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New Determinants of Political Socialization in the Internet Age

Abstract: The media appears to play an increasingly significant role in the process of political socialization. This is the outcome of the large amount of time people spend every day in front of their screens and other sources of information on the one hand, and from the growing ‘intimacy’ of their relations with their devices. A majority of Poles (ca. 64% in 2017 in the 15+ age group) have smartphones, and thus the possibility of being online at practically every moment. This proportion can be assumed to be even higher among schoolchildren. This precipitates a question of the extent to which access to the web influences the process of political socialization, and what impact it has on the processes of social adjustment. This article attempts to compare and review theoretical tenets of the concept of political socialization. The validity of some assumptions made in the pre-internet area is questioned in the face of the contemporary reality of the world operating in *permanently-logged-in* mode. A handful of recommendations are also put forward for a more socially useful application of the media in the adjustment of the individual (in particular young people) to living in the circumstances of media democracy.

Key words: political socialization; social media; media education, the internet

Introduction

The media, in particular online media, have rapidly been developing, becoming one of the main actors of political socialization and continuing to increase their importance (Zduniak, 2013, p. 59). They play a two-fold role. On the one hand, they provide an instrument for adjustment to life in society; on the other one, the direction of change determined by the form of the contemporary media frequently appears to contradict the values of liberal democracy established after World War Two, which

– however – does not undermine the objective goal of socialization. Socialization is a direct reproduction of the social order, and even this order demands changes. The influence of a new actor in political socialization, namely online media, constitutes a hidden element. Therefore, the consequences of the development of online media for the process of the politicization of society is worth investigating.

The aim of this paper is to present these consequences, and attempt to review the theoretical tenets of the concept and theory of political socialization. A hypothesis will be verified, according to which the goals of individuals in the process of political socialization and the ideological postulates of liberal democracy are mutually exclusive, producing a cognitive dissonance which is difficult to overcome. In connection with the above assumption, a number of questions are asked in the article, making it possible to address several phenomena in the field of political socialization, pertaining first and foremost to young people.

RQ 1. How does the system of free content created by non-professionals influence the emergence of knowledge about politics, which is an important component of forming a valuable individual in a liberal democracy?

RQ 2. What is the level of usability of short forms of network communication for the system?

RQ 3. What is the level of extremist content in the new media in comparison to traditional channels?

RQ 4. What influence can ‘filter bubbles’ or ‘echo chambers’ have on forming the views of the public in the web environment?

RQ 5. What influence does media education implemented within the framework of institutional socialization in Poland have on the forming of civic attitudes?

Employing the method of critical analysis of sources, and deduction in the field of institutional and non-institutional social adjustment of individuals within a liberal democracy, the above hypothesis is verified, leading to a proposal for certain changes to the theory, and recommendations for the actors involved in political socialization.

Classical approach to political socialization

Political socialization is a process whereby individual awareness, culture and political standpoints are continuously formed. It involves the

transfer of patterns that an individual is willing to assimilate and imitate. In this way, individuals become familiar with, and largely accept, the formal and informal rules characteristic of a given political system. Individuals are subjected to a specific pressure to encourage the adoption of behavioral patterns that are consistent with the interpretation of these rules by the main actors involved in socialization.

Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell developed a concept of political socialization which is now considered classical. They approached political socialization as a process in the course of which individuals become aware of the issues in political culture and in this framework form their own attitudes towards political phenomena (Almond, Powell, 1975, p. 589). Stanisław Michalczyk (2005, p. 167) associates political socialization with individuals' adjustment to the different socio-political roles they play in a modern democratic state. Political socialization also occurs in non-alternative regimes where it is distinguished by the restricted influence of ideologically illicit entities. According to Leszek Sobkowiak (1999, pp. 161–162), political socialization involves the ongoing shaping of an individual's awareness of political attitudes and culture, by way of receiving information from other actors and his own intellectual and behavioral activity. This concept emphasizes the interactive role of individuals, who can enhance or weaken the influence of socialization agendas.

There are numerous entities in modern societies attempting to influence political attitudes. Family, school and the mass media are institutions of essential importance in the process of political socialization whose influence has changed over time. In the mid-twentieth century, mass media were treated as an auxiliary measure. Yet towards the end of the twentieth century, their exceptional position in political socialization was recognized. Today, the influence of the internet as the most modern medium continues to grow and begins to dominate, especially when taking the impact of social media into account.

