The Limits Of Self-Expression In The Virtual Community According To The Concept Of Known Strangers By Stanley Milgram

حدود التعبير عن الذات في المجتمع الافتراضي وفقا لمفهوم غرباء مألوفون لستانلي ميلغرام

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the boundaries of self-disclosure in virtual communities, where the concept of virtual identity is associated with disclosing details and personal characteristics to others, leading to the existence of knowledge about them among others, but this knowledge is virtual and not real. According to Stanley Milgram, they become "Familiar Strangers" to each other, as he started from the idea that repeated encounters in public places lead to a kind of familiarity and knowledge among individuals. We found that excessive disclosure of personal information has transformed the concept of "Familiar Strangers" into strangers who know every detail and characteristic of others. This cancels the idea of mutual non-interaction agreed upon by "Familiar Strangers" and leads to breaking down barriers and boldly delving into the privacy of others, which distinguishes virtual interaction. Virtual interaction is often written and widely exposes personal and self-related information, while the information shared by individuals in public places remains very limited no matter how often they meet, due to the limited information shared by individuals in public places and its lack of documentation.

Keywords: Self-disclosure, Virtual community, Familiarity, Stanley Milgram, Familiar Strangers.

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- Abstract in French:

Cette étude vise à explorer les limites de la divulgation de soi dans les communautés virtuelles, où le concept d'identité virtuelle est associé à la divulgation de détails et de caractéristiques personnelles aux autres, ce qui conduit à l'existence d'une connaissance à leur sujet parmi les autres, mais cette connaissance est virtuelle et non réelle. Selon Stanley Milgram, ils deviennent des "étrangers familiers" les uns pour les autres, car il est parti de l'idée que des rencontres répétées dans des lieux publics conduisent à une sorte de familiarité et de connaissance entre les individus. Nous avons constaté que la divulgation excessive d'informations personnelles a transformé le concept d '"étrangers familiers" en étrangers qui connaissent chaque détail et chaque caractéristique des autres. Cela annule l'idée de non-interaction mutuelle convenue par les "étrangers familiers" et conduit à la rupture des barrières et à l'exploration audacieuse de la vie privée des autres, ce qui distingue l'interaction virtuelle. L'interaction virtuelle est souvent écrite et expose largement des informations personnelles et auto-relatives, tandis que les informations partagées par les individus dans les lieux publics restent très limitées quelle que soit la fréquence de leurs rencontres, en raison de la limitation des informations partagées par les individus dans les lieux publics et de son manque de documentation.

Mots clés : Divulgation de soi, Communauté virtuelle, Familiarité, Stanley Milgram, Étrangers familiers.

- Abstract in Arabic:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التعرف على حدود الكشف عن الذات في المجتمعات الافتراضية، حيث يرتبط مفهوم الهوية الافتراضية بالاعلان عن التفاصيل والخصوصيات الشخصية للآخرين، مما يؤدي الى وجود معرفة عنهم لدى الاخرين ولكنها معرفة افتراضية وليست حقيقية، فيصبحوا مألوفين لبعضهم البعض حسب ستانلي ميلغرام، الذي انطلق من فكرة أن تكرر اللقاء في الاماكن العامة يؤدي الى وجود نوع من المعرفة والألفة بينهم، وقد توصلنا إالى أن الاعلان المفرط للخصوصيات الشخصية قد حوّل مفهوم

الغرباء المألوفون الى الغرباء الذين يعرفون كل تفاصيل وخصوصيات الآخرين، وهو ما يلغي فكرة الاتفاق على عدم التفاعل التي يتفق عليها الغرباء المألوفون، ويؤدي الى كسر الحواجز والغوص بجرأة في خصوصيات الآخرين وهو ما يميز التفاعل الافتراضي، الذي يكون غالبا مكتوب ويتعرص بتوسع للخصوصيات الشخصية والذات، في حين تبقى المعلومات التي يتقاسمها الأفراد في الاماكن العامة جد محدودة مهما تكرر اللقاء، نظرا لمحدودية المعلومات التي يتقاسمها الافراد في الاماكن العامة وعدم تدوينها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكشف عن الذات، المجتمع الافتراضي، الألفة، ستانلي ميلجرام، غرباء مألوفون.

