

YOUTH SUBCULTURE OF HIKIKOMORI

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Hikikomori represents the one of modern youth subcultures emerged in Japan and strengthening their positions in different regions of the world.

Hikikomori (“hikikomori” from Japanese means a “being in seclusion”) is a category of young people refused any forms of social activity, tending to an extreme degree of isolation due to the presence of certain personal complexes and phobias. Hikikomori are spending all the time at home, leaving such duties as school, university or work, wasting a free time engaging their hobby. The hobby is a whole time senseless staying online. The age of Hikikomori is varying from 17 till 27 years. The works by such Japanese psychologists as Genda, Hattori, and Saito are devoted to analysis of Hikikomori. According to these authors Hikikomori lifestyle is characterized by insularity, destruction of social relations, including within the family, the complete absence of any contact with the outside world except some basic needs such as paying utility bills and buying food.

The presence of such category of young people represents a sustainable process of atomization of the informational society. Training and labor activity, contacts with family and friends are not a priority for the Hikikomori and are discordant with their current way of life. They prefer the life in a confined space and consumption of various information products (anime TV series, computer games, comics, etc.). Direct communication is being replaced by technically mediated one. Hikikomori are immersive in virtual space, which is perceived as an ideal, “sterile” space free from domestic problems and communicating with relatives or friends. Internet addiction reaches critical proportions: online games, online communication free of registration and accounts are the communicational space of Hikikomori where they feels themselves comfortable and can contact with the same people. The real living space is narrowed to the boundaries of a room or an apartment. At the same time it becomes a multifunctional: a space for relaxing, everyday pastime, eating, sleeping, using a computer or a game console, storage space for necessary things and food.

All of the listed problems of modern youth socio-cultural space are indicating an alarming trend of deep and systemic social degradation of a significant part of today’s youth. Youth society and modern society in total don’t have a single established system of the hierarchy of values. The coexistence of continuity of traditional values typical for our society and the formation and mass distribution of consumer interests can be observed.