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INTERGROUP INTERACTION IN THE SPACE OF IMAGINED AND VIRTUAL GROUPS

Introduction. The development of Internet technologies and the creation of modern gadgets, such as smartphones and tablets, contributed to the fact that their use acquired new features and became more and more affordable. The creation of new programs and technologies helped people communicate with each other, exchange information, news, photographs and opinions in multitude of applications, for example, Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. These applications, in addition to possibility to create and maintain so-called "channels", provide ability to discuss or to create thematic groups and to engage verbal interaction in them. Thus, these groups develop a certain special communicative group field, virtual space, filled with emotional and informational interpersonal exchange based on mutual understanding.

Cyberspace is a certain reflection of the social environment, so the processes present in real groups take place in virtual ones. Fairly often take place a violation of certain boundaries of the group members and their protection, restoration and upholding. Members of such groups often provide group support to their comrades, use their in-group status and, in particular, leadership.

In the modern world full of uncertainty, in the realities of Ukraine, engulfed in the war due to the Russian unprovoked attack, people are looking for additional information that could shed light on what is happening and, thus, for some time reduce anxiety caused by uncertainty. Anxiety mobilizes informational behavior of people in the direction of clarifying and accessing risks and threatening events, as well as stimulates an exchange of views on what actions will help to reduce or avoid them.

Multitude of people in Ukraine forgo television programs in the favour of Internet, which provides much greater flexibility in accessing information. On the Internet, people have a choice - to view feeds of social networks (in particular, Facebook for those who prefer detailed and deep analysis; Twitter, with more brief, perhaps "bite-sized" pieces of news or information, which tend to be more interconnected; or perhaps any other social network) or use mobile/ PC applications such as Viber, WhatsApp or Telegram (which provide the possibilities of diadic or group communication based on emotional connection or thematic interest).

With the beginning of an unprovoked full-scale Russian invasion, plethora of new Telegram channels arose, and many of pre-existing got experienced growth (be it in outreach, quality, or topics they cover). Many of those channels present information structured by the author(s) of the channel, which helps to navigate in those uncertain times. For our study, Telegram application will be a point of interest as a platform for creating groups for communication and interaction of interested participants.

In not-so-distant-past, there already was a sharp change in the communicative situation and habits in connection with the pandemic of COVID-19, when, due to the requirements of social isolation, people sought to overcome loneliness by communicating remotely, using social networks or other types of online social interaction [Korobanova, 2020]. In the study we conducted, significant connection was revealed between concern / anxiety in connection with the possibility of getting infected by COVID-19 and the use of social networks, as well as between the use of social networks and participation in online social interaction. Then, 62.6% of respondents noted growth of online interaction in the context of restrictions on social

contacts, and 59.6% of respondents - growth in usage of social networks [Korobanova, 2020; Bondarenko et al., 2022].

In summary, it can be argued that the virtual world of communication in social networks and PC / mobile applications is real for their users and in a certain way compensates for the missing informational and emotional aspects of real communication, prompting a new type of behavior - "hanging on the Internet". According to our 2021 investigations, 57.1% of modern young people are included in online groups [Korobanova, 2022].

Considering the interaction in certain virtual online groups, we simultaneously take into account that the participants in these groups partially consciously, partially unconsciously, consider themselves as members of several imagined groups. Interacting in virtual groups, they are members of their imagined groups, therefore, in this way, intergroup interaction occurs between members of different groups. We consider group and intergroup interaction as the dynamics of the group conscious and unconscious. Imagined groups are groups present in the mentality of people, to which a person belongs to. Virtual groups are groups of like-minded people created for a specific purpose, existing in virtual cyber reality, created in the Viber, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter PC/ mobile application, etc., as well as other discussion forums.

Let us denote that new members join the virtual group, while being members of certain real and imagined groups, having their own unique experience of intergroup interaction. Based on past experience, they formed patterns, prescriptions and scenarios for such interaction. Thus, they react to the messages of the group as members of certain groups, according to previously learned communication models. At the same time, in the process of participating in the group, they take part in the formation of the interactive style characteristic of it.

Peculiarities of group and intergroup interaction in the space of virtual and imagined groups. Imagined groups are specially constructed communities, imagined and represented by people who perceive themselves as part of them [Anderson, 2006]. Members of the community hold in their minds a mental image of their similarity, and this unites them. Virtual (online) groups are characterized by the fact that, for the most part, in reality they have never met in full force and only known one another virtually, via the Internet. However, the group members of such groups, with some experience of interaction, already form their own ideas about what can be expected from one or another participant, imagine his character and reactions that underlie behavior modeling [Powell, Piccoli, Ives, 2004].

Activity in virtual groups can be associated with leadership. Virtual groups may have several leaders, who can often change at the initial stage of the existence of these groups [Alexander, 2003]. However, it takes time for an online group to recognize leadership [Hollingshead, 2011]. An essential feature of virtual communication is the different geographical locations of the participants. The members of the groups we have examined do not live only in Ukraine and may be or may not be Ukrainians. Given the entry into virtual groups of participants from various territorial clusters, it should be recognized that cross-cultural communication often takes place in them. Sociocultural features and differences between cultures were identified, first of all, in the uncertainty avoidance - tolerance for uncertainty; power distance - closeness; individualism - collectivism; masculinity - femininity; long-term or short-term orientation [Hofstede, 1980]. Thus, culture, as a value-normative system of collective mentality, determines many features of communication and social interaction of its representatives.

When interacting with a group, a person acts as a member of a particular group, although he may not always be aware of it, and is the bearer of the value potential of significant groups [Altman, Taylor, 1973]. If the group he is interacting with is not a group of his membership, intergroup interaction occurs. Another case of intergroup interaction is the interaction between microgroups /subgroups within large groups. In accordance with sympathies and preferences, group members with a similar value background are combined into microgroups. In interaction with representatives of other microgroups with different values and life prospects, they will defend their point of view, their living space in the space of group interaction.

Sociocultural experience, the quintessence of the group conscious and unconscious, arises as a result of the territorial and geographical connection with the place of residence. Thus, territoriality is the sociocultural basis of normative unity and coherence of behavioral expectations established through the values and norms of interaction in a certain territory [Parsons, 1966]. Territoriality is fixed in the mentality, which reflects the group conscious and unconscious, as well as a layer of national culture, and affects the characteristics of interaction.

It is within the framework of intergroup interaction in the space of imagined and virtual groups that territorial identity is honed. People tend to carry out the organization of space in a certain way in their lives, including the structuring of intersubjective space [Hall, 1966]. In the space of group interactions important indicators, by our opinion, are significant relationships, the axiology of the life space, the territory of identity and the space of self-realization. They are associated with the significance, value of interaction in the group and have a motivating power.

Based on the tape of interaction in virtual groups, we present samples of social representations of intergroup interaction.

Samples of interactions in virtual groups

Processes of intergroup communication and interaction	Samples, examples of interactions
Group Leadership	Admin: "Why are you stealing from our chat? Why did they take ownership of it? These are not your words, this is the post of our Victoria!"
Maintaining group status	"I won't argue and why)) If you could see, you wouldn't enter into an argument with me." "Should I expect an answer? Or is it an attempt to devalue the companion?"
Maintaining boundaries	"Dear chat participants. Follow the thread of the conversation."
Keeping up the conversation	"Thinking about the proposed topic, I remembered this film" (gives link to the film)
Confirmation of own membership in the group	"Good morning, dear people! Have a nice day everyone!"
Expression of support	"That's for sure. I had the same feeling".
Maintaining a conversation, suggesting a new	"Girls, don't fight. Our task is to create and not

topic	to bring discord, of which there are already many now." Posts an image. "I propose better to contemplate the beautiful." (The picture moved the line of discussion into the mainstream of another topic).
Maintaining a conversation, developing a topic	"My parents also collected certificates for retirement. Should have received an increase based on seniority. And in the end - there is no data there, it's gone here. If you don't like it, go to court, was the answer."
Opportunity, using conditional anonymity, to tell about yourself, about some problem	"Ha, it's like this with my husband's father, when they started collecting documents for retirement, then an archive fire, then a flood. So I was shocked, how can the person be so unlucky. And now it is clear what is really happening."
Initiating, suggesting a discussion topic or event	Posting a photo of a fruiting raspberry. Caused a wave of enthusiasm, positive comments and photos of fruit-bearing shrubs
Manifestations of belonging to imagined groups	Gardeners
	Utility users
	Trolls, spammers
	Followers of a healthy lifestyle
	Critics of official history
	Readers, lovers of literature
	Tax payers
	Travelers and tourists
	Family tree, family history researchers
	Connoisseurs of contemporary Ukrainian art
	Interested in mysticism
	Followers of national holidays
	Followers of the author of the channel, etc

Table. Samples of interactions in virtual groups.

There may be mutual understanding, emotional support, informational support, frankness, humor, sympathy, trolling, etc. You can analyze which groups are behind the communication of the participants based on the topics that sound in the channel feed. Among the imagined groups whose members entered into communication, are Gardeners, Users of public services, Followers of a healthy lifestyle, Critics of official history, Readers, lovers of literature, Taxpayers, Travelers and tourists, Researchers of the family tree, family history, Connoisseurs of modern Ukrainian Arts, Interested in mysticism, Followers of folk holidays,

Followers of the author of the channel, etc. For example, posting a photo of fruiting raspberries activated an imagined group of gardeners. A heated discussion was caused by the theme of natural sites, beautiful landscapes, cleanliness of the environment by participants in imagined groups of tourists, travelers, followers of a healthy lifestyle.

Conclusions. The study of the characteristics of virtual groups and the interactions that take place in them will be productive when taking into account the imagined groups to which their members belong.

Activity in virtual groups can be motivated by the need for emotional support, the desire to express support oneself, the desire to join like-minded people, as well as status claims.

The processes taking place in virtual groups were the manifestation and maintenance of group status, the building of personal, interpersonal, group social boundaries. The means to achieve these goals that we found were, in particular, appealing to ethical standards, demanding a response, refusing to communicate, sending a member to a ban, etc.

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