on intimate or embarrassing details of our lives to other people. This exhibitionist needs to expose oneself in public even extends to behavior that a decade ago was shrouded in shameful secrecy. I mean unethical, dishonorable, or even reprehensible behavior, of which the narrators themselves often become heroes and which they eagerly communicate to the world. Patofilms, pathostreams, obscene photos, scandalous reality shows, tik tok videos, often created by the

heroes of these events themselves. Getting drunk on camera, posting self-recorded fights online, obscene behavior, sharing accusations with the audience, using profanity, „bragging" about cheating, divorce, illegal activities, health problems, embarrassing diseases, eavesdropping or backbiting others in front of a camera, and posting these images on the web is not a problem for their authors and heroes. The Internet is flooded with this type of news.

Magdalena Krzpień (2005), the author of an interesting monograph devoted to the The phenomenon of exhibitionism on television even talks about promoting nudity in the broad sense of the word in contemporary public media, calling this type of behavior emotional exhibitionism. It seems to reflect this general trend quite well. Indeed, one of the meanings given to the term exhibitionism is to *consciously and deliberately attract someone's attention by displaying or deliberately conspicuous behawior* [1] (Macmillan Contemporary Dictionary 1979). Intimate, or shameful behaviors once locked in the most personal space have been brought to light, and have gained the status of events shown by the narrators themselves in the light of cameras to all observers who only know the website address, and about which the narrators themselves know nothing. A if the lights on the stage were about to go out, the actors would take off their make-up and return to the real world. As if the behavior of the narrators recording these scenes in front of the camera in no way affected their assessment. As if they didn't care that their vulgar entries, obscene behavior, aggression, hurting others, or other unacceptable behavior will be remembered, and recorded on the web. However, on the Internet nothing is lost, nothing is forgotten.

AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND

Therefore, the question is, why it is so easy to make public in the media not only one's not very glorious behavior, which may be a danger to the individual in the future, be a source of deterioration of one's chances for promotion, happiness, fulfillment of dreams. Of course, the simplest answer is to refer to the technical possibilities created by the development of technology

for the average person. The Internet, smartphones, and the ease of transferring data to distance, in real time, are not only common, – but also extremely easy even for a user who is not very familiar with digital technology. But that answer would be too simple. After all, we are talking about behavior that not only can pose a threat to the individual itself, but also affects the most sensitive spheres of personality, i.e. self-consciousness, self-esteem, and even a sense of identity. There are much deeper reasons for the exhibitionist tendencies of the network generation.

A DESIRE FOR ONE'S OWN UNIQUENESS

Contemporary culture is defined primarily by large anonymous communities. It is a society of big cities, virtually unlimited space, a blurring, fluid sense of time, stability of place, moving masses of people, functioning in many social groups, often changing, in various normative systems. As Zygmunt Bauman (2000) notes, it is a society of wayfarers, episodic friends of one event, friendships built on the basis of common passions rather than blood ties, formal dependencies, and interpersonal relationships of people who know little about each other. The desire to distinguish one's individuality in the world of mass culture, to break free from the mass culture in which modern generations live, and to prove one's own uniqueness, even in the form of a scandal, becomes an identity need. In fact, modern Western societies are an unidentifiable, diffuse mass of atoms in a large social organism. This must give rise to identity anxiety. In a community that did not know the Internet, a man was connected to his local community through many informal ties. Even living in a big city, he was rooted in his community with clearly defined roles, a recognizable identity that stood out from other people, a specific person, and a name given only to him. Of course, it also had its negative sides, for example, the risk of negative stigmatization, exclusion, and limited development opportunities, but still, a man was not so much dependent on himself. He knew what his place in the community was and how the community perceived him. Nowadays, we live in a world devoid of many former limitations, we can be whom we want, move where we want, follow the norms that suit us best, and function in different

social groups at the same time. We enjoy opportunities that pre-industrial generations did not experience, but at the same time, in a specific way, we all become similar to each other. Nothing distinguishes us in this great, global collective in which we live, and no one cares about us, except for our immediate family, whose circle has also shrunk dramatically. We maintain relationships based on blood ties, no wider than 3-4 generations.

Benefits

This need for self-presentation is not only a consequence of living in globalized societies. It also has its winners, its self-made men. Civilization changes, the disappearance of class societies, and the availability of social advancements have made self-presentation the main source of success for an individual in the social world, but they have also created opportunities in this area that previous generations did not have. They allowed of creation of one's own social image, making this process independent of verification by experts and widely understood authorities. The only judge is a spectator, a walker, or a passer-by who, as we know, can be guided by various criteria. Many contemporary celebrities, popular people, and show business stars openly admit that they owe their success to their presence on social media or in the so-called reality show (Derber 2002). Others who failed to promote themselves in the mainstream media, or simply wanted to go their own way, do in the so-called. social media real careers become real media personalities. So we have a real explosion of influencers, YouTubers, and authors of podcasts, running their own channels, attracting an increasing number of regular listeners, viewers, and subscribers.

There is one more advantage of living in the society of the spectacle, available even to the average user, which is the ability to create one's own image without having to confront real life. On social networks, it's much easier to pretend to be someone you're not. When a person who knows a foreign language very poorly corresponds freely with a foreigner, there is no certainty whether we communicate with him directly or through a Google translator. If someone presents a theory with expertise, we also cannot be sure whether we are dealing with an erudite or someone who has a computer in front of him

with an open page on a given topic. It was very aptly expressed by Magdalena Krzpiet (2005) already quoted here… *Thanks to video, everyone can become their own God (create themselves in their own image)*… (p. 24). How many more opportunities does the Internet offer in this regard, since the image created by oneself may never be confronted in the real world?

The fact that we have become a society of the spectacle has its profound benefits. Our success in the social world depends on how well we present ourselves in the environment in which we live, and on how well we sell ourselves. In a society in which all non-personal sources of an individual's attractiveness have disappeared, such as class affiliation, family prestige, riches, or even possessed skills; in a society in which family and neighborly ties have been reduced to a minimum, the most important source of social position has become one's own attractiveness and the ability to sell yourself, if only to win friends, supporters, fans, but also to avoid loneliness.

A man of the postmodern era deprived of almost all normative and institutional connections in the social network, if he does not make friends, remains alone. Therefore, according to Riesaman (1970), it is more important for him whether he is liked than whether he can do something better, he focuses more on whether he can attract people to himself than whether he stands out among them, whether others like him more than whether he has some talents. This phenomenon will also be confirmed later by other well-known sociologists and contemporary researchers, such as Christopher Lasch (1980), Anthony Giddens (2001), and Zygmunt Bauman (2009). In addition, a person's life now takes place in such an often changing environment, in so many groups, and in so many relationships that the ability to adapt to this volatility becomes the most valued skill.

Exhibitionist Training

The development of psychotherapy also played a huge role in this ease of exposing oneself to an unknown observer. It was she who give permission to reveal her secrets to strangers and popularized the exposing of human problems „outside", beyond the immediate environment. Of course, the first

was the confessional. However, confession did not absolve man of his faults and weaknesses unconditionally. She did not absolve him of responsibility for his sins. The condition for absolution was repentance and the resolution to improve. On the other hand, the development of psychoanalysis, and then other forms of psychotherapy, not only created a friendly ground for revealing one's innermost secrets to strangers, – but also gave this experience the rank of scientific validity. And what is important, it neutralized the individual's responsibility for behavior that violated norms. In the therapist, external factors are usually responsible for our misery; cruel parents, traumatic experiences, inadequate educators, and difficult life. There is also no possibility of executing the therapist's recommendations. If it is too demanding from the client, we will simply change it. Finally, it would seem that a therapist, like a priest, is obliged to keep the information obtained from the client (patient) secret, but disclosing cases without providing personal data is no longer a violation of professional secrecy, as well as professional ethics. Moreover, the phenomenon has become so common that there are even public sessions.

Dangerous

There is a kind of paradox, although young people want to be unique, although they want to stand out in the community, their norm is determined by the universality of behavior, and not some imaginary authorities or social experts passing values and patterns of behavior from generation to generation.

Shooting yourself in the foot

The network generation, which manifests the need for its own uniqueness and individuality with such enthusiasm, is at the same time deathly afraid to stand out from its own group. Young people dress similarly, listen to the same music, watch the same movies, have the same aesthetic and culinary tastes, love the same gadgets, and their greatest concern seems to be being accused of not keeping up with general trends. The ease of making one's image public,

the universality of showing ethically ambiguous behavior, and the need to break out of anonymity sufficiently reduce the fear of social evaluation of making one's own image public, or more or less risky behavior.

On the other hand, commercial companies commonly present in the media drive the consumption needs that we follow so obediently and thoughtlessly, without scruples and without worrying about environmental protection. It should be noted, however, that this is not specific to the behavior of young people. The unification of consumption needs is a phenomenon of contemporary culture in general, which has been observed for at least five decades and, according to some, is characteristic of affluent societies. For example, Dawid Riesman in his book *The Lonely Crowd* (1970/ first ed.1950)[11], one of the most imaginative publications on the mechanisms of shaping social relations, emphasizes that the unification of consumption needs is an integral part of the enrichment of societies at all. When they no longer have to fight to meet their basic needs, societies redirect their attention to multiplying sensations, pleasures, and experiences. This stimulates the development of the services market, which is growing rapidly. However, for the service market to be profitable, it must create a base of customers with similar preferences. Therefore, it skillfully manipulates consumer preferences towards unifying needs, as well as creating new ones to reduce the costs of producing consumer goods. If someone asked the average consumer why he must necessarily have the latest smartphone even though he uses it only for the simplest activities, why he gets disfigured for a lot of money at a fashionable hairdresser, why he must necessarily pay an expensive gym for membership, why he can queue for hours to eat a cake with fashionable confectionery, I think most people could not come up with anything more than slogans about the quality of service. The truth, however, is much less sophisticated, we do it because it is fashionable, because it confirms our status, that we have been effectively „screwed", that is, manipulated by the creators of our needs. In welfare societies, most of our needs are transferred outside the household, but there are more and more needs that we cannot do without and which are completely unnecessary for our well-being.

The illusion of closeness

Replacing face-to-face communication with other people using social networks is as easy as it is dangerous. On the one hand, online presence easily creates the illusion of closeness, you can talk, have fun, ask for advice, occupy your mind with something, deceive the feeling of loneliness, and get the conviction that others are similar to us. We watch the same movies, use the same messengers, and view the same news, so there is always someone to talk to and something to talk about. This is the contemporary cultural context that makes us find a common theme with everyone. It can be a favorite series, a game, the fight for animal protection, a trendy movie, or the protection of consumer rights. We are not limited by time, distance, our own skills, age difference, or language. We also do not have to confront the opponent in a direct relationship. Everything we need to keep in touch can be found online, and we can also end the relationship at a time convenient for us. We approach it with enthusiasm, which lasts as long as we spend with the last interlocutor, as much as the topic itself arouses interest in the media. The NASK Report mentioned at the beginning of the article shows that three-quarters of teenagers use the Internet to chat with relatives or friends (Lange 2021).

The illusion of intimacy obtained through online communication also gives many benefits to people who reveal various adaptation problems, for example, being deprived of real opportunities to make contact, being too shy, or narcissistic. The latter reason is indicated by one of the psychotherapists, Donald Kaplan, mentioned by Philip Zimbardo (2006) in his work on shyness. Well, the mentioned therapist puts forward the thesis that shyness is a paradoxical defensive reaction of people who are characterized by grandiosity mania. The fear of failure, of being unnoticed, and ignored, is so great that, just in case, such a person prefers not to face a direct confrontation with other participants in the relationship. This tendency to withdraw in order to avoid confrontation is also quite well described by researchers dealing with methods of self-handicapping (Szmajke 1996). For these people, the Internet seems to be a safer form of relationship, it is difficult not to be noticed in it, and it creates great opportunities for self-creation. At the same time, it is a breeding ground for narcissistic features.

Decrease in social skills

One of the dangers of living online is the decline in social skills and it is a feedback proces – low social competencies make an individual more willing to communicate online, which in turn deepens the problem of low social competencies. Jean Twenge, a psychologist who has been studying generational changes for several decades, published one of her books under the telling title *iGen. Why kids growing up online are less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy, and completely unprepared for adulthood* (2017; Polish edition 2019). One of the conclusions she came up with, which surprised the author herself, is that *iGen* is the first generation to choose a chat meeting more often than face-to-face contact with peers. (She has been studying them since the 1960s.

Similar conclusions were reached by Iwona Grzegorzewska and Lidia Cierpiałkowska (2018) in a publication devoted to behavioral addictions. The authors refer to studies revealing a high positive correlation between compulsive use of the Internet and such factors as, poor relationships with peers, lack of or conflicting relationships with teachers, communication problems in the family – and in relation to personality traits; low level of agreeableness, reduced level of control of executive functions, poor attention span, high level of neuroticism, and low self-esteem. At the same time, referring to longitudinal studies, showed that before the development of Internet addiction, these people did not reveal similar problems in their relationships with other people. It can therefore be concluded that they are a consequence of excessive use of the network (p. 218-219). Research by Piotr Kwiatkowski and Ewa Jurczyk-Romanowska (2018) also indicates the existence of such a correlation. They proved a negative correlation between the propensity to engage in risky behavior online and the functionality of the family. The better the functioning of the family, the better its relations and the organization system, and the lower the tendency of its members to risky online activity, in the broad sense of the word.

Online relationships are undoubtedly less demanding of their participants and you can always use various prostheses or avatars that cannot be used in a face-to-face relationship. For this reason alone, a face-to-face relationship is a real verification of an individual's social skills

Alienation

The reduction of the family to two or three generations, the reduction of relations with relatives, the disappearance of local communities, and finally the reduction or lack of good, extensive neighborly contacts mean that contemporary man, living in large communities are in fact quite alienated in the social environment. There is no sense of family bond because the family circle has been radically limited and often even siblings start living apart from each other very early; there are no shared experiences, or memories because every few years the social environment will most likely change completely; there is no sense of group loyalty because he is not bound to any group by deep emotional ties, common rituals or symbols known only to themself – what we popularly call the cultural context, and which usually facilitates communication, and maintaining a conversation, which creates a sense of mutual understanding and community.

Today's adult inhabitants of big cities often feel a greater bond with selected friends and colleagues than with their siblings and closest neighbors. Even though they will change both in their lives many times. The process of this specific diffusion will begin at the primary school level. We effectively replace the limitation of real relations with relatives, neighbors and colleagues with contacts with virtual friends, more or less casual acquaintances. (Szarota 2018, Twenge 2019).

The feeling of loneliness and depression that often accompanies it is considered one of the significant civilizational problems of the modern world (Pospiszyl 2019). The risk of suicidal behavior increases several times in people showing symptoms of mood disorders, and depression itself is often called a disease of loneliness, abandonment, and strangeness (Muller, Beutel Wolfling 2014, Pospiszyl 2019). It is therefore no coincidence that there is a rapid (three-fold) increase in suicide attempts in children and adolescents, just after the period of forced alienation related to the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Police data, only in the last four years, the rate of suicide attempts among children and adolescents under the age of 18 has increased by nearly 300% (from 800 attempts in 2018 to 2031, and attempts in 2022)[III]. Psychologists point to the feeling of abandonment, alienation, lack

of close relationships with caregivers, and lack of lively direct relationships with peers as the main reason.

The feeling of loneliness is characteristic not only of depressive people, but it is also a feature of narcissistic personalities, and as has already been shown above, modern culture is a breeding ground for narcissism. Christopher Lasch (1980) in the already mentioned book on the culture of narcissism points out that one of the problems of narcissistic personalities is the inability to create and maintain close bonds with another person. The narcissist needs admiration, not a companion of shared experiences. However, not being able to commit to the same extent, he cannot count on the devotion of another human being. So, to some extent, he is doomed to loneliness, which he feels immediately when he lacks a favorable audience. Activity on the Internet allows him to create the illusion of participation in the community, deceive the feeling of loneliness, and also gives him a better chance of gaining fans.

Zygmunt Bauman (2000) believes that the identity symbol of modern man is a *vagabond*. I find this comparison particularly apt. We more often come into contact with other people „for a moment", play a role „for a moment", and function in a group „for a moment". In this situation, it is more important that we do well in front of this temporary audience than work on ourselves in the hope that someday the community in which we live will appreciate our efforts. However, the costs we incur of these temporary relationships and friendships are extremely high. These undoubtedly include: the lack of permanent normative references, the uncertainty of one's status, unstable self-esteem, the impermanence of friendship, and above all, the lack of a sense of being rooted and loneliness.

Conclusion

The generation living in times when the Internet did not exist, was connected with its local community by many more or less institutionalized elements of ties. He was rooted in it with clearly defined roles, a recognizable identity, distinguished from other people, clearly defined only by the name assigned to him. Currently, we live in a world in which many of the former

limitations have disappeared, but also many elements of ties with the environment. Except for our personal ties, we have nothing in common with the community, nothing distinguishes us in this great global community in which we live, and we don't care about anyone as an individual. The main source for success of an individual in the social world has become the ability to self-presentation, and the most important criterion of social success has become popularity in the group. The Internet creates great opportunities in this respect (although it was not the Internet that initiated these civilizational changes). For the network generation, it is more important to be liked than to be able to do something better. It is more focused on whether he can attract people to himself than whether he stands out among them, whether others like him, rather than whether he has any talents. However, there are many traps in this.

The pursuit of popularity in the group, the nurturing of the desire to be liked, is not at all conducive to building social bonds. Nor does it solve the problems of its own identity. The availability of the Internet has popularized and trivialized many behaviors that previously belonged to the sphere of intimacy, tied an individual with the local community, or emphasized his individuality. In addition, the undemanding criteria for participation resulted in a decrease in social skills and an increase in communication problems in real life. And finally, paradoxically, the trap is the illusion of closeness. In such a great unknown community there are no friends, there are only actors and the audience, strict judges, and reviewers related to the actors only by the awareness of participation in the same event. This leads to feelings of loneliness, alienation and increased depression. Finally, a tool that could be an important factor in communication between people seems to pose a serious threat to it.

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ENDNOTES

[I] Other and most popular, treats exhibitionism as the need to expose one's own genitals in public places, in front of strangers, to achieve sexual satisfaction.

[II] Riesman D., Glazer N, Dnney R., (1950) *The lonely Crowd, Yale University Press – polish edition, Samotny Tłum,* 1971, Warszawa, PWN.

[III] Based on an annual Report Komendy Głównej Policji.