NETWORK PEACEKEEPING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF VIRTUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

Ekaterina V. Baksutova[a]*

[a]*Psychology and Pedagogy Department, Samara State Technical University, Molodogvardeyskaya st. 244, Samara, Russia*

Abstract

In the life of modern man, and of society as a whole, the role of virtual interaction is growing, especially in social networks and virtual communities. In this regard, the problem of virtual social capital construction arises. The paper deals both with the classical concept of "social capital" and the possibility of transferring the phenomenon to network reality. The author considers the approaches of Russian and foreign authors to the legitimacy of this concept usage, as well as of the role of virtual communities as a means of virtual social capital realization. Moreover, the paper presents a novel concept of "network peacekeeping", which is of extraordinary relevance in modern society of anomie and growing aggression in virtual communications. Network peacekeeping can be implemented using technology such as script implantation. A script is a tool that is implanted into an aggressively destructive network discussion characterized by such markers as: frustration, negativity, depreciation, depression, insults, hostility, threats, trolling, confrontation, chauvinism, discredit, rage, provocation, etc., expressed by the offensive and obscene vocabulary. Verbal aggression reveals the following psychological dominants of network communication: collective fears, resentment, aggression, ideological separatism, and intellectual terrorism. To suppress the aggression growth in the most intense online discussions, a specially developed script is implanted into them – a text with the group agreement potential. The author presents an experiment conducted in three online discussions using such a script. The management of network communications using script implants acts as network peacekeeping that strengthens virtual social capital.

Keywords: Virtual social capital, group agreement, aggression minimization, network peacekeeping, script implantation methodology

*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: bakshutka@gmail.com*

1. Introduction

It is indisputable that the bottom line for all business is profit. That is the biggest motivator for anyone involved in running a business. It would be pointless to be in business but profess that money is not the objective. According to neoclassical economic theory, a lack of suitable rewards discourages entrepreneurs to take on risk and put in extra effort, without which the world becomes stagnant. Government authorities rightly offer entrepreneurs special rewards through patents, copyrights and royalties. Entrepreneurs are less likely to invest their time, effort, energy and money without the reward of profits (Seth, 2018)

2. Introduction

The most scarce value in Russian society is social capital, that appears and grows at the individual, group and social levels as a result of the interaction between contact participants and their group actions. The virtual social capital under study has its specific feature determined by the scripting nature of network communications. It is based on the formation of a positive attitude towards someone or something for the growth of social ties, the development of trustful relationship and pro-social preferences; thus, the virtual social capital is primarily focused on the growth of trust, reciprocity and recognition in the context of the author's "avatarism" (namelessness, uncertainty, 'addresslessness'). In a crisis situation of group mobilization of aggression and resentment, the virtual social capital of network communications becomes an important tool for protecting and preserving social integrity and prosperity. Learning the ways of dealing with social conflicts that exclude the paroxysms of destructiveness, and incorporates the influence of texts of semantic peacemaking, contributes to this.

3. Problem Statement

The key problem of our research is the possibility of network peacekeeping as a way of constructing virtual social capital. To start with, it is necessary to clarify such concepts as "social capital", "virtual social capital", "network peacekeeping". The idea of social capital as a balance of interests of the public, the group and the individual was formulated in the works of classical theorists (Bourdieu, 2005; 2014; Coleman, 1991; Fukuyama, 2002; Putnam, 1996; and others). Their concepts were further developed in the subsequent literature: a large number of works are devoted to the analysis, the comparison of theoretical principles and the possibilities of practical development and implementation of social capital (see, for example:

Block & Golovin, 2015; Guzhavina, 2012; Polyushkevich, 2013; Rogach, 2019; Tikhonova, 2004) in social practices.

The idea of social capital in Russian science was developed in the concepts of "social capital of virtual communities" (Butnakov, 2014) and "virtual social capital". This marks the beginning that the very possibility of the existence of social capital in network and virtual communication was considered (Butnyakov, 2014; Chebunina, 2019; Leushkin, 2016; Myasnikova, 2007; Nazarchuk, 2012). Undoubtedly, when the specifics of the organization of space – time and technology of the transfer of information, and communication are factored in, social capital can also be constructed in virtual space. The capital developed here has both a literal economic potential and all the resources of socialization, education, cultural exchange, including the formation of such values of "ordinary" social capital as trust, support, self-realization, solidarity, reciprocity of recognition, and so on.