Almond and Powell distinguish between overt political socialization, involving an open transfer of information, promotion of values and assessments, and covert political socialization, in the course of which non-political patterns are conveyed which nevertheless modify individual attitudes to the roles and entities in political systems (Almond, Powell, 1975, p. 590). Political socialization can therefore be assumed to be a process which is always twofold. On the one hand, specific values, norms and models are conveyed in an open manner that the recipient is aware of, for

instance through political statements, lessons in civics, journalistic commentaries on political events, and so on. On the other one, recommended attitudes to certain significant elements of political life are conveyed under the guise of other messages, such as the selection of school reading, attaching importance to specific symbols, selection of information in mass media coverage, etc. Given the technological changes taking place in communications, it is interesting to investigate to what extent social media feature in the covert and overt channels of political socialization. Analyzing the impact of the factors of political socialization their different emotional levels need to be taken into account, and the fact that they are never free of emotions (even the allegedly neutral or objective content of school curricula). The internet, however, seems to be a medium where emotions definitely prevail over rational content, and political contexts emerge in discussion fora not even remotely related to politics, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Political socialization employs a complex grid of penalties and rewards. It is applied in order for individuals to acquire knowledge about the conventions and principles of the political game, to adopt specific attitudes, to adhere to a generally accepted interpretation of aims, to accept the institutional responsibilities due a given political system, and to reinforce attachment to this system. This field of our political education is characterized by the relatively convergent influence of different socializing factors. They guide us emotionally by indicating different possibilities for fulfilling our need for approval and affiliation. Differences emerge when political objectives are identified in detail and specific values and norms are hierarchically arranged. This is particularly observable with respect to the covert variation of the socialization process.

In the second half of the twentieth century, it seemed obvious for individuals in modern societies to be socialized in order to pursue a secularized political culture. Consequently, political life was highly pragmatic and transactional leadership was supported. However, since the beginning of the 2010s, Western societies have increasingly been demanding community experiences which go beyond a secularized culture. The classics have indeed observed that no member of any political system has ever been able to totally overcome the outcomes of such primordial socialization, or reject the need for security and support which can only be provided by the intimate bonds developed in primordial groups. These limitations and needs are the reason why modern systems continue to be dual, and why support is desperately sought in ideologies, political parties or charisma-

Fig. 1. An article and a list of comments on the *Wirtualna Polska* website

"Buchnie ciepłem" znad Hiszpanii. Termometry mocno w górę

Stare przysłowie mówi, że w "marcu jak w garncu", a z wiedzą przekazywaną od pokoleń nie ma co dyskutować. Przelotnego deszczu się więc nie ustrzeżemy, ale synoptycy zapewniają: "Przez najbliższe 2 tygodnie temperatury będą rosły".

☆
5 godzin temu

pierwszy bantustan druga japonia trzecia hiszpania czwarty izrael
+ 167 - 4 Odpowiedz Zwiń odpowiedzi

1 godzinę temu

nocturno culto A nad wszystkim króluje duch średniowiecza.
+ 0 - 0

3 godziny temu

Łukasz A przez rozdawnictwo prezesa już niedługo będziemy mieli Grecję i Wenezuelę.
+ 3 - 2

4 godziny temu

Zaklinacz Żeby Kambodża nie wyszła.
+ 7 - 0

37 min. temu

Zmęczony Dobra, dobra, poczekamy do głosowania. Tam jednak siedzą sami politycy - im nie można ufać. Zaraz się pożrą i na złość jedni drugim coś wykręcą. Zioną nienawiścią i jadem na co dzień, tak nagle im skrzydelka ... Czytaj całość

"A heat wave" coming from Spain. Temperatures skyrocket

There is an old proverb saying that "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" and you don't argue with the wisdom of generations. We will not be safe from the occasional shower but forecasters assure us that "temperatures are going up for the next two weeks."

5 hrs ago

first bantustan second Japan third Spain fourth Israel
+167 -4 Reply

1 hr ago

nocturno culto And the Medieval spirit rules all
+0 -0

3 hrs ago

Łukasz And thanks to the party leader's largesse we will soon ago have Greece and Venezuela here
+3 -2

4 hrs ago

Zaklinacz Let's just hope it doesn't lead to a second Cambodia
+7 -0

37 min ago

Zmęczony Well, well, let's wait until the election. After all, there are only politicians there and they cannot be trusted. They will fall out right away and will do things to spite the other party. They spit venom and hatred on an everyday basis and suddenly... Read all

tic leaders, even by the most enlightened persons, in critical moments when the social, economic and political structures of the system seem to be collapsing (Almond, Powell, 1975, p. 595). In our opinion, however, the political experience of Western European states and the United States over recent years has exceeded the expectations of the desire to experience politics emotionally, becoming, in fact, utterly irrational.

Emotional bonds with members of a group whose socializing impact is of the greatest importance to us allows us to survive in moments of doubt or insecurity, while simultaneously consolidating myths and stereotypes which facilitate simpler interpretations of a complex reality. The mind indicates that reality is more complex, but it usually loses against feelings. This can be understood better when we realize the importance of our identity and identification. Identity is associated with the need for security, approval, respect for oneself and the question of 'who am I, what should I do and how?' Identification is a process of copying and internalizing the behavior, attitudes and values of other people (Palmer, Stern, Gail, 1974, p. 148). Online communication provides completely new ways to look for communities that share our views, and to attack 'the others.'

David Easton noted that in the process of growing up in society, different institutionalized goals, norms and socially accepted values, some of which are related to politics, are inculcated in individuals by other members of society through positive and negative reinforcement. He calls this process the politicization of society (Easton, 1975, p. 574). It allows people to learn to play political roles and to adopt political attitudes which are desirable from the point of view of reproducing the social order. When fundamental political affiliations are deeply rooted or institutionalized, the system is deemed legitimate. Politicization is therefore the ultimate result of the way in which the political system has been established and legitimized. Political systems that survive the longest maintain support due to the belief in the legitimacy of their governments and structures (Easton, 1975, pp. 575–576). The most effective politicization appears to rely on covert political socialization, because it does not have to employ rational arguments but forms emotional bonds instead.

In their classical approach to political socialization, Almond and Powell stressed the essential and covert impact of families on forming attitudes to authorities. Making decisions in either a collective or authoritarian manner may determine the future propensity to take the role of a participant in political life or that of a subject. An attitude of disrespect towards

the institutions of the political system observed by children can dominate their future political attitudes, even though school, among other things, will promote an utterly different type of behavior (Almond, Powell, 1975, pp. 590–591). The influence of the internet on the process of political socialization can produce utterly new consequences. The role of family and school seems to have become secondary.

Educational institutions can be assumed to have a greater share in disseminating knowledge about the principles of the political game, as they teach about the influence of political systems on individual life and about the possibilities of providing feedback by taking part in political life, if only by making demands and generating support for the system. Schools can also develop the awareness of the unwritten rules of the political game, such as the political traditions of a given society (Almond, Powell, 1975, p. 591). They can also indicate the correct interpretations of the art of politics and how the main political roles are played. Nevertheless, the primary objective of educational institutions involves teaching about the formal principles of the political game.

An increasing role in covert socialization is played by the mass media, if only because their influence can be observed throughout the whole life of a person. In totalitarian systems, this factor of socialization is controlled to the greatest extent, thereby constituting a powerful tool of indoctrination (of course, functionally combined with other factors). In pluralist systems, the mass media can exert an impact on political attitudes by way of selecting news, embedding the news in emotional contexts or by linguistic manipulation. The emergence of the internet, and even more so of social media, has given an utterly new dimension to this phenomenon.

On the one hand, the influence of the above-mentioned actors of socialization on individuals is enhanced or weakened by their individual experiences. On the other hand, it is true that for a majority of people such experiences are the outcome of their orientation towards the values and norms adopted in the course of socialization. Typically, we look for the confirmation of our emotionally conditioned attitudes in reality (for instance, by selecting those media which will not generate cognitive dissonance by the news and commentaries presented there).

The socialization process, also in politics, involves adjusting individuals to life in society in the most effective manner, which also means accounting for all the drawbacks of the existing system. A considerably disintegrated social system will force individuals to adopt attitudes and behavior functional under those conditions. The process of socialization

will take a different course in consolidated societies which have established the principles of seeking social compromises and conciliatory traditions. It will seek to duplicate behavior which is best suited to this social system and maintaining it.

Let us now consider the consequences of the increased importance of new media in the process of the politicization of society, even when these media are allegedly not interested in this process whatsoever.

The internet in the process of political socialization

The rapid surge in the numbers of web users globally has meant that, in a relatively short time, ca. 4 billion people (over 50% of the global population) have gained access to the tools allowing them to generate and disseminate content (*Worldwide digital*). ‘The cult of the amateur’ (Keen, 2007) which dominates in the media has undermined authority and taken young people in the direction of exchanging their views with other inexperienced community members. The inability to assess the credibility of content can result in selecting content on the basis of insubstantial criteria, such as emotionality, visual aspect, etc. In the field of politics, this process is encouraged by the fact that political communication is competitive. In the event of numerous and serious socio-political divisions, of which Poland is an excellent example (Markowski, Stanley, 2016; Czeźnik, Grabowska, 2017), content developed in order to implement specific political goals can prevail over sources of information teaching recipients how to operate actively and rationally in democracy (assuming that this is the current requirement of the system).

Additionally, in a model where content is available in return for access to information about the user, and high quality (premium) content has to be paid for, the vast majority of web users are exposed to low quality, superficial articles, frequently on a poor professional level (taking into account the principles of journalistic work).¹ Web users accept this principle and agree to use their personal details as an equivalent of money. On the other hand, a significant portion of the population does not know about the mechanisms of the system, both as regards the sources of information they get and verification of its credibility. The lack of awareness in this

¹ It is difficult to unambiguously quantify the credibility and reliability of information available online, but this problem has been noted by researchers (Szpunar, 2007; Wala, 2015).

respect can result in their consolidation of knowledge based on erroneous premises.

Short forms of online communication (gifs, memes, tweets, etc.) impoverish everyday information exchange, making it superficial and based mainly on entertainment, constituting a new form of infotainment (Naruszewicz-Duchlińska, 2013). This produces a 'vicious circle' of ignorance, or rudimentary knowledge and consolidation of negative social models. The actual process of the perception of content is evolving because of the inability to concentrate on the message and the manner of reading texts.² However, young people frequently interpret this lack of professionalism as evidence of the spontaneity/novelty of the content contained in the messages. This actually conforms to popular criticism of mass society, because every new medium has been accused of bringing about the collapse of social authority. However, the range of radio or television, and particularly their interactivity cannot be compared to those of the newest means of mass communication.

Aggression online, limited legal control over extremist messages and, first and foremost, the unprecedented range of online communication expose young people to extremist views to a greater extent. Due to the weakness of legal forms of content control, the scale of negative phenomena online is much greater than in other media. Problems include the following:

- the absence of self-censoring mechanisms which characterize traditional journalistic forms;
- the scale and amount of content continuously posted online is difficult to control;
- the absence of controlling institutions which operate with regard to other media (in Poland, this could be an equivalent of the National Broadcasting Council – KRRiT);
- imprecise regulations pertaining to online communication;
- the scale of activities that may qualify as breaching the law which discourages law enforcement agencies from taking action regarding certain types of offenses and crimes.

All this makes internet users definitely more likely to encounter extremism online, while the discussion on extremists is more ruthless (Tokarczyk, 2003/2004, p. 278). Combined with the extraordinary online

² E.g. articles without pictures are ignored, or single lines are selected to assess whether a given unit of content is worth paying attention to (*Czytanie online*).

activity of young people and their lack of emotional maturity, that otherwise would allow them to critically assess ideological messages, this leads to an increased significance of extreme-right/left, and other extremist and populist demands. This can translate into a greater propensity to vote for extremist political parties.

Additionally, such phenomena identified in the theory of the media as “filter bubbles” (Pariser, 2011) or “echo chambers,” make it even more difficult for young people to confront different outlooks and views on the world. Due to filter bubbles, internet users are exposed to homogeneous worldviews that are convergent with the earlier choices they and their circle of friends have made. This is an outcome of the algorithms employed by social media, whereby internet users get access to content they are already familiar with and which is also eagerly watched by other users they are related to. This mechanism is reminiscent of McDonaldization, a phenomenon based on meeting consumer’s needs by supplying them with products they know, and therefore products safe from the decision-making point of view (Ritzer, 1997). Assuming that information constitutes a commodity on the market, it can also undergo the same process.³

In the case of young people, this may also result in the formation of closed circuits and make some representatives of the group ‘addicted’ to others. This process seems even more likely, taking into account the fundamental laws of sociology, where conformity and adopting the outlook of one’s community can constitute an important factor in winning the approval of a peer group. Knowing how important approval and the appreciation of peers is for young people (Kokociński, 2011, p. 77), it can be assumed that this process will be equally powerful in online behavior. On the other hand, it has long been known that in order to avoid cognitive dissonance people choose media that reinforce the attitudes they have already developed. Creating information niches (or bubbles), the internet only intensifies this phenomenon.

Media education in Poland has a weak position in the system, resulting in a lower level of media competency (e.g. in the field of distinguishing between facts and opinions, identifying fake news, post-truths, etc.) and making young people less sensitive to pathological processes in mass communication (Ogonowska, 2012). School curricula of IT or Polish Language, among others, either lack such topics or treat them marginally.

³ A filter bubble is thus an equivalent of the McDonaldization process in the world of information, but an improved one, and equipped with a technological component which ensures effectiveness and a high level of efficiency.

This naturally promotes covert political socialization. In modern times, people are almost always online, and the role of the school in shaping the habits of using the media is becoming crucial (Nowicka, 2015). Families are also reluctant to educate young people, either failing to notice the problem, or remaining 'digitally illiterate' and thus unable to pass down knowledge the families do not have (Drzewiecki, 2010, p. 4). Self-education about the media and questionable spontaneously developed skills can be compared to self-training in sports – some habits developed at a young age are difficult to eradicate later on. In this situation, the objective nature of socialization is demonstrated, which fills the void left by institutionalized entities. However, speaking about 'pathological processes' is a subjective assessment, which is due to a certain perspective of a generation that is alienating itself. In fact, this is also a result of the criticism of mass society, which has been repeatedly voiced since the development of the Frankfurt School.

One may also have the impression that the lack of authorities and points of reference results in young people seeking opinions in the media, much more than facts. Modern circumstances force us to 'continuously think about what to think on a given topic' and leave young people in a state of constant dissonance and imbalance. Due to the reproductive nature of the whole of educational system, which is based on single-choice tests, answer keys, etc., active searching is becoming a tiresome alternative to ready-made answers and cognitive models based on non-creative and non-constructive thinking. This is further supported by the architecture of the web itself, which operates on the basis of ranking algorithms allowing us to find answers to more and more intuitive questions. Another crucial element of this system involves comments as an integral part of press texts (Mielcarek, 2010). Comments primarily help readers to develop an opinion about the text, because the habit to do so on the basis of one's own preferences, opinions and value system is becoming extinct. Combined with the above-mentioned ruthlessness of these online opinions it can be assumed that the habits formed in this manner can become widespread and durable.⁴

Another factor that changes socialization is related to the generation gap in using the media. The 45+ generation remains television-bound,

⁴ One may also wonder whether or not the same process applies also to other media related to the groups that are interested in influencing public opinion and forming specific attitudes. To what extent are the changes in political socialization caused by online communication qualitative and to what extent are they quantitative?

whereas young people get information almost exclusively from the web. This is well-illustrated by the results of an annual survey by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS). Those obtained in 2017 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Use of the internet by age group

	What is the main source of information about domestic and global events for you?					
	Television (also when watched online)	Printed press	Radio	The internet	None of the above	Difficult to say
	Percentage					
Age group (years)						
18–24	28	2	4	58	7	1
25–34	44	3	11	38	2	2
35–44	62	3	7	26	1	1
45–54	68	7	8	14	3	0
55–64	78	5	8	6	1	2
65 and older	83	4	6	4	3	0

Source: *Ocena wiarygodności...*, 2017.

Different forms and ranges of content create two separate media worlds, thus impeding relationships between generations. In this case, it is not about the phenomenon itself, but about its scale. Firstly, the structure of the information environment changes fundamentally including new media genres or combinations of ‘old formats.’⁵ Simultaneously, the number of websites and the extensive system of categories make this system quantitatively far more complex than the system formed by the ‘old media.’

Yet this phenomenon can also be interpreted as an outcome of the objectivity of the socialization process, which aims to adjust individuals to current environmental circumstances, however they may be assessed. Socialization in an atmosphere of chaos translates into being able to survive in an atmosphere of chaos (Kwieciński, 1997, p. 275). The ‘TV generation’ is becoming extinct.

This ubiquitous dissonance (social adjustment and the deteriorating quality of knowledge gained from the media) emerges as a feature

⁵ For instance, the home page of the *Onet* website features ‘live’ programs, news presented in texts, infographics, galleries, collections of memes, commercials, commentaries, notifications, etc.

of media reality as such, which may be dubbed the *paradox of media socialization*.

Paradox of media socialization

At nearly every stage of the relationship between (young) people and the media a dissonance emerges which triggers an interesting mechanism of mutual dependencies that feed back on themselves. A fundamental feature of every type of socialization, including political socialization, involves the development of internal and external motivations to behave in a socially accepted manner. This is also a process whereby individuals adapt to participate in social life in the most optimal way – mentally and even physically. What is meant here are such factors as minimizing exposure to stress, winning approval of others, fulfilling one's need for appreciation, avoiding the risk of social exclusion, etc.

An essential feature of the process of socialization employing the media involves the continuous need to deepen and intensify individual activities. This is about adjusting to social models, which increases one's probability of gaining approval and fulfilling the need for appreciation. Such phenomena as media democracy, telegenicity and celebrity culture intensify this process even more. Components of this process include, for instance, the requirement to always be online; positive perception of media activity; the 'stand out or die' principle; the fetish of thinking positively and feeling well, promoted by Western culture also through the media; emphasis given to developing the relevant image of, e.g., an expert, an attractive person, etc.; the semantic affinity of popularity and personal/professional success; the fetish of being young, attractive and sexually active which is promoted by the media.

Although a majority of these phenomena apparently do not exert a clearly negative impact on the social life approved of by liberal democracies, the constantly intensifying social pressure to follow these models can bring about axiologically ambiguous consequences. It is somewhat reminiscent of the development of the mechanism of capitalism, where the requirement for continuous economic growth as the sole measure of the development of society leads to being unable to take a holistic look at society and see all its aspects, including social stratification, health, leisure and so on.

The situation is similar as concerns modern socialization, which uses the media and produces individual benefits while possibly generating se-

rious perturbations in collective terms. At the same time, the continuously rising expectations (of the above-mentioned telegenicity, media competencies and being always online) are moving the limits of social adjustment and generating a dissonance between one's own activity and external pressures. An adjustment which is beneficial for individuals produces a side effect in terms of phenomena that are negative, or even plainly pathological for social development

Conclusion

This analysis and description of phenomena of political socialization leads to a handful of conclusions which can serve to formulate recommendations for individual and institutional entities operating in the broadly understood field of education (after all, it is difficult to find teaching subjects which do not use elements of web communication, and the political nature of all social phenomena characterizes the entire range of school subjects or academic disciplines).

1. The paradox of media socialization is associated with the development of online competencies, which is simultaneously related to their reduced functionality in the field of politics: the more we can do, the less we are able to put our skills to use. It is therefore essential to develop these skills and accompany them with overt guidelines on how they should be applied: indicating hard skills (such as speaking the 'web language') and translating them into soft skills (for instance, how to distinguish between opinions and facts).
2. Given the new understanding of political socialization, an important element of practice involves explaining increasingly complicated mechanisms of media operation, regardless of the stage of the process (starting at school at ending with senior citizens). The lack of knowledge about such phenomena as the personalization of website content, ranking algorithms and the simultaneous presence of advertisements and organic content, can lead to being led astray in the complicated world of new media and politics.
3. The benefits of using the mechanisms of overt socialization to a greater extent than those of covert socialization should be indicated. This is mainly due to the above-mentioned level of complication of the modern media world and the deficit of social trust, which could be eradicated by open and clear naming of facts, processes, emotions and so on.

4. Contact with mass media does not always translate into greater knowledge about politics, but it certainly forms emotional orientation, especially towards politicians. This is especially observable in the context of social media. That is why, when using social media, it is worth naming those emotions and revealing whenever they are intentionally used for the purpose of individual political goals.

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Nowe determinanty socjalizacji politycznej w dobie Internetu

Streszczenie

W procesie socjalizacji politycznej media wydają się odgrywać coraz istotniejszą rolę. Wynika to nie tylko z dużej ilości czasu spędzanego każdego dnia przed ekranami i innymi nośnikami informacji, ale i coraz większej „intymności” w relacjach z urządzeniami – większość Polaków (ok. 64% w 2017 r. w grupie 15+) posiada smartfon, który daje możliwości bycia online niemalże w każdym momencie życia. Należy założyć, iż w grupie młodzieży szkolnej, odsetek ten jest większy. Skłania to do zadania pytania: na ile dostęp do sieci wpływa na proces socjalizacji politycznej i jakie są jego skutki w obszarze procesów społecznego dostosowania? Celem artykułu jest ich zestawienie i próba zrewidowania założeń teoretycznych dotyczących pojęcia socjalizacji politycznej. Poddajemy w wątpliwość aktualność pewnych założeń ery przedinternetowej w stosunku do współczesnych realiów świata funkcjonującego w trybie permanent-logged-in. Wysuwamy też propozycję kilku rekomendacji mogących stanowić podstawę do bardziej użytecznego społecznie wykorzystania mediów w obszarze dostosowania się (w szczególności młodej) jednostki do życia w warunkach demokracji medialnej.

Słowa kluczowe: socjalizacja polityczna, social media, edukacja medialna, Internet