

## **Some of the symptoms of education socio-pathology and the popularization of higher education as well as the Internet use by the students**

The inspiration to write this article was literature of the subject but also discussions with students, own experience as well as conversations with colleagues who are working as academic teachers. The aim of the paper is to show the problem of some sociopathology existing in the higher level education. Though it has been present in the higher education institutions for many years it seems to be stronger with the popularization of higher education and a wider access to the Internet. It is not going to be a complex analysis but also a reason for further analysis and research – frequently asked for by Rectors, ministries or institutions interested in and obliged to keep and raise the quality of education. There is a need to understand the problem of diploma depreciation and not always clear motives to start studying. What I do in this paper is performing sociological function of unmasking, which is aimed at showing, very often hidden problems crucial from the social point of view.

In the paper I adopted a quality strategy using the results of some quantity research. They are of an initial character, their aim is to signal the discussed social problems connected with higher education. I aim at focussing attention on the following phenomena:

- plagiarism and its widespread in connection with the wider access to the Internet, analysis of the web pages offering written papers, notes, compilations, the theft of intellectual property (images, tests, reports, research results, presentations etc.);
- slandering and threatening academic teachers on the Internet portals, cyber violence (personation, anonymous letters, verbal aggression);
- cheating and new means of communication;
- illegal use of academic books.



Zbigniew Kwieciński in his book *Socjopatologia edukacji* wrote about the crisis of education. He exposed many myths concerning functioning of schools i.e. referring to education, the illusion of promotion and social mobility encouraged by school. Indeed still, with the growing prestige of science, there is a social belief that 'school is a condition, means, or even major source of cultural and social promotion, both individual and collective and that management and employees are intensively changed according to the better competencies criteria' (Kwieciński, 1995, p. 76). Professional success depends on, in social opinion, having school certificates proving certain skills and knowledge of the graduates.

Evaluated values	Grading on a 7 level scale					Hard to say
	1	2-3	4	5-6	7	
	not important		very important			
	percentage					
Being healthy	1	1	1	12	85	0
	2			97		
Family happiness	1	1	2	12	83	1
	2			97		
Emotional life	0	1	3	29	66	1
	1			95		
Other people's respect	1	1	4	31	63	0
	2			94		
Peace	1	2	6	34	57	0
	3			91		
Weelfare of the country	1	4	9	37	47	2
	5			84		
Friends	0	4	12	46	38	1
	4			84		
Professional work	4	5	8	40	40	3
	9			80		
Freedom to express opinions	2	5	12	36	43	2
	7			79		
Education	2	5	14	34	44	1
	7			78		
Religious beliefs	5	12	16	33	33	1
	17			66		
Possibility to take part in democratic socio-political life	5	14	16	37	25	4
	19			62		
Contact with culture	3	13	22	43	18	1
	16			61		
Wealtfare	4	17	27	40	11	1
	21			51		
Life full of advetures, experiences	8	25	25	29	12	1
	33			41		
Success, fame	14	33	24	22	5	2
	47			27		

Source: R. Boguszewski (2010).



There is no difference in reference to higher school, as it cannot be denied that higher education nowadays is of a certain value. It is one of the most important values for Polish people as it was proved by some CBOS research. 78% of the surveyed considers it to be the most important value (Boguszewski, 2010).

‘Education is a value, thus there are some expectations involved: competencies, knowledge or even being wise’ (Borowicz, 2008b, p. 102). One cannot forget about the possibilities that a job market opens to those with diplomas, and what follows better earnings, better quality of life and access to luxury goods, potential life success and social promotion, prestige and unquestionable autotelic value of a higher education level.

It is not difficult to foresee what is going to happen with these values when some sociopathologies in education such as: cheating and plagiarism will not be controlled. It is widely spoken about the problem of education inflation which is a consequence of both popularization (Borowicz, 2008a, p. 625), and of more often shown irregularities in the functioning of the higher education area. Though university diplomas look exactly the same, as their pattern is established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education Regulation of 18th December 2008, it is observed that there is ‘internal differentiation of the product – it is difficult to acknowledge the competencies received at a well know university and a provincial school [...] with time and mass «production» of students, there is the effect of satiation’ (Borowicz, 2008a, p. 625).

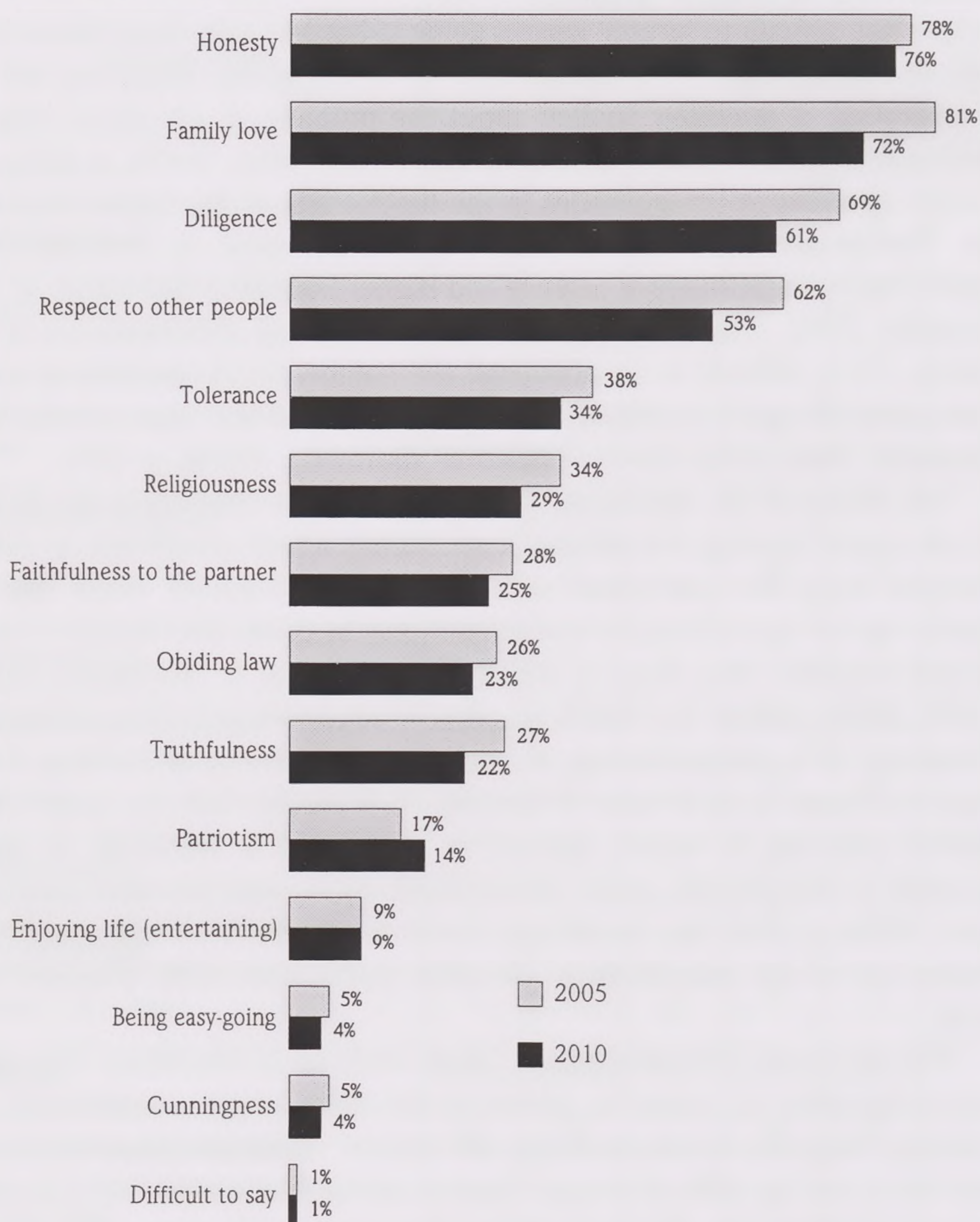
The reform of the education, the change of rules concerning the limit of Matura exams passing and making a secondary school certificate as sort of automatic leave (no post-school selection) to higher school ‘made that the reward – access to studying, is received not only by those who deserve it but in practice everyone who wants it and is able to pay for it’ (Borowicz, 2008a, p. 626). In the context of school’s function of education and other phenomena understood as a sociopathology of education it is worth presenting Polish people’s attitude to such value as honesty. As it results from the latest CBOS research referring to values, honesty is at the top of hierarchy of values important in everyday life, when the surveyed are to mark five most important values. When in 2010 the researchers asked about one, most important value honesty was at the second place just after family love (42%) (Boguszewski, 2010).

Why are there socio-pathological issues involved in education? Why many times in the name of a value i.e. education (for some people – understood only as having a diploma) are there frauds and abuses? These questions may sound naive and it may be difficult to treat them as research questions but it is worth to remind that we are within an environment that until some time ago was considered to be exclusive, basing its functioning on academic ethos, having



certain requirements towards students and people of science. It is worth to remind a sociological definition of ethos: 'a set of socially acknowledged and acquired socio-moral norms in a certain social group, which establish the way of its members' behaviour; characteristic for a certain social group way of living that differentiates it from other groups, «a spirit» of a culture, unifying its members with references to the basic values accepted by the majority of the group' (Olechnicki, Załęcki, 1999, p. 57).

Fig. 3. Which of the mentioned features are for you the most important ones in everyday life?  
Please chose from the list maximum five most important features according to you.



Source: R. Boguszewski (2010).



Academic ethos is expressed in many university documents, presenting a mission that the university follows. More often it is extended by detailed examples of academic values as it was done i.e. at the Jagiellonian University (<http://www.uj.edu.pl/universytet/wartosci-akademickie>). On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003 the University adopted Academic Code of Values ([http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172](http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172)), which include: **service to the truth; responsibility** for scientific work, represented discipline, institution and environment as well as educating students; **kindness, justice** (especially in grading); **reliability; tolerance; loyalty; independence** in scientific work which violation is by the authors of the Code understood as: 'Any infringement to the rule of independence is an infringement of the fundamental rules and ideas of the science, thus must be considered as worth being condemned ethical attitude of a member of academic society, it is a serious infringement of law. It concerns mostly plagiarism, so theft of someone else's work, as well as other sophisticated forms of using other people's work, in the form of crypto-plagiarisms (using other peoples thoughts, ideas or categories without referring to their sources) and adding yourself to someone else's results or suggesting higher than in reality co-authorship, as well as auto plagiarism (numerous sale of the same product). Unambiguously immoral is selling scientific works and other papers, both as its authors or sellers, and buyer i.e. alleged authors. The consequence of such practices is getting undeserved promotion at studies, getting diplomas, titles, professional qualifications, and licences and getting other goods without its beneficiary's merits, and – in a wider social dimension – creating an educational chaos, depreciation of diplomas and published works and a general relative moral permissiveness. It has to be strongly highlighted that the same norms should be referred to professors as well as cheating students, but the first ones should in their whole academic carrier be an example of moral values to younger colleagues and the studying youth' ([http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172](http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172), p. 4-5).

The Academic Moral Code highlights the role of fundamental values i.e.: **honesty, freedom of science** and **dignity** that as the code says trigger: 'internal strength which does not allow a human to withdraw from beliefs, ethical ideals and trust in reason nor undergo pressures, the temptation of comfort, the desire for privileges and awards' ([http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172](http://www.uj.edu.pl/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d63b4be0-5eee-4d94-bd32-3b1cccf396f6&groupId=10172), p. 6).

The fact is that together with a wider access to higher education, which is written about by R. Borowicz in his article *Dlaczego upowszechnienie*



*wykształcenia wyższego nie prowadzi do egalitaryzmu?*, there are some symptoms of depreciation of some academic values.

This situation and dishonest behaviour of students and scientist mentioned in this paper can be explained, in a sense, by Michael Hechter's theory of rational choice and thus this theory is chosen as the basic theory of this paper. The author of *Principles of Group Solidarity* stated that people are goal oriented and 'have a set of hierarchically ordered usefulness preferences. By choosing the way of action people make rational calculations regarding: (A) usefulness connected with an alternative way of action in the context of individual preferences hierarchy; (B) costs of each alternative in the category of lost possibilities; (C) the next way of maximizing the usefulness' (Turner, 2005, p. 349). The author assumes that usefulness means values. Another assumption should also be described referring to the source of the principles of group solidarity. Hechter states that 'rational and maximizing the resources actors construct a normative group, and then remain loyal towards its structure. [...] They build normative obligations and obey them' (Turner, 2005, p. 349).

In this article I would like to prove that higher school clients, i.e. students, treat social space of the Internet as a common asset referred to the educational contents: artefacts and ideas – sometimes even net structure. Justyna Hofmokl, the author of the book concerning this subject, in the group of artefacts includes: 'articles, notes, books, data bases, maps, computer files, Internet websites, films, sound files' (Hofmokl, 2009, p. 152). The ideas included in the artefacts are 'creative vision, transferred information and knowledge'.

The hypothesis is that due to this fact on the Internet there are places where students exchange notes, cribs, presentations, speeches, readymade semester, diploma, MA thesis etc. There is a huge number of this type of pages: Sciaga.pl, Bryk.pl, E-sciagi.pl, Notatek.pl, Wymiennik.pl, Dajnotatki.pl, Gotowce.e-sciagi.pl etc. Google search engine gives thousands of results concerning the above mentioned webpages. The same ones were created for students from different levels, what is not surprising, the most popular ones concern Matura exam, especially oral presentations for the exam in Polish. There is unfortunately no place in this article to analyse this problem, which does not mean I do not notice it at all. Plagiarism, a fraud of Matura exam presentation and 'success' at Polish language Matura exam is one of the steps a student must take to belong to a group of higher education students. I will mention that presentations performed' with success at the exam are then sold at Allegro.pl and the initial price starts from several dozen of zlotys.

The described situation shows another principle of the rational choice theory: 'emerging social phenomena– social structures, decision, collective actions – are results of rational choices made by individuals maximizing the usefulness'.



The aim of presence of numerous 'educational' resources on the Internet, 'produced' by educational system clients is to fulfil public wealth that is getting positive grades and positive results at exams – very often at a minimum own work cost. Sometimes it evens zero. 'Educational help' is downloaded from a crib service onto the mobile phone or is printed. It is usually printed with the smallest font and used during exams or tests. It is not an exaggeration to say that copy shops localised nearby universities during exam sessions spend most of their time on copying these cribs<sup>1</sup>.

The described theory refers to the phenomena of i.e. cheating, plagiarism as a dilemma of 'a fare dodger' i.e. 'avoiding costs connected with production [public goods – A.N.K.]' (Turner, 2005, p. 351). 'Fare dodgers' may be more than only one person, they make a 'latent group'. An individual who finds himself in such a group 'may not have a noticeable contribution to any of the group's efforts, as no one in the group will react to its support, has no motivation to give such. Consequently big «hidden» groups have no stimulus to act in order to achieve a common goal because the common good would be valuable for the whole group, it does not give individuals any motivation to raise the costs of action of any organization working for the benefit of a hidden group, nor raising, in any other way, the burdens of inevitable group activity' (Olson, 2006, p. 144).

The issue of public wealth can be looked at from a different perspective. If we treat public wealth as a country that organizes and maintains (for public money) the system of education and a diploma as a symbol of knowledge, skills and competences, the cheating student – by not giving anything from him, not choosing a role of a valuable actor in the academic play – behaves according to the strategy of a 'fare dodger'. University as an organization<sup>2</sup> provides goods in a sense of knowledge, abilities and competencies transferred by 'classes and stimulating students own work'.

It is worth to highlight that the work that a student must do to get a credit, according to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), is counted in the form of points and may include: semester assignments, exams etc. Students in their discussions often admit that the **Internet** is not their only source of knowledge, but the first and the only **source of knowledge** and **didactic materials**, Wikipedia – is an oracle<sup>3</sup>, a library is useful only when the required

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<sup>1</sup> The author of the paper during each exam session conducts some observations according to which the thesis is not exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> 'The essence of an organization is providing shared benefits. In consequence providing public goods is a fundamental function of any organization' (Olson, 2006, p. 142).

<sup>3</sup> As it was possible to establish even for the most important people in the country i.e. at that time the Speaker of the Parliament Bronisław Komorowski, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl//kat,1342>,



literature can be copied or scanned, very often breaking the copyright law, i.e. by placing scans on a shared website or such services as Chomikuj.pl, so that it is easily used by thousands of other users who were given the same text to study. Very popular are summaries of such texts – these are shorter, simpler and do not require dealing with a scientific jargon. It takes shorter to learn them which in the so called ‘tyranny of the moment’ (Eriksen, 2003) is the most important argument. It is difficult to believe that the process of studying – traditionally connected with spending a lot of time preparing an essay, MA thesis or project which should result in its quality – should be of the interest of the knowledge about the speed and acceleration of learning that is dromology. Very often reaching the aim of education (getting a diploma) is to be fast and ‘painless’.

The example that there are quite few people who would take ‘a shortcut’ was a famous ‘Gazeta Wyborcza’ journalists’ provocation. Journalists started a fictional high school – Akademia Komunikacji Społecznej ([www.szybkimagister.pl](http://www.szybkimagister.pl)), offering getting MA diploma in two years. Though the Internet site gave no information about official acceptance of the school’s activity, the teachers (apart from the fact they are great), and even the address – the interest was tremendous. The journalists counted that if they wanted the entrance fee they would earn 150 000 pln in 5 days. The candidates were not interested in getting knowledge, but a diploma. As results from a questionnaires having a scientific title is required by employers, environment or is necessary to be promoted, it is good to have one or is required to work at clerk posts etc. Some of the people were in a real hurry to get a diploma ‘A woman aged 44 from Poznan: I don’t want to wait 5 years, I can defend my thesis even today’ (Kącki et al., 2009). This uncovered by the journalists’ true motivation to study is very often one of the reasons for sociopathology in the higher level of education even within the legally working schools. One of the authors of this provocation Marcin Kącki, wrote: ‘Those answering our questionnaire [students – ref. A.N.K.], very often mentioned one motive – we don’t care about knowledge, we want to have a diploma’. To achieve the aim students in their dishonest actions use the Internet. The author of the article in ‘Newsweek’ states that the web started to play the role of an intellectual fence (Kowalska, 2006).

Students according to the Hechter’s theory share the resources rationally: scanned books, notes, ready cribs and semester assignments, BA thesis etc. as they know that the more people act this way the greater benefits for everyone with reference to the common goal that is getting a higher school diploma;



'the emerging social phenomena which occur as the result of rational choices provide a set of factors which determine next choices in the sense that these determine: (A) distribution of resources between individuals; (B) distribution of possibilities of different activities; (C) distribution and the nature of norms and requirements used in the certain situation' (Turner, 2005, p. 249). The topic of norms and values will be discussed further on while analysing the results of quantity research. A question arises whether, due to numerous cases of students fraud (plagiarism, cheating) that will be mentioned, the ECTS points do not show students effort?

Mancur Olson in the book *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* writes: 'the assumption that groups act to fulfil their business comes from the assumption that the individuals making up the groups follow their own business. [...] If members of a group have a common business or goal and each of them benefits if the aim is reached – it seems logical that if as individuals they are rational and oriented towards reaching their benefit, than as a group will try to reach the aim' (Olson, 2006, p. 138-139). For such actions according to Olson rewards are necessary – in case of students it will be a positive exam or assignment grade or in the perspective a graduation diploma.

The problems discussed so far were written about by Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik, the author of *Ściąg, plagiaty, fałszywe dyplomy. Studium z socjopatologii edukacji*. She starts her analysis from an uncovering thesis that all the available data prove cheating is widespread, serious frauds are performed by the majority of students, and the general level of school morality has decreased. The phenomena does not skip students of such studies that have special requirements i.e. future doctors: 'out of two and a half thousand American doctors 59.3% found it «impossible to eliminate the phenomena of cheating from departments connected with medical studies»', every third surveyed stated that there is an exam when students do not cheat, a similar number of the surveyed said that in the conditions of high competition cheating is natural to achieve the aim (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 12). The research connected with cheating was performed at the Nicolas Copernicus University in Torun by Monika Kwiecińska and Elwira Piszczek (Kwiecińska, Piszczek, 2004). They believe that this phenomenon is the biggest plague of the university. What is crucial is that the practice is accepted by the majority of the surveyed students. Not only by them: 'cheating is not difficult for the surveyed – as many as 40% admitted that it is very easy. According to students the tolerance of teachers makes it even easier. Only 3% of students say that the examiners «don't shut their eyes to» cheating (sometimes both sides agree that cheating is allowed during the exam)' (Kwiecińska, Piszczek, 2004). The research confirms that pathologies at universities are a sort of 'social agreement'.



In the representative country research cheating among many other evaluated ways of behaviour is condemned by half of the CBOS surveyed Polish people. About 26% accepts it. Every fifth surveyed did not have a precise opinion concerning this subject.

Evaluated behaviours	7 levels of grading in the following scopes:					Hard to say	Average of grades
	1	2-3	4	5-6	7		
	it is always bad and there is no excuse		there is nothing wrong with it and can be excused				
	percentage						
Using employees by employers	82	14	2	1	0	1	1.29
	96			1			
Taking bribes	81	13	4	1	1	1	1.36
	94			2			
Hitting children	66	22	8	3	1	1	1.73
	88			4			
Using professional position to have benefits	61	27	7	2	1	1	1.7
	88			3			
Cheating a spouse	70	17	6	3	1	3	1.63
	87			4			
Giving bribes	72	20	4	2	1	1	1.52
	85			3			
Neglecting duties at work	43	40	9	6	1	1	2.14
	83			7			
Fake granting of property or lowering income to pay less tax	51	27	11	5	2	4	2.11
	78			7			
Speeding	47	26	15	9	3	1	2.38
	73			12			
Abortion	47	22	14	7	5	5	2.37
	69			12			
Riding a tram or bus without a ticket	36	31	16	9	6	2	2.68
	67			15			
Homosexuality	46	18	12	8	11	5	2.75
	64			19			
Giving presents to i.e. doctors, nurses to arrange something	35	29	13	9	11	3	2.89
	64			20			
Conscious buying fake products	28	33	18	9	7	5	2.9
	61			16			
Shortening a dying life at his request	33	20	13	14	12	8	3.2
	53			26			
Not taking part in voting	22	28	23	12	11	4	3.39
	50			23			
Cheating at exams	22	27	20	14	12	5	3.49
	49			26			
Divorce	21	23	22	15	17	3	3.73
	44			32			



Some of the symptoms of education...

Living in a partnership without marriage	21	17	15	16	28	3	4.2
	38			44			
Sex before entering into marriage	13	13	17	17	36	4	4.78
	26			53			
Using contraceptives	13	12	15	18	37	5	4.84
	25			55			

Source: R. Boguszewski (2010).

The problem of mass access to education is discussed in this article – the growth in number made the social control inside the academic society, including both students and teachers, weaker. It can be stated that some of the members of these groups have financial benefits resulting from this fact. Students getting the diploma without much effort, get sometimes posts that are available only to people with higher education degree, teachers work in many places and that allows to have a decent life. The theory of rational choice explains that: ‘the groups exist in order to provide goods which may be produced only due to collective activity. [...] If people depend from the group as to reaching some crucial values, the rational activity is then constructing rules and norms, which will give access to these collectively created norms’ (Turner, 2005, p. 351). Cheating and plagiarism according this theory, in students consciousness are not something worth condemning, contrary – they are proves of entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, ‘fight with the system’ and even sometimes a reason to be proud (see: Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 25), because for some students teachers are enemies, they do not hide satisfaction if they can ‘beat’ them.

The cult of success and career made that ‘in the consciousness of many students there is a breach of a connection between getting a diploma and having knowledge and competences. In a traditional interpretation getting a diploma is a consequence of personal and professional development. Knowledge competencies and qualifications make up «educational capital» (and social) of a young person. Currently many students perceive getting the diploma as a result of having credits from all the subjects and passing exams. The former idea of «knowledge cumulating» was replaced by concepts of studying as «a hurdle-race»’ (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 23). When there is a chance, it can be omitted if a student cannot cheat he/she will definitely find suitable guidelines, guidebooks, instructions and what’s more from the point of view of the rational choices theory and its thesis about resources distribution, readymade cribs placed on the Internet by other people. On the Internet site of ‘educational knowledge database’ Sciaga.pl there is a clear encouragement: ‘You also can help us create a crib! Just do it’ – next to that there are some special forms for adding works and cribs. The portal is divided into categories: junior high school, high school, studies and... teacher! Teachers can also get anything they need in their work: scenarios, hand-outs etc. This service allows downloading things



directly to a mobile phone. What is interesting at Sciaga.pl on the day of its analysis (22.09.2011) one of the public schools advertised itself by saying that it is 'student friendly'.

I am going to come back to the theory. Since due to a demographic depression universities feel the problem of having less candidates, does that mean that students will get even more power? R. Borowicz writes about the fight for candidates (Borowicz, 2008b, p. 105). It is visible not only in the backstage actions, but also in the streets, media or the Internet which in the 'season' are full of advertisements concerning offers of higher schools. Non public universities act so for obvious reasons. They do not have long-lasting traditions and have to exist due to students' fees. Educational marketing in the last years is more popular among these universities which in the 'golden era' could count to have several students for one place. Students are more aware of this situation. They know that without them their universities are not able to survive so they can or often impose their – not always honest – norms: 'groups have power over their members who are depending on the resources created by the group. In the effect the scope of normative obligations within a group is connected with a degree of its members dependence. So dependence is a stimulus not only for simple norms creation, but to create norms wide enough to be able to set and determine the behaviour in a wide scope' (Turner, 2005, p. 351-352). Since Internet provides a chance for creating big social groups having a social area for communication, by their actions it becomes a factor of repeated socialization. I allow myself to make a thesis that lack of care about academic values is the cause of the creation of **new morality** based on social agreement made on the Internet. Herbert Blumer wrote: 'Media being a factor of socialization undermine the existing sources of identity and result in the growing problem of ego which is rooted in traditional beliefs and moral assumptions. Morality based on a mass consensus is uncertain, not permanent and more often situational thus the search concerning moral society attitude and the issues of public ethics are the basic problems' (Hałas, 2007, p. XII).

Universities which intend to preserve their diploma prestige take control over this situation. Having at their disposal the goods of the highest value, still attract a group of those who want to undergo the norms provided by the institution. One of the examples is Szkoła Główna Handlowa in Warsaw where on the Rector's request special analysis concerning cheating was performed. It involved defining cheating, its causes and even motivation of the cheating people in the light of Lochner, Garoup and Johnsona-Payne's behaviour. The most important ways to fight with these phenomena were presented. The analysis of the theory of optimal contracts and its implication is very interesting in this research. A certain solution to the problem was also provided to this prestigious institution (Bukowski et al.).



The Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University also fight with dishonesty. Warsaw University in a special act 'declared fight against plagiarism of diploma thesis. In the forthcoming years the works on the archive of electronic versions of diploma thesis will be continued, as well as electronic Diploma Book which is an effective tool to search for borrowed contents' (*Strategia Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego...*). At the Department of Economic Sciences of the Warsaw University a special program was announced 'Zero tolerance for cheating', which says: 'We are well known for the fact that **there is no cheating here**, the thesis are of the highest levels, we have no problems to start doctoral studies in Poland or abroad. This creates the prestige of the diploma' ([http://www.wne.uw.edu.pl/www.php?id\\_www=177](http://www.wne.uw.edu.pl/www.php?id_www=177)).

The thesis about taking the control over by students seems to be true even in this case. In 2004 disciplinary Commission at Warsaw University found a student, who came to the exam with a crib, not guilty. There was no proof that she was using it...

Hechter states that such behaviour proves the existence of the rational system of control. He proves that the system of monitoring and using sanctions has to be at a very high level to be effective. In any other case the majority of rationally active individuals chose a strategy of a 'fare dodger' and 'would take remuneration without any contribution of own work into the goods production' (Turner, 2005, p. 352), so in case of students' knowledge, competencies and skills. However, 'if the system of monitoring and using sanctions is a burden, imposes high individual costs, it will be rational to leave the group and search for remuneration somewhere else [in this case university diploma – A.N.K.]. It is not a secret that there is a competition between universities and especially at the time of recruitment they are afraid to lose students (recruited sometimes at higher costs i.e. spend on promotion). Media sometimes provide information that there are cases when the authorities of a university control the system of internal selection so that majority of students could be promoted for the next year' (Krężelewska, 2011). Popularization of studies is according to the theory one of the causes of the crisis of academic values: 'Together with the growth of the number of students in a group there is a lower possibility to monitor the group and use sanctions' (Turner, 2005, p. 354).

That is why sometimes academic teachers let their students cheat as it is supported by a research conducted by 'Gazeta Wyborcza' (Warchała, 2009).

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik on the base of available data wrote about the problem of teachers and professors 'being co-participants of dishonest behaviour'. She states that the base for breaking rules by teachers is the fear of their students' bad results and consequences arising from that fact (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 48). This is the reason why they do not reveal



plagiarisms (the disciplinary procedure is very long-lasting, unpleasant that not everyone wants to start it), they ignore their cheating students, who sometimes even threaten universities with court proceedings which universities want to avoid, similar to negative emotions that are involved in 'administering the justice'. Gromkowska-Melosik also writes that taking consequences is psychologically difficult as the teacher in case the guilt is proven is afraid about the student's fate (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 52-53). It is important to note that there is lack of training for teachers on how to deal with such situations – as these seem to be difficult. Sometimes the teachers behave also like celebrities: they try to get the students' friendliness and liking knowing that they are regularly evaluated by them (in the universities systems, Internet forums – just like celebrities), and their opinions finally reaches their supervisors. As rational actors they evaluate what is 'worth'.

In Poland there is a tradition of helping students while their Matura Exams and other exams as well as so called leakage of examination forms to the Internet which is to raise the level of passing the exam in certain institution. The general result surely is of importance in the rating of the school and what follows its 'prestige'. In the USA what follows school's prestige is even the evaluation surrounding it estates so there were even cases when real estate agents tried to influence the level of 'exam passing'. Such cases occur from time to time in the newspapers and were described by Gromkowska-Melosik (in one of the American schools the correct answers were read aloud by its headmaster using the broadcasting centre!) (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 50-51).

The problem of a massive scale access to studying should also include the given in the title of this paper phenomena of Internet popularization. Marta Juza wrote about exclusive and mass forms of communicative Internet use. The Internet creators, scientists were building the network on some traditions and academic values such as: 'shared work for the benefit of the humanity, the prestige deserved according to the amount of work provided, equality within the environment and the openness of the research results' (Juza, 2006, p. 46). Due to the development of the Internet, providing the services to the mass receiver, the number of Internet users grew and the netiquette, so the Internet *savoir-vivre*, stopped to be respected and even known. 'By Internet popularization, in which everything was supposed to be shared, the intellectual property – always valued more than the material one – seems to depreciate' (Cieśla, 2004). It is popular among students to use someone's intellectual work or artistic just as own one. Plagiarism is a plague<sup>4</sup>. This problem is dealt by Gromkowska-Melosik

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<sup>4</sup> There are numerous offers of selling papers. One of them was found on the students forum, dated 17.02.2011, 11:45, <http://www.samorzad.ukw.edu.pl/forum/viewtopic.php?t=9493>.



(Gromkowska-Melosik, 2007, p. 79-106), and Marek Wroński in the magazine 'Forum Akademickie'.

Currently the Internet, as a generally accessible medium, is a network in which masses exist. Juza reminds that according to Jose Ortega y Gasset 'mass human is a being not distinguished, restricted, and unable to undertake great actions or discussions. [...] The most serious problem with masses is that they rejected the previously known respect for the elite and do everything to replace them, and their own features being ordinary and trivial – want to impose on the actors of the social scene' (Juza, 2006, p. 55). Undoubtedly the reformed Matura exam helps those who are not prepared for studying as it has a lowered level of passing, 'it breaks the habit of critical, abstract thinking which is the pass to the higher level of education'. R. Borowicz wrote about the lack of school criteria mentioned before. The question rises whether the fight with inequalities in the access to education achieved the desired result?

The lack of respect for the elites, the crisis of authorities (including teacher's job) is visible on the Internet in the form of public slander, cybercrime, cyber mobbing, and even threats or personating to be academic teachers in fake e-mail messages etc.

I have already defined the term cybercrime in the article entitled *Cyberprzemoc – przyczyny i konsekwencje użytkowania przez młodzież masowych form komunikowania się* (Nowakowska, 2010a, p. 179-195). Just to remind according to specialists from the Dzieci Niczyje Foundation it is 'crime with the use of electronic media – most of all the Internet and mobile phones'. The problem concerns mainly children and the youth. In Poland over half of Internet young users have experienced it!

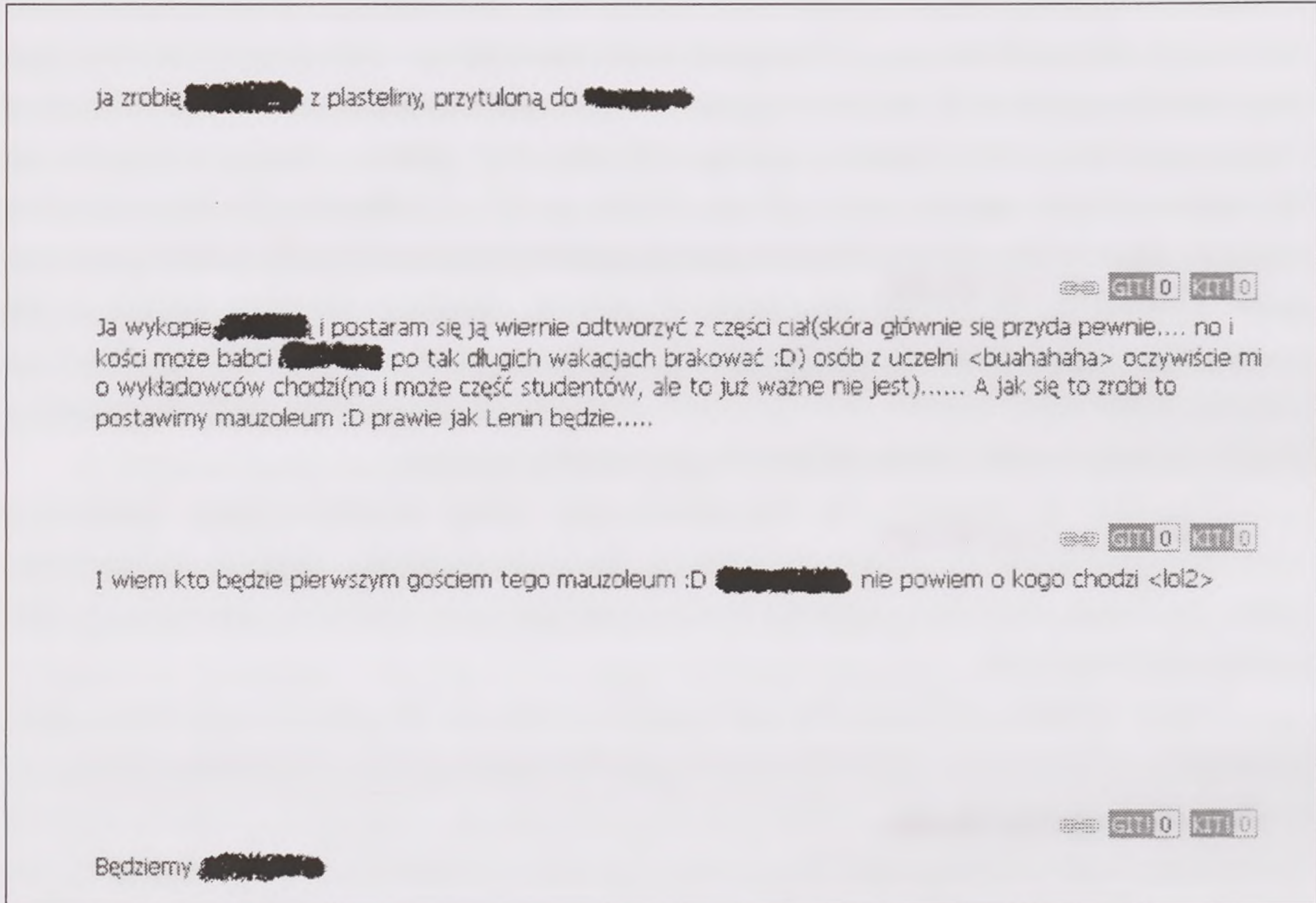
The actions described as cybercrime involve:

- calling names, threats, humiliating in the internet with the use of mobile phone;
- taking postures or recording someone without the person's consent;
- publishing in the Internet or sending by mobile phones of pictures, files or texts that are offending or making someone ridiculous;
- personating (pretending to be someone else) (<http://www.cyberprzemoc.pl/>).

In the mentioned article I proved that one of the reasons of cybercrime is the feeling of being anonymous which loosens social control, gives courage and creates opportunity to express sometimes very extreme opinions which otherwise would not be expressed. Anonymity also proved the feeling of being unpunished. 'The perpetrator of the cybercrime is aware of raping someone's image and its intentionality, as results from the research data, is the feeling of being anonymous, the possibility to reject the everyday system of conventions and restrictions make the phenomena so widespread' (Nowakowska, 2010a, p. 188). The Internet



includes numerous profanations, degradation rituals directed at academic teachers in order to destroy their reputation and lower the social status of the victim. As a case study I would like to present an example of such behaviour directed at academic teachers.



Translation:

I will do... made of plastelinę, close to...

I will dig it... and try to make a copy from parts of the body (skin will be usefull... and maybe bones of a grandmother will be missing... after such a long holiday :D) people from the University <laughter> I mean teachers (maybe some of the students as well, it is not important though)... and when we do that we will create a mauzoleum: D just like lenin's...

I know who will be the first guest at the mauzoleum :D ... I will not say who I mean <lol2>

Source: Due to the ethics of the Sociologist it is impossible to give a precise Internet website address from which the conversation was taken and is subject to analysis. I present only a print screen, the page included photos of the people taking part in the discussion, the name of the university, full teacher's names so this identity needs to be protected as well.

The described case was found after writing in the Google search engine some key words. The forum is of an open character, there is no password required – so it may be treated as a public place. The conversation took place in January 2007. As it may be read the major aim of the conversation is making fun of academic teachers, but not only. It expresses certain frustrations, denies the academic hierarchy, shows discussing students' real thoughts about academic teachers.



This conversation is surely an example of described by Erving Goffman scenes and backstage of everyday life. It very often happens that students and teachers are masters of the described by Goffman fake presentations': 'when we talk about those who present fake façade or only about those who stimulate, mislead and cheat, we think about the discrepancies between them illusions the kept by them and the reality' (Goffman, 2000, p. 87). Certainly in the case of the discussing students, and similar ones, the stimulation was necessary as revealing the beliefs would meet serious consequences: using power by the offended teacher and getting a negative grade, disciplinary consequences and even law suit which could be chosen by the offended public officer. The facade is very often seen in: being obedient, silence, nodding, adjusting strategies and even playing a role of a well-behaved and involved – control of expression' (Goffman, 2000, p. 80). Following Goffman it can be said that the play on the scene of lectures completed by social actors is according to rules settled by socially accepted norms (as they guarantee benefits in the form of teachers liking), and on the social scene on the Internet (Nowakowska, 2010b) they say, write what they really think.

In the context of the described situation classes are sometimes an introduction at which a shared expression is required. It shows 'the discrepancy between our very human «I» and socialized «I». As human beings we are prone to different stimulus under the influence of which our moods and energy change every minute. As a people on the scene acting in front of the audience we cannot however undergo changing moods. Durkheim points out that we cannot allow our social activity to be «influenced by the state of our body though it is received by the sense and the body». Some bureaucracy of the spirit is somehow expected from us so that we could give at any time a perfectly uniform performance. The process of socialization – as Santayana states – does not only change us but also makes us stiffer' (Goffman, 2000, p. 85).

The research concerning the hidden educational programme revealed the phenomena of teaching students submission, adjusting to teacher's expectations in order to get a reward which is a positive grade (Meighan, 1993, p. 69-189).

Coming back to the analysis of the given case it has to be assumed that doing 'plasticine sculptures' is not a problem but the expression 'getting rid of' is a proof that power (actually or symbolically?) is taken over by the client of the university which was written about above. The student introduces a certain plan connected with a certain teacher. It is not just discharging emotions, but a plan dealing with the corps of the person who taught those discussing students. Students were always gossiping about their teachers, used vulgar words, draw caricatures. However the present conversations (in this or that style) have changed as far as their quality is concerned. Due to the Internet use



the things that for centuries remained within the private sphere, entered the public one which is the Internet understood as a public arena. *Nasza-klasa.pl* used to be this type of forum where a school structure was rebuilt within the Internet, students talked about their teachers eagerly on the created schools' web pages. The surface analysis of the discussion proved lack of the knowledge about law, as by issuing, real personal data a teacher was offended without any obstacles. Such discussions are in my opinion examples of malicious depreciation described in Mirosław Karwat's book. 'The aim of the ceremony of depreciation is always depriving the victim of the real identity, self-positive image «creating a person from scratch», by ascribing with «new motivations»' (Siemaszko, 1993, p. 128).

Is it a hidden violence (Kwieciński, 1995, p. 123-145)? This time the source of this structural and symbolic violence is not situated in the school environment, on the clients (students) side who currently in Poland make social mass (about 2 million people). As the answer to economic conditions, ways of financing universities, the power concentrates in the hands of a smaller group of clients who knowing their 'market values', 'put pressure' (in a more or less exposed way) on different institutions. Symbolic violence according to Pierre Bourdieu is connected with some patterns of behaviour, imposing meanings and setting new norms. On the base of these cases cybercrime can be also discussed, which can be public (when the group of receivers is quite numerous) or hidden when the number of people involved is not numerous and the process cannot be always identified.

The question is whether due to a growing fight for the student between the universities it is worth to be courageous and unmask dishonest behaviours? Is it 'worth' for the universities to have their systems of punishment for plagiarism, cheating during exams etc.? How much does the fight for existence, commercialization of universities and entering the marketing way based on the image of 'a university that is student friendly' allows to fight against frauds? The inflation of higher education reaches students especially those who study the most popular majors, it is proven by the unemployment indicators and the analyses of the job market. For sociologist this phenomenon is not surprising. In Sociology there is a well-known definition of a 'post school selection' which explains the currently observed situation. Will the universities in the light of a rational choice theory care for academic values such as: independent work, the reliability of research and students evaluation (in the scope of authenticity) fair student selection, honest and professional completion of classes by academic teachers? The are many sources of the problems being analysed. To sum up it is worth highlighting that universities by becoming part of the economic market reach the gap between their aims (teaching, educating, high quality of education



etc.) and new ones – hidden – including fight with the competition and ways of finding public or private (fees) sources of financing.

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