Continuing the traditions of the social capital theory classics, international authors have also introduced this concept as part of virtual space. Chambers (2013) notes that opinions about the role of the Internet and virtual communities as a whole vary in literature. According to some authors, virtualization of our lives can make network users lonelier in real life. But, according to other researchers, including Chambers, digital media raises hope for the restoration of the community in electronic form through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Chambers, 2013).

It should be noted that in Russian literature, a significant part of the research in this area is devoted to the analysis of the historically established concept of "social capital" and the possibility of "placing" it in a virtual space, as well as to its resources for expanding social opportunities (Chebunina, 2019). International publications, however, are more devoted to the applied aspects, primarily the constructive ones, such as the people consolidation and the social capital exchange in communities of various kinds - health groups, women's communities, psychological support groups - forums where participants can ask questions, share knowledge and information, as well as provide each other with the socio-emotional support (Mpinganjira, 2018). Cartwright (1968) opined that is the emotional level of communication, at which situational sympathies are the form of consent manifestation, that determines the degree to which the group members wish to remain in it. It is also noted that social networks can be used for real economic enrichment. A meta-analysis of such researchers conducted by Cheng et al. (2019) on 178 independent samples from 7 regions of the world, allowed them to conclude that people who are already socially rich, with a wide circle of contacts, actually use social networks to enhance social interaction and can acquire more social resources on the Internet;

at the same time, adults with communication difficulties turn to networks to compensate for their social deficits, but not to accumulate social resources on the Web.

In general, it should be noted that the concept of virtual social capital is considered a novelty in scientific research. Having received a phenomenological description and some empirical content, it is still hardly fully conceptualized. Additionally, the problem of network peacekeeping as a psychological process of minimizing network aggression and a way of constructing virtual capital has not been thoroughly researched yet.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study is to develop a script-implantation strategy in aggressive online communications in order to reduce the levels of aggression and the resentment of network communities.

5. Research Questions

The key question of the study is the possibility of using the script implantation method in social networks for the growth of virtual social capital in conditions of mutual aggressive rejection. The construction of texts – the synthesizers of consent in a situation of toxic aggression of communication (dialogue, relations) reproduces the consonance subjectivity of the group. Modeling of texts – "switches" (crypts and scripts) of viewpoint of the discussion subject through the adaptation of the semantic dominants of the text flow to seeing the subject in a new perspective of consent is the main task of network psychotherapy and peacemaking. By solving it, we expect the implant to provide the possibility of managing group discourse with the help of a thought construct, that is, a semiurgy that changes the cognitive space of group discussion.

6. Research Methods

The study utilized the methods of network aggression minimization when constructing the empirical models for matching the value orientations of scripts:

a) the script implantation of peacekeeping "posts" – the congruents;

b) the crypto conversion – the reintegration of a network text stream;

c) the network script-alliance of directions / consent settings.

An experimental model for the implementation of methods to minimize aggression includes:

– the preparatory stage of the rationale for the preventive impact in group communication;

– the induction of "post" – the congruent in group content (an implant - consent potential);

– the implant placement in the text stream and the consequences analysis;

– the analysis of the agreement identification process.

The extreme of aggressive modalities (see the matrix) serves as the basis for a decision on the use of a network warning action of script implantation to prevent a shift in such intentions as hate, envy, revenge, separatism, terrorism, bloodshed, violence, riot, massacre in reality.

7. Findings

For two years (2018-2019), the author monitored trigger discussions in the Russian-speaking sector of Facebook. The author analyzed the materials of the groups and personal pages of famous Russian bloggers and public figures (N = 20, 1341 comments were analyzed, of which 83% were found to be deviant in nature). The analysis was carried out on the basis of the matrix approach, intent analysis and factor analysis. The author's 22-scale matrix of discussion intentions was used as an assessment tool.

Table 1. The matrix of network discussion threats coding (confrontation of public beliefs)

Communication dominants of script networks				
Collective fears	**Ressentiment**	**Aggression**	**Separatism**	**Terrorism**
Social and psychological phenomena of network threats (verbal markers)				
frustration; negativism; depreciation; depression	dislike; hate; envy	abuse; hostility; threats; trolling	individualization; confrontation; