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SOCIALITY IN VIRTUAL SPACE: PRAXEOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN SECURITY STRATEGIES

Abstract:

The article examines sociality as a precondition for becoming a system of social relation and communication, public opinion, and collective beliefs in the virtual space. It is argued that the essence of the social is virtual, such as social roles and hierarchies, habitus and rituals, institutions, and others. It is defined the way of understanding virtual reality as a special communicative space where take place a tendency to the disappearance of personal and public, ethnic and social, or cultural factors of differentiation. Instead, the sociality of cyberspace produces an effective model of social cooperation, which serves as an embodiment of utopian concepts of social order. Following the principles and emphases of interpretation, the problem of sociality in the virtual space determines ways of solving a wide circle of political, economic, ethnic, global, and ecological problems. The sociality of virtual space is characterized by anonymity, intensity, and operationality of its manifestation and influence. Such transformations are explained by the general aggressive nature of Infospace and the pursuit of subjectivity to the maximum of self-actualization. These characteristics emphasize the measurement of new challenges to society's security and well-being on a global scale.

Keywords:

virtual space, sociality, information culture, cyberspace, community, communication, security strategies.

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Introduction

The mechanisms of adaptation don't limit the way of human activity. Humankind can reformat, arrange the surrounding space according to his requests and needs. We could confirm that culture is a virtual space of symbol, meaning, abstraction, value, and else. Culture is embodied in things but not reproduced from artifacts. And this is its virtual, ideal, or spiritual meaning. The key to this way of functioning of culture is society, a stable system of realization of sociality.

The direct purpose of information technology is to consolidate the monumental scale of world civilization. However, such an applied aspect of the content and role of information technology, of course, isn't limited. Information technology produces a special type of reality, namely, virtual reality. The number of adherents of virtual reality is growing rapidly around the world, along with the increasing amount of time invested by the average citizen in cyberspace. That is, virtual reality becomes more important to the average person than first-order reality. This fact allows us to talk about Internet addictions: the painful commitment of the masses to the simulation environment. The priority of the virtual over the real threatens the biological as such. Also, several thinkers, philosophers, and psychologists underline a kind of expansion of the virtual into reality: frequent cases where the horizon of everyday life of a person is guided by the axioms and principles of virtual reality. Thus, the number of cases of unmotivated aggression in adolescents is growing, from beatings and humiliation recorded by a mobile phone for further placement on the global network, to mass murders, shootings, which have repeatedly occurred around the world. Thus, the philosophical discourse of the concept of sociality in the context of virtual reality is a priority of modern humanities. So, in 2020 have started two international projects in NPDU: Jean Monnet Chair "Social and Cultural Aspects of European Studies" (SCAES) and Jean Monnet Project "EU Values of Diversity and Inclusion for Sustainable Development" (EVDISD). Among the projects' main tasks should be called the study of interaction and communication in the virtual space, its dangers and challenges.

Praxeological dimensions of sociality in the modern world

Following the principles and emphases of solving sociality's conceptualization, the contours of interpretation of many problems of political, economic, ethnic, and global, ecological nature are determined.

Thus, Martha Radice analyzes the problem of the realization of sociality in the context of the modern urban landscape, the specifics of which the author calls 'multiculture'². Jeff Malpas also follows this logic of understanding the phenomenon of sociality and its role³. He argues that the phenomenon of sociality underlies the spatial representations and orientations of humans. In other words, the fundamental problem of the existence of society and culture as a genesis involves attributive human sociality.

The idea of sociality as a certain precondition, a context for realization, will be fair. Sarah Pink interprets this category comprehensively as the unity of activity, sociality, and place. As for her, the unity of these factors produces a kind of social locus, concerning which it is appropriate to make judgments of an evaluative and prognostic nature. Daniel Hjorth explores sociality from the standpoint of the commercialization of modern social life⁴. He believes that the interaction of society and business leads to the formation of the concept of 'social entrepreneurship' and significantly transforms the content of definitive practices of the phenomenon of sociality. In other words, the ways of determining sociality are formed following the context, where the gradation of the definition of value takes place.

However, it is not capital, but values of another order are more important in determining the content of the category of sociality. Often the category of sociality is identified with civic consciousness or position. The methodology of this approach to the study of sociality raises some doubts. Thus, Trevor Stack distinguishes four categories of citizenship: political, national, legal, and social⁵. Suppose the first three categories are known and understood. In that case, social sociality means stable structures of consciousness of individuals who identify themselves as part of a certain community, not limited by ethnic or state factors. It is a motivating sense of belonging to a rather abstract community, a community as such. The author comes to such differentiation based on a

² M. Radice, *Sociality, spatiality, conviviality, community*, „Ethnic and Racial Studies”, 2019, Vol. 42, Issue 3, pp. 395-401.