- Introduction:

Social networks have significantly impacted individuals' lives, influencing their communication and interaction styles. Virtual identity has become a reflection of one's real identity, serving as a tool for interacting with others through a set of data and information that conveys a certain self-definition to others. This makes individuals familiar to others, despite being strangers, as expressed by Stanley Milgram. Here, strangers refer to individuals with whom there is no real knowledge but rather a collection of information and details that the identity owner wishes to reveal.

Given that virtual identity is relatively fixed, it is either textual or presented as images or symbols on these networks. Despite its potential to reveal substantial data and details, individuals may unknowingly publish a considerable amount of information about themselves, attracted by the allure and followership offered by these platforms. They may forget that these details and information could persist for many years, even after their demise. This realization blurs the concept of strangers when others have intricate knowledge, making the idea of strangers less applicable to their situation.

In contrast, when **Stanley Milgram** first introduced the concept, he referred to individuals who know each other not through precise knowledge but by encountering each other in various transportation means or public places. Interaction between them, if it occurs, is often limited to a smile. Therefore, this research paper aims to delve into the boundaries of virtual

identity in self-expression, according to the concept of "Familiar Strangers" by Stanley Milgram. It explores the extent to which this concept represents virtual identity, characterized by its public nature, unlike the real-world identity, which requires effort, time, and significant interaction for details to be revealed.

This study aims to uncover the nature and characteristics of identity in virtual communities. In these virtual spaces, identity differs from real-world identity, where an individual's physical features, appearance, and attire shape the perception others have of them. In the real world, discovering details of a person's life and personal characteristics requires direct interaction over a specific period, gradually unfolding with each encounter. Moreover, individuals cannot significantly forge their identity or control various components of it. In contrast, virtual identity can be visually or textually expressed, allowing users to manipulate and modify it as desired. Users can express their opinions, record personal data, and share details of their lives, personal views, making this information public exposes them to privacy violations and intrusion from others. Consequently, identity shifts from representing an individual's self-image to representing how others perceive them through the dissemination of personal information, transforming it into public knowledge.

1-Key Features and Characteristics of Virtual Communities:

Some sociologists view society as a "vague concept that requires definition of its meaning and may refer to various levels of human gatherings. It may encompass the human community in general and may be used to indicate a geographical assembly that shares language, customs, and traditions, such as the Arab society... It can also be used to refer to a specific group or assembly within the larger society, as in the case of phrases like "women's society" or "rural society"(Othman, 2011, p. 89), In general, society refers to a self-sufficient social structure, sustained by its own forces, and includes members of various genders (males and females) and ages(Al-Jawhari, 2007, p. 32).

The word virtual (VIRTUEL) in French is encrypted from VIRTUALIS in the Latin language of the Middle Ages, and it is a predicate of (VIRTUS), meaning good power. The expression virtual in scholastic philosophy is applied to properties that exist in the latent, not to things that actually exist, and virtual tends to become actual without Invention, however, by creative or formal creation, the tree being virtual in the seed, is not opposed to virtual in terms of precise true philosophy, but it is opposed to making: virtual and actual are merely two different modes of existence (Pierre Levy, 2018, p.15)

In 1985, computer scientist Jaron Lanier used the term "virtual" for the first time, with its historical roots and philosophical connotations, to describe the emerging field of technology. He intended to refer to the reality experienced in fully sensory immersive experiments, where all senses are shared through an electronic mediator. (Maliki et al, 2012, p.84)

Therefore, the virtual community is a group of individuals connected by common interests, not necessarily bound by geographical, ethnic, tribal, political, or religious boundaries. They interact through communication channels, social media platforms, entry and exit rules, mechanisms of engagement, and ethical considerations that should be taken into account. (Farah, 2014, p. 23).

Among the advantages of a virtual community are:

1-1-The End of Space Phobia:

When entering the virtual space, we no longer fear anything, as we cannot possess the virtual, considering it a space. Therefore, the Internet has been described as the most liberating virtual space, and no party has the ability to own it.

1-2-The End of Time and Space Phobia:

One of the prominent characteristics of the virtual community is manifested in its adherence to a temporal equation that combines instantaneity with the speed of orbiting. Some refer to this as global time, which acts as a transcendent time "across the boundaries of continents,

societies, and languages through various media, transmitting images and messages at maximum speed from any point on Earth to another." This time is countered by what Dr. Abdullah Al-Haidari calls "mediatic time," exemplified by the fact that an individual's life today is incessantly connected through media and electronic communication, to the extent of disintegrating intimate familial and social ties (Al-Rawi, 2012, p. 99).

The most distinguishing feature of these virtual communities is that they are open to individuals who wish to participate in them. According to Alberta Ropert and Michael Jenkinson, a virtual city is a "city that never sleeps," where its members engage in virtual interactions at all times and places. This is not surprising, as the Internet has become an integral part of people's lives in general, and virtual communities in various forms have become significant for those interested in the Internet and its social impacts. This led researcher Maria Bakardjeva to declare that the computer has become a "lifestyle" in the chapter she prepared titled "Technology in Our Daily Lives." (Zaki, 2009, p. 98)
"While real-world communities are characterized by limited meeting times and locations, which can only occur at specific times and with prior organization and agreement among their members. In this context, Barney Downton believes that people in virtual communities live not separate from place and time, but the experience of living in these places and times can vary greatly, especially when technology intervenes and makes it artificial." (Barney Down, 2015, p. 34)

1-3-Sharing Interests and Concerns:

In virtual spaces, individuals are drawn to those who share their interests. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of social networking sites from others is the ability to easily share files, ideas, and opinions. In addition to other features, this has led to the emergence of a social environment that closely simulates reality to a large extent. (Rahouma, 2008, p. 81)

1-4-Space for Discussion and Exchange of Opinions with Others:

When social media platforms emerged, Arabs, in general, used them primarily as a tool for expressing opinions and engaging in political participation. This was due to the absence of neutral media, civil society institutions, or political activity in Arab countries. However, there was an exaggeration in attributing a transformative role to social media in changing the political landscape. The role of Facebook groups or participants is often symbolic, contributing to meetings and idea exchange rather than being the primary driver of events. Political activity on the internet doesn't necessarily translate into real political change in the Arab street. It remains a space for free expression of opinions, but real political change doesn't necessarily originate from the internet.

The new media played a tangible role in mobilizing and directing protesters, but it wasn't the primary driver of events in Arab countries. For example, in Egypt, protests continued significantly after internet services were cut, and in Yemen, where the number of social media users is very low, the streets witnessed significant events and demonstrations. The consensus is that these platforms played a crucial role in conveying the voice of the Arab street to the international community. YouTube videos and Twitter posts had a significant impact on informing the global public about the problems and conditions prevailing in some Arab countries, especially those related to the exercise of political rights and freedom of expression.

However, the use of social media and engagement in virtual communities are closely linked to the nature of the audience and its cultural, social, and demographic characteristics. This is why the use of these platforms collided with relatively high levels of illiteracy in Arab countries and the prevailing social and economic conditions. This factor plays a role in how individuals interact with these sites, express their opinions, and sets the boundaries within the virtual space.

1-5-Biological Erasure:

This term refers to the elimination of all classifications based on sex, religion, ethnicity, etc. In the virtual community, an individual is regarded as a communicative being regardless of various physical attributes or ethnic affiliations (Al-Makki, 2014, p. 104).

Therefore, researchers use the term "cold impressions" to emphasize the significance of body language (gestures, signals, etc.), which doesn't manifest in the virtual community. They also refer to these as the "material society" and the "society of shadows.(Abdel Fattah, 2011, pp. 42-43)

1-6- Openness versus Isolation:

Individuals in the virtual community experience liberation from all forms of constraints and boundaries, whether related to their physical makeup or their ethnic and cultural affiliations, without the presence of any laws or regulations. This is in contrast to real-world societies that bind their members to specific behavioral rules and regulations (Rahouma, 2008, p. 86)

On the other hand, virtual communities are characterized by isolation, a contradiction encapsulated in the title of Sherry Turkle's book, "Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other." While we may share the same physical space, each of us lives in isolation with our devices, separate from others (Soliman, 2015, p. 6), Virtual communities offer a simulated and unreal form of communication, as true communication necessitates actual encounters (or face-to-face interactions). (Abderrahahman, 2005, p. 208)

This was expressed by the sociologist Manuel Castells as "the network society," which he attributed to two crucial factors. The first is a cultural dimension that emerged in the 1960s, advocating for absolute freedom and the elimination of all constraints. The second is a

technological dimension that arose in the 1970s, particularly in wireless communications (Ben Ramadan, 2010, p. 09).

2-Major Representations of Identity in Virtual Communities

The concept of identity in Arabic originates from meanings of uniqueness, distinctiveness, and differentiation from others. In the language, identity signifies elements of distinctiveness and uniqueness from others. It is narrower than essence, as identity refers to the part, while essence refers to the whole. (Rahouma, 2005, pp. 303-304).

It is evident from the preceding context that the term "self-referentiality" refers to self-reference, and although the concept of the self is characterized by multiplicity and encompasses various notions in metaphysics and philosophy, the use of the word "self-referentiality" is almost fixed in contemporary literature to mean the concept of identity.(Rahouma, 2005, p. 304).

In pre-digital ages, identity was fundamentally understood as an internal and private quality. Individuals had roles to play in society, but once those social functions concluded, the individual returned to their private life, the "real self." This real self represents the personal and private aspect of the individual. In our current era, the self has become more public, with individuals showcasing their presence in the virtual world to a greater extent. (Looper, available online: https://www.goethe.de/ins/eg/ar/, 11/17/2023, 22:00).

This reflects a shift in understanding identity, where the relationship between the individual and society has become more complex due to digital technology. We now have a public interface that intersects with the personal and private aspects of the individual. The key components of virtual identity include the user's basic information: name, profile picture, and date of birth. However, this concept extends to what is known as the digital footprint. Identity is now understood to encompass various digital aspects actively presented by the user through social media and digital platforms. These can be summarized as:

-Digital and expressive interactions: Different comments, reactions, posts, and emotions expressed by the user during their online activities.

-Communication through chats and instant messaging, including the symbols and language used.

-Comments from friends and followers on various posts, thoughts, and activities.

-Participation in various activities in virtual space, attending celebrations, or events.

These elements constitute part of the digital identity of the individual and contribute to determining how others perceive them online. Additionally, these interactive and expressive components reflect more complex and comprehensive aspects of personal identity in the digital age.(Hartley, Bruges, Bruns, 2018, p. 69).

The communal aspect of virtual communities has significantly influenced the nature and embodiment of digital identity. This type of identity is characterized by its lack of connection to a specific physical place, time, or material body. Instead, digital identity liberates itself from physical constraints, allowing individuals the freedom to create their identity with representations they desire, which can be changed at will. Digital identity refers to a set of data, information, images, and opinions that constitute an individual's identity in virtual communities. This identity can manifest through images, words, and other forms.

It is a dynamic and fluid identity shaped by individuals in the online world, where they can interact with others and freely shape their digital image. Digital identity reflects the experiences and interactions of individuals across the network, expressing their representations and developments in this virtual space. Consequently, digital identity is open to change and evolution over time, providing individuals with the ability to define their identity effectively and dynamically within the context of digital communities(Taibi, Azzabi, p. 596).

As there is a set of identity cues available online, which may be fewer than those available in face-to-face interactions, it indicates that every digital piece of information provided by

someone, such as typing speed on the keyboard or the username and email address, can be used to make inferences about them. This reflects the shift in daily life details into digital records that can be utilized to form an understanding of individuals and their identity. Consequently, online digital interactions and information sharing become significant contributors to shaping and building individuals' identity in the digital age.(Hartley, Bruges, Bronze, 2018, p. 48).

Sadek Rabbah argues that in the virtual space, an individual's biological and physical characteristics vanish. Here, the individual gains more control over the physiological dimensions of their presence and reality, liberating themselves from all forms of anthropological constraints.(Rabeh, p. 6, available online: www.wearealgerians.com/up/do.php, 09/11/2023, 14:10)

   Differences in the characteristics of participants in virtual relationships significantly impact the quality of interaction between them. When interaction parties possess qualities such as sincerity, honesty, and cooperation, they are more accepting and the level of interaction between them increases. Conversely, if an interacting party exhibits traits that conflict with these values, the other party tends to reject interaction with them.

Identity components contribute to the success of interaction on social networks. Individuals can disguise themselves under fictional identities without providing reliable evidence of the data they present. Studies have shown that non-disclosure of true identity or the use of fake identities is fundamentally linked to users' lack of trust in others. Thus, virtual relationships are often ephemeral, and interacting with an unfamiliar party raises individuals' concerns. For this reason, they may be hesitant to reveal their identity and prefer using anonymous identities in the early stages of digital relationships. This caution leads to a lack of trust until they can verify the authenticity of the data and identity of the other person, especially in the initial stages of the relationship (Baaziz, 2007/2008, p. 149)

The prevalent labeling of social networks among Arabs is social media platforms, implying that chatting and making acquaintances are among the primary objectives of using these sites, apart from other serious goals. This might lead many individuals to conceal their identities for the purpose of socializing and entertainment(Azzi, Boumaiza, 2010, p. 307) And that's why individuals hide their true identities, to feel secure in their relationships with others without any social or cultural restrictions. The reason behind concealing one's true identity may be a sense of security because many people, in the words of Gerald Nero, when using aliases and hiding a lot of their data, still use their real personalities and disclose real details about their lives. (Hamoud, 2008, p. 150)

This is similar to individuals who share public transportation and public spaces, where many people feel comfortable and safe due to the anonymity. They often elaborate on the details of their lives, venting about their feelings and personal problems as a way of relieving stress and pressure. Turkle argues that in the virtual space, individuals reveal their true personalities when interacting with strangers, without any masks or sensitivities. This is in contrast to the real world, where individuals, upon meeting people they know, tend to present an idealized version of themselves, often seeking to please others even at the expense of their true personalities. In this context, John and others, including Margulis, suggest that presenting one's true personality, especially if it holds opposing views, may lead to non-acceptance by others. Individuals typically seek approval and satisfaction from others, especially if they have a relationship with them. This has led, according to Turkle, to the emergence of a world of multiple personalities. According to the social identity theory established by Tajfel and others, the Internet society has introduced multiple social personalities. Individuals can have more than one identity when interacting with strangers online. (Abd elfattah, 2011, pp. 46-47) On the other hand, others argue that virtual identity can be a tool for revealing people's privacy effortlessly, especially with the widespread

availability of information on social media platforms. With the vast amount of information accessible, individuals can obtain a lot of details about others without the need for direct interaction. This development poses a challenge to appropriate disclosure rules and maintaining individuals' privacy (Fox et all, 2013, p. 08).

Unlike real identities, which require the disclosure of details and the knowledge of personal characteristics to varying degrees through interaction and acquaintance, personal information is not universally available in the physical world. In the virtual realm, personal data takes on a public nature, making it challenging for individuals to protect themselves from the intrusions of others into the details of their personal lives.

In this context, many researchers argue that an individual concealing their identity while interacting with others and pretending to be someone else may lead them to accidentally encounter the same individuals in the real world with a different persona. This can result in overlap and confusion in the communication process. Additionally, individuals creating multiple personas during interactions may cause their true selves to get lost. Engaging in such behavior might lead to addiction and gradual detachment from their real community, living in the illusion of forming relationships with other (Abdel Fattah, 2011, pp. 46-47)

3- Virtual Identity and Self-Expression: Between Reality and Virtuality:

An individual may adopt multiple virtual identities with the conscious aim of positioning themselves and exploring their creative capabilities. This diversity in identities can be part of the personal experience and self-discovery. Instead of escaping from oneself, using these multiple identities can be a means to broaden understanding of oneself and contemplate creative possibilities for personal development.

The dialogue between conscious selves and identities can be highly positive, contributing to self-awareness and understanding personal transformations and aspirations. This dialogue can assist in defining goals and directing efforts toward achieving professional or

personal ambitions. Therefore, the positive aspects of adopting multiple identities lie in providing individuals with flexibility to explore different facets of their personalities and discover their potential. This approach reflects personal awareness and creative thinking in creating meaningful experiences and self-development(Rahouma,2008, p. 15).

The determination of virtual identity is influenced by various factors, striking a balance between irrational impulses and social standards. On one hand, virtual selves can serve as a realm for expressing fantasies and unrealistic desires, allowing individuals to create characters that represent different facets of their personalities or achieve what may be challenging in reality.

On the other hand, virtual selves can be subject to social standards and expected societal roles. An individual may present an image that aligns with social expectations to gain status or recognition within the community. This behavior can lead to identity conformity, where individuals adapt themselves to fit the demands of society. However, these phenomena must be understood in a broader context. Virtual selves not only reflect irrational impulses or conformity to social standards but can also serve as tools for individuals to express their diversity and innovation. Individuals may use virtual identities to acquire different experiences and explore multiple facets of their identity. In this context, individuals appear as complex beings responding to the challenges of social interaction in various and diverse ways. Simultaneously, there is a desire to overcome the constraints imposed by society on individuals and a longing to distinguish oneself from other (Rahouma,2008, p. 15).

Virtual worlds on the internet represent a symbolic environment that diverges from tangible reality, making the internet a symbolic phenomenon. Individuals interact with its contents through text and image symbols. Consequently, these virtual worlds are not actual realities in themselves but expressions of truths. The resort to the virtual symbolic world may result from a desire to escape reality or express imagination and contemplation. An individual can

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be conscious of the symbolic reality they interact with, but in some cases, there might be an extreme attachment to this world, leading to a loss of awareness of the surrounding reality. Individuals can deeply immerse themselves in the virtual world online, sometimes making them feel that this world is the real reality, while the physical world becomes marginal or secondary. This blending can lead to the creation of virtual relationships and interaction with virtual communities, influencing the individual's experience and shaping their personal reality (Azzi, p. 193).

Mohammed Rahouma assumes that manipulating virtual identities reflects a desire to break free from societal-imposed self-images and an expression of a yearning to experience existence in a different way. This inclination is not a fear of merging with these virtual identities or an escape from reality; rather, it is a pursuit of independence and an aspiration for freedom. Reclaiming virtual identities, in this case, serves, for the individual, as a means of escaping the constraints imposed by being a member of the social community, allowing the fulfillment of aspirations to be a distinct self, even if achieved in a circuitous manner(Rahouma, 2008, p. 15),

Mohammed Rahouma introduced the concept of "networked withdrawal" to describe another pattern of "self-forgetting" in the context of individuals using the Internet. In this pattern, manipulators of their identities tend to lose their personal identity not due to merging into interactive networks where individuals know each other outside of the internet. Instead, this occurs through the disintegration of personal identity within the realm of multiple virtual communities.

In this context, individuals lean towards achieving uniformity and complete alignment with rapidly emerging online communities. This poses a challenge for individuals who seek to remain distinct in this virtual space. This behavior manifests as a problem of self-dissolution and fading within the immersion of virtual presence, not only in interacting with groups where individuals know each other.

In other words, this concept comes to the forefront in virtual spaces where individuals who do not know each other previously come together, engaging in dialogues centered around mysterious and captivating topics. This context presents a complex scene in the digital space, where virtual communication intertwines with the pursuit of conformity and collective unity, posing ethical and philosophical challenges for individuals in the era of digital communication. (Rahouma, 2008, p. 15),

The withdrawal from reality signifies the individual's dissolution into the virtual environment. The endless satisfaction of the individual's ego by acknowledging its fantasies in the online space propels them to immerse themselves in internet practices characterized by self-coercion to replace the virtual with the real. Spending long hours online within imaginary spaces leads the individual to believe that life offline is secondary.

In the virtual space, the characteristics of physical existence disappear. Thus, the individual's perception of reality in this situation occurs only through electronic devices that manipulate the physiological and social dimensions of reality. The individual, free from the anthropological constraints of physical space, becomes dependent on communication equipment in representing reality. Consequently, any disruption at the network boundaries or malfunctions that may affect the network represent a catastrophe for them, jeopardizing their identity and existence online. In this context, their presence in the virtual environment is precarious, and they cannot control it. This self escapes the circle of self-construction and internalization based on social models. The individual no longer originates from selves that societally establish them to reach their individual self, but rather emerges from disappointment in their relationship with their personal self. This drives them to escape into virtual selves (Rabah, p. 6).

Many individuals find in virtual spaces a realm for self-appreciation and mutual respect, away from the marginalization and lack of recognition that may affect real-world

communities. These issues are often tied to societal or physiological factors related to an individual's status, surroundings, physical appearance, or other aspects. In virtual environments, these factors are marginalized, and the focus is on shared interests, intimacy in relationships, and the appreciation of the self, evident in the exchange of private conversations and lengthy voice chats.

In many cases, individuals avoid expending their human energy for society, regardless of the nature of that energy. This is particularly noticeable when individuals can represent themselves as they see fit without being compelled to adopt roles imposed by others in real social life. In this context, individuals can naturally present themselves and express crucial aspects of their identities without losing confidence or finding themselves in situations where they must assume inappropriate roles.

This freedom in virtual representation is a crucial aspect of building self-confidence. Individuals can rely on themselves and express their thoughts in a way that reflects their personal will without being forced to present themselves in a prescribed manner. This essential aspect of virtual representation serves as a means to protect individuals from interference and negative influences that may occur in interactions with others. The virtual mask becomes a way to maintain an individual's independence and their right to freely express themselves (Rahouma, 2008, pp. 12-13).

4-Self-Expression through Virtual Identity: Familiar Friends or Familiar Strangers

Stanley Milgram's expression year of "Familiar Strangers" refers to individuals who share common spaces without engaging in direct interaction, such as people from the same neighborhood who commute on the same train every day. This phenomenon delves into the intricate dynamics of people recognizing each other within shared environments while maintaining a level of anonymity.   (Hartley, Bruges, Bruns, 2018, p. 41)

In this context, a Familiar Stranger refers to someone we regularly observe but with whom we have no direct interaction. A classic example is individuals who share our daily bus

commute; we encounter them repeatedly, yet we don't engage in direct conversation. While they aren't categorized as friends, there is a greater likelihood for them to transition from being Familiar Strangers to friends compared to complete strangers (PEREZ, BIRREGAH, LEMERCIER, 2013).

Human relationships can be classified into four distinct types: Familiar Stranger (FS), In-Role (IR), Friend (F), and Stranger (S)(Liang, Li, Zhang̓ (2016).

 Milgram's research highlighted that these familiar yet non-interacting relationships play a role in shaping the social fabric, bridging the gap between strangers and close acquaintances. He suggested that such interactions are an integral part of the social landscape, fostering a sense of communal familiarity.. (Hartley, Bruges, Bruns, 2018, p. 41)

It's crucial to highlight that this concept is rooted in sociology and encompasses various dimensions when applied to the online sphere. These dimensions include behavioral, spatial, temporal, and more. The proliferation of digital social networks provides an excellent opportunity to explore the diverse facets of this phenomenon, presenting both theoretical and practical challenges (PEREZ, BIRREGAH, LEMERCIER, 2013)

 The implications of Familiar Strangers extend to numerous fields, such as entertainment, services, and homeland security. The online adaptation of this concept allows for an in-depth investigation into how individuals connect and interact in the digital realm, opening avenues for theoretical exploration and practical applications((PEREZ, BIRREGAH, LEMERCIER, 2013)

 In essence, Milgram's work sheds light on the complexities of these encounters, emphasizing their significance in constructing a subtle yet essential social network. The concept of "Familiar Strangers" provides insights into the multifaceted nature of human connections, with a focus on the role of shared spaces and repeated encounters in shaping social dynamics (Hartley, Bruges, Bruns, 2018, p. 41)

Is it feasible to maintain non-interaction when we discover ourselves sitting next to someone on a train who expresses a desire for guidance, citing a five-hour interaction on YouTube

from the previous night? This perspective shifts us from the realm of familiar strangers to individuals confined in a situation of unexpected familiarity. It blurs the boundaries with strangers, introducing an intimacy that arises from sharing private information with those we are physically close to, rather than distant strangers. (Hartley, Bruges, Bruns, 2018, p. 41)

One of the most significant features of online social networks is "The excessive advertisement " This feature holds a considerable appeal for a substantial portion of users, particularly the youth who are enthusiastic about sharing details of their private lives, attracting a large number of followers eager to explore such information. However, on the flip side, it comes with several drawbacks. Individuals may find themselves targeted more than necessary, especially in public places, where someone approaching them might inquire about their personal details, life specifics, or family.

owever, researcher Elaine Lally argues that virtual relationships are not limited to interacting with strangers (people we don't know in real life, especially interactions leading to emotional connections or children interacting with potentially dangerous strangers). Instead, they are primarily used for chatting and communicating with people we already know and see in person. Sometimes, the internet becomes the only means of communication with these individuals. We ask them questions like "Where have you been?" or "What are you doing this weekend?" and make plans to meet with them. Additionally, we may use it to reconnect with people we haven't seen in a long time.(Lally, 2011, p. 139).

ccording to some researchers, the internet is used as a platform to establish new relationships, in addition to those that existed before. This type of relationship is considered more limited by its nature when compared to the bonds of family and close friends. This limitation is due to geographical constraints, synchronous timing, and is primarily based on specific interests and practices. Consequently, these online relationships play a significantly restricted role in people's lives compared to the strong and inclusive demands of family and close friendships.(Benkler, 2012, p. 500)

Results and discussion :

One of the most significant features of online social networks is "excessive disclosure." This feature holds great appeal for a large portion of users, especially young individuals who are eager to share details of their private lives. It attracts a considerable number of followers interested in staying updated on these details. However, this characteristic comes with several negatives. Individuals may find themselves targeted more than necessary, especially in public places, where someone approaching them might inquire about their personal characteristics, life details, or family.

The concept of "familiar strangers" in the real world is relatively logical, as individuals may encounter people with some known information about them but choose not to interact unless there is an implicit agreement to keep their distance. In virtual communities, however, the information known about individuals is not limited to a certain extent. These communities have provided the capability to share extensive information and personal details about a specific person, revealing their identity entirely or partially. Some individuals may not be aware of the details shared about them, while others may know a lot about certain people, making them familiar or excessively known to some and entirely or relatively unknown to others.

Social media platforms have a unique allure that encourages users to disclose details of their lives. The question that appears at the top of a Facebook account, "What's on your mind?" is a clear indication of the temptations these networks offer individuals to reveal their privacy and thoughts publicly. The allure doesn't stop at the individual user; it extends to their followers. While we may commute daily with the same people, there is usually no attraction to inquire about their private lives or thoughts. However, individuals who openly share their

private lives on social networks possess a unique allure that compels others to follow them constantly, sometimes reaching the point of addiction to every detail and daily update.

5.Conclusion:

From this, we can infer that the question of identity has shifted from the old query related to an individual's self-perception, "Who am I?"——which distinguished them through various data, traits, and details from others——to "Who am I in the eyes of others?" This new perspective involves the judgment of the "self-proclaimed identity" through social media from the perceptions of others. Consequently, the concept of self transforms from being private to public, making it challenging for an individual to prevent others from delving into their privacy. This difficulty exists whether in a public space, during transportation, or in other situations. This transformation of identity contradicts Stanley Milgram's concept of "familiar strangers."

Moreover, virtual identity doesn't always align with the real one, either partially or entirely. Individuals can adopt multiple identities, providing inaccurate or false information to others. Therefore, someone who appears as a familiar stranger may be closer or farther away depending on the information they disclose on their virtual identity.

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