

Cyber Z-Generation and Transforming Social Capital-A Commentary

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Abstract

The information age has trodden into a new era of the cybernetic social domain. Society and social capital are tangled in a hybrid cultural disposition. The new generation is the one experiencing a big step towards new virtual social capital compared to the old generation used to interact face-to-face. The research questions are presented with narratives: whether the authenticity of information is compromised by the virtual presence of facts and figures, which often are manipulation by politically motivated objectives or a capitalization of misleading data. Socially constructed isolation is the function of super-connectivity, leading to the formation of fragmented social borders while the virtual world connects profoundly with the virtual presence of data. This is the subject of new exploration that underpins the research premise-how the new generation builds upon the virtual data will look like in the future?

Keywords: Cyberculture; Social capital; Z-Generation; Physical space

Commentary

According to Timothy Leary (1990), new generation are mutating into another species from 'Aquiria to the Terrarium, and now we're moving into Cyberia'; as a result, we are creatures crawling to the centre of the cybernetic world, empowering individuals into self-sustaining without the need of social capital that traditionally we are familiar with [1]. The new generations are in the social network, seems very near but distant to the fact that the catchment of the virtual world has endless tentacles of connectivity and infinity geographical linkages. Today, without the presence of the cyber world, none of the new Z-generation would survive as a daily basis. Social capital is in a different form and settings, where daily needs are met by virtual helpline: consumerism, socialism, cyber-bullying, travel information all are sitting in the unknown virtual domain. Physical space is being compromised by the virtual faster accessibility. What is the future of high-street? How new generation will delineate their social interactions in the absence of the physical realm. According to the Child Mind Institute, '...kids whose social lives revolve around the online world can be led to risky situations' ... creating more personal border' [2]. Psychologist Jean Twenge says smartphones have brought about dramatic shifts in behaviour among the generation of children who grew up with the devices [3]. Today's teens are just not spending as much time with their friends in person, face-to-face, where they can read each other's' emotions and get that social support. A virtual sensory perception and border of loneliness are what concerns traditional believers of socialization. Given that using social media for more hours is linked to more loneliness: virtual world cannot substitute physical world!

Children now grow with more disconnected social life-by having a new virtual substitution. Jean Twenge demonstrated [4] that the parallel upsurge of smartphones and social media has "wrecked" a generation of young Americans by holding them captive to their devices, day and night. It is known today that how remote working can increase stress and reduce well-being since the social disengagement of individuals cannot be compensated by the virtual presence of hundreds of acquaintances. According to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 'It turns out that the people who reported spending the most time on social media more than two hours a day had twice the odds of perceived social isolation'.

Connectivity is not well-balanced if we scrutinize the marginalized nations, which OECD defines "Digital divide, is, in fact, a whole series of interlocking divides the gaps that separate segments of society as well as whole nations into those who are able to take advantage of the news ICT opportunities and those who are not" [5]. Another definition serves by Judge S et



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al. [6]: "Digital divide is now generally defined as the difference in information technology use based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status." Key Issues today is that global and local cultures are in a state of struggle, in a dual social spheres, one is the strong, connected society; another is the growing void, bordering social and personal realm, in which personal borders are often compromised by cyber threats by pushing one extremely to a dead-end, without the presence of social capital.

Cigna U.S. Loneliness Index states [7] that, most Americans are lonely, which focuses on the Generation Z (adults ages 18-22) and Millennials (adults ages 23-37)-both are lonelier and claim to be in worse health than older generations. The study shifted our focus from the benefits of the cyber world to the dark side of the social media which is alone not only a predictor of loneliness. For instance, Megan Meier from Missouri committed suicide due to cyber-bullying, suggests that cyber society is so detached when it comes to seeking social capital are heavily captivated and shift away from immediate interactions physically. This commentary

postulated on Generation Z and put forward the key question for further research: How the new generation builds upon the virtual data will look like in the future?.

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