³ J. Malpas, *Space and sociality*, „International Journal of Philosophical Studies”, 1997, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 53-79.

⁴ D. Hjorth, *Public entrepreneurship: desiring social change, creating sociality*, „Entrepreneurship & Regional Development. An International Journal”, 2013, Vol. 25, Issue 1-2: The distinctiveness of the European tradition in entrepreneurship research, pp. 34-51.

⁵ T. Stack, *Beyond the state? Civil sociality and other notions of citizenship*, „Citizenship Studies”, 2012, Vol. 16, Issue 7, pp. 871-885.

significant empirical base of questionnaires and surveys of recipients of different categories. We consider the very fact of such a motivational structure as an argument that confirms the definition of sociality as the intentionality of subjectivity to the social. But citizenship is a derivative phenomenon, as a form of embodiment and realization of such an intention in social life's objectified structures.

In the context of defining sociality as a prerequisite, Trevor Butt forms his concept, who considers sociality to be the basis of the phenomenon of empathy and studies it in the context of M. Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology⁶. L. M. Leitner and D. T. Pfenninger also follow the line of identification of sociality and empathy⁷. Margaret Gilbert explores sociality in a slightly different context⁸. She analyzes the phenomenon of sociality based on the concepts of 'common intention' and 'joint action'. In other words, the study of sociality is justified from the standpoint of social convention and collective beliefs. Otherwise, the discourse of sociality acquires signs of excessive speculation.

Also, a productive direction of the study of sociality is to study the specifics of its explication because of the historical context. The sociality of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity is motivated and ideologized by various worldview principles. Accordingly, the present also forms peculiar principles of sociality. Thus, Lee Thompson and Julie Cupples explore the formation of digital sociality in the online space of modern ICT⁹. According to them, modern gadgets don't low sociality but change the form of one's explication, increasing one's impact on society's dynamics as a whole.

Individuals are attributively endowed with sociality and need to belong to a social group. Thus, in existential philosophy, a specific feature of existence is 'being-to-another'. However, a person's life has a focus on the Other, as evidenced by a whole galaxy of outstanding classics, giving separate addresses and emotional assessments of this direction. Establishing communication with the Other necessarily implies the presence of a mediator, or mediative space, a space of

⁶ T. Butt, *Sociality, role, and embodiment*, "Journal of Constructivist Psychology", 1998, Vol. 11, Issue 2, pp. 105-116.

⁷ L. M. Leitner, D. T. Pfenninger, *Sociality and optimal functioning*, "Journal of Constructivist Psychology", 1994, Vol. 7, Issue 2, pp. 119-135.

⁸ M. Gilbert, *In Search of Sociality. Philosophical Explorations*, "An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action", 1998, Vol. 1, Issue 3, pp. 233-241.

⁹ L. Thompson, J. Cupples, *Seen and not heard? Text messaging and digital sociality*, "Social & Cultural Geography", 2008, Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 95-108.

communication. Of course, such a function of mediation is performed by semiotic, or sign-symbolic reality, i.e., culture. Thus, culture explicates sociality as an attributive trait inherent in the human essence and acts as a factor in the consolidation of society as a whole. At the heart of the concept of 'sociality', most of its researchers point to such determinants as 'relationship', 'mutual agreement', 'community of human existence'. So, sociality is the embodiment of the belief in a common way of building a world of life, the desire to belong to a community. Society is a way of life of many subjects, based on the agreed order of worldview, values, and community activities.

Aggression and entropy of Infospace: new configurations of morality

If we talk about the complex characteristics of a human, it is customary to indicate their bio-social nature. Characteristics of humans as biological essence under the influence of a new virtual ontology also change significantly. Thus, loud hyperdynamic, atrophy, and rudimentation of some organs, significant 'rejuvenation' of the so-called 'age' diseases: heart attacks, strokes, osteochondrosis, etc. But even if we don't focus on the pathological manifestations of biological transformations, there are some common stereotypes of behavior, that also pose a threat. Forgetting about food, personal hygiene, interest in the opposite sex is quite natural for adherents of cyberspace. Fundamental biological instincts, such as the instinct of self-preservation or the instinct of procreation, are being supplanted.

Fundamental study of this issue was received in the works of Professor of the University of Hertfordshire (UK) Luciano Floridi, in particular in work "Open Problems of the Philosophy of Information"¹⁰. According to the author, the information revolutions radically change not just the course of everyday life, but the content of the concept of the Universe. The information space, or the created intellectual environment (in L. Floridi's terminology) is formed by reontologizing the surrounding reality. Thus created infosphere, or totality of information objects, formulates a new conceptual idea of the Universe. It employs other laws of physics (reversibility of time, its and space plasticity, multivectority, fragmentary laws of mechanics and gravity, etc.), other laws of life, biology (the ability to add health 'in one click', the conditionality of death, and the exchange substances and reproduction of the genus should

¹⁰ L. Floridi, *Philosophy and Computing: An Introduction*, London/New York 1999.

not be mentioned), other laws of knowledge (fakes, information intrusions, encyclopedias, providing an unlimited number of editors, general anonymity and unlimited freedom of expression). And logically, other laws and principles of social and personal relations.

The lack of clear coordinates for self-identification in the infosphere, the conditional and arbitrary or fragmentary nature of determinants, the general aggressive nature of the information space – all these tendencies lead to the disorientation of the person. And we remember that disorientation, or controlled entropy, is the simplest and most effective way to manipulate an individual or a community. The subject in this context is allowed to act incognito, avoiding the results of action or responsibility. That is, cyberspace doesn't imply the presence of a subject as an agent of action. All traditional systems of ethics are based on an agent responsible for his actions. L. Floridi creates a non-anthropocentric ethical theory. His information ethics is characterized by researchers as centered on the passive ('patient-centered') aspect of human activity. Even inaction is a consciously chosen act. Everything that a person does or does not do is subject to moral evaluation. The Socratic principle of ethics, according to which the basis of every evil deed is ignorance of man, in the days of the fifth information revolution is extremely difficult to justify. We do not aim to refute the conclusions of prominent classics of culture, Socrates in particular. Wide access to information doesn't mean a high level of culture or education. As in the famous proverb about a grenade in the paws of a monkey. Such situations in the infosphere are not only widespread but even more dangerous. Destruction in consciousness is also the disorientation of a person with all the following consequences.

There are many philosophical concepts of the nature and genesis of evil. Since the Enlightenment, it has become a tradition to consider social organization's imperfection as a source of evil. The reality in general, and society in particular, create insurmountable obstacles to simple human happiness. Virtual reality is a field of unlimited possibilities, which can give a person the fulfillment of the most secret desires. Such a powerful channel of sublimation can minimize social conflicts, collisions, and shocks. Virtual reality sets a fundamentally different logic for defining purpose and content. The eternal struggle of priorities, the problem of choice as a curse of freedom – the vestiges of a passing era. 'All-inclusive' - this is the slogan of the era of prosperity. In this regard, virtual reality can perform the functions of 'promised land' or 'paradise on earth' for an unlimited number of sufferers.

The Chinese scientist Liu Gang discusses the problem of orientation in an aggressive and noisy info-space¹¹. The reason for this severity of the problem, the researcher sees in the focus of the Western paradigm of thinking on cognitive philosophy, which is limited to the internal systemic way of analytics. Instead, he proposes an orientation philosophy, which is based on a modal theory of information and the idea of possible (information worlds). The work's historical and philosophical basis consists of traditional Chinese philosophy and the genius works of G. Leibniz. Modality significantly determines the content and nature of analytical procedures. The subject in such a discourse is accustomed to a variety of contexts, and therefore the aggressiveness of the information space is not able to confuse him.

Significantly, the comprehension of modern technogenic problems and the corresponding socio-cultural transformations is carried out within the framework of the Platonic-Aristotelian paradigm of epistemology. Plato's "Myth of the Cave" prophetically describes the current contradictions between the fragmentary perception of reality, the conformism of such a habit, and the need to adapt to the expanding information universe.

Synchrony and diachrony of virtual communication

Along with the biological nature, human social attribution undergoes significant transformations. The great Aristotle defined society through communication, which connects different individuals into a single social organism. Communication can take place in two planes: synchronous and diachronic. Communication in the aspect of synchrony means interaction in a single space-time, i.e., participation in social processes. The diachronic context of communication involves dialogue at the level of culture, accumulated semantic and value constructions. Thus, society and culture are the parties to one medal, one existential essence of man, which is manifested in the need for the presence of the Other, and hence overcoming and transcendence. Refusal of reference entails the negation of both subject-object relations and subject-subject relations.

Being in virtual reality is like a 'God's game'. First, it is unlimited possibilities, the ability to be guided solely by their tastes and preferences. Secondly, it is complete freedom that does not involve

¹¹ L. Gan, *Philosophy of Information and the Foundations of the Future Chinese philosophy of science and technology*, "Philosophy questions", 2007, No. 5, pp. 45-57.

responsibility because virtual reality is a space of simulation, illusion, and copy, full of existential tension. Third, absolute freedom implies the same absolute loneliness. This being *ex nihilo*, which is not determined by anything but its subjectivity, has traditionally been considered the Absolute prerogative. The disappearance or expulsion of the Other destroys the fundamental foundations of human sociality. Thousands and tens of thousands of virtual friends in social networks don't exclude loneliness, fear, and despair and don't mean an active civic position or a high level of personal culture. Hyper-sociality, an incredible activity in the information space, destroys the archetypal skills of social interaction, turns into asociality, or sociopathy in more familiar terminology. We are dealing not just with information technology, not even with IT-culture, but with a new type of existence: dialogue with everyone with complete anonymity and impersonation of the mentioned 'everyone'. The metaphor of romanticism 'loneliness in the crowd', or a hermetic tragedy from where there is no way out, becomes loneliness in the network, which does not burden, but on the contrary, allows the desired pattern of self-identification. Thus, communication in a synchronous section of the virtual world is, in essence, a conversation with the best interlocutor – himself. In this regard, the need for schizoanalytic procedures, which are declared by postmodernism, becomes obvious.

However, communication in cyberspace has other properties. Confirmation of this fact is appropriate to consider the events of 2014-2015 in Ukraine. As you know, Internet users with the help of information and communication space of social networks, caused a change of government in the country and mobilized society to resist external aggression. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to assume that with the help of digital technology for the first time in human history it was possible to implement utopian communist doctrines, beginning with Pythagoras and Plato: building a society of total happiness. It is appropriate to assume that with the help of ICT is the embodiment of the classical ideal of a just social system, communism in its classical (non-Soviet) view.

Diachronic communication, in terms of culture, is based on a different understanding of time. Synchronous is updated in the current model, so it is quite organically reflected in virtual reality. Diachrony in the present moment connects the past as historical memory and the future as the intention of a logical continuation. Virtual reality is a continuity of the present, therefore, doesn't require memory and tradition, and the future is a set of equivalent possibilities, the implementation of each of

them doesn't exclude the others. The nonlinearity of time is an attributive feature of virtual reality. Thus, the need for culture as the transmission of experience and connection of generations is lost. Besides, the main function of culture is protective. According to F. Nietzsche, culture is a thin apple peel over the hot chaos¹². Its purpose is to hide the unattractive ugliness of nature. Culture makes the surrounding reality acceptable and habitable. Virtual reality is a product of humans, a world in which humanity is the main architect and creator. And he needs to defend himself only from himself. Is there a need for this? The negative answer will be obvious. However, in our opinion, this is a wide field for discussion.

According to many researchers, culture is a consequence of natural human mortality. In today's relevance, a human is immortal. Understanding the phenomenon of death requires a memory that captures the departure of loved ones and knowledge of the inevitability of the future. Virtual reality gives a feeling of immortality, belonging to the Substantial principle or information. The person in cyberspace is a segment of the general information flow. Thus, the new ontology necessarily affects anthropogenesis at all its levels, including archetypes. Changing communication and psychological skills shifts the emphasis on communication procedures and, as a result, changes somatics. These transformations are due to interactivity as an attributive feature of virtual reality.

Based on the derivative, secondary nature of the ontological status of virtual reality, arbitrariness in the way of existence of its objects, the lack of clear criteria of existence, meaning, and causality, there is a wide range of problems associated with metamorphoses that occur in modern phenomena of subjectivity and sociality. It is significant that the widespread demand from society for virtual reality products, some thinkers associate with escapism techniques, gaining freedom through 'escape from society' in the terminology of E. Fromm. Thus, E. O. Taratuta calls virtual reality freedom from the social without going beyond the social system¹³. Indeed, if the category of freedom presupposed a transcendental act of spiritual growth and development in the classical tradition, then modernity increasingly insists on the attribution of conformism and mannerist perfectionism. Naturally, virtual reality is the environment where such intentions find the necessary and

¹² F. Nietzsche, *Evil wisdom. F. Nietzsche Works*, Vol. 1, Sankt Petersburg, p. 829.

¹³ E. E. Taratuta, *Philosophy of virtual reality*, Sankt Peterburg 2007, p. 148.

sufficient tools for implementation and satisfaction. A virtual object is plastic in itself, and virtual space is created according to the needs and requests of a person: in communication, searching for information, purchasing the necessary things and services, etc. In other words, virtual reality is a sphere of sublimation of the psychological and emotional states of humans.

Maximum expressiveness and clarity, deliberateness of virtual objects have a very pragmatic purpose. This feature produces a significant emotional reaction of the actor, dependence, and passion for such an intensity of perception. Therefore, the generation of modern students is bored at school because the constant reality on the horizon of everyday life doesn't have such an intense impact on perception as the aesthetics of virtuality. Note that the aesthetics of virtual space plays a decisive role in the demand for these technologies. Unlike the traditional communicative model, where language acts are a mediator as a sign-symbol system, communication in cyberspace is carried out through an image. Thus, verbal communication practices presuppose the need for rationality, through which the semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of the text, both oral and written, ensure and maintain the adequacy, accuracy of transmission, and reception of information content. Virtual space is a translation of an image, not a word, so the priority in the reception certainly belongs to the impression, emotional response, rather than reflective-analytical activities. It appeals to emotions, stimulation, and 'cultivation' in the virtual space that leads to the improvement of the 'living presence' technology and expands the possibilities of interaction in the immersive computer dimension.

Thus, the multidimensionality of reality in IT-processes is a fait accompli. The matter is different: the order of being in the world changes, being itself loses its traditional foundations. A 'new ontology' is brewing, the attributes of which must be understood and formulated. To describe and analyze the principles of interaction between man and the world, the position of 'two realities' - objective and subjective - was quite sufficient. Moreover, the thesis of the identity of being and thinking is one of the axioms of heuristic ambitions. The thesis was shaken in the IT era when the multiplicity of realities became a fait accompli, and the growing virtual reality shifted the object-subject coordinates. Inherent in the classical paradigm, the idea of the world as a set of discrete beings is not convincing in the space of virtual reality. Impermeable to knowledge object, stronghold, and the curse of epistemology, is beyond the psychological, the explication of which is virtuality. As M. Foucault aid,

the secret is that there is no essence¹⁴. In the virtual space, the essence is exhausted in the phenomenon; the lack of depth precludes pluralism of interpretation. The virtual object is entirely in the power of its creator and consumer. Based on this, the question of the status of uniqueness and the necessity of the existence of being is removed, as well as the procedure of its cognition. The relation to being consciousness builds not on the principle of analogy, and the principle of reduplication: the creation of clones. Children who grew up in cyberspace don't break toys to open the internal structure; they create them with the content they already need. The unusual plasticity of a virtual object naturally leads to a lack of reference. Reference as such is a necessary principle of communication between subject and object. Postulating the refusal of reference leads to irreversible changes in the subject: uncritical perception of information, openness to suggestive emotional influence, the anonymity of communication, the priority of presentation and positioning before the essence, rudimentation of long-term memory, and development of operative, search for impressions as motivational communicative.

Conclusions

The modern information society exists on principles that demonstrate the expansion of the virtual into reality. Such a priority of the virtual over the real is a threat to the biological both in the context of life support and given the changing archetypes of human thinking and consciousness. Under the influence of virtual reality technologies, the reontologization of reality and the transformation of sociality's basic predictions as a prerequisite for belonging to the community, common values, and beliefs. Significant differences characterize the Infospace of virtual reality compared to first reality: it employs other physics laws, other ideas about the meaning, value, and uniqueness of human life, other epistemological procedures, and other principles of interaction between people. On the one hand, such opportunities provide the necessary space for the realization of subjectivity, the sublimation of its effects and aspirations, to minimize social conflicts and conflicts of interest. New communication technologies make it possible to create a new format of solidarity without class, property, ethnic and cultural differences. On the other hand, the information space of virtuality is oversaturated with

¹⁴ M. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject. A course of lectures given in College de France in 1981-1982*, Saint Petersburg 2007, p. 677.

various messages and patterns of behavior, which disorients the modern man in his worldview priorities and prospects. And since one of the most important functions of culture is defined as protective, a dilemma arises: is the space of virtual reality a promised land for man, which brings needs and a resource for self-realization, or is it an evolutionarily new round of adaptive and creative abilities? And given the above arguments makes the second answer is more convincing.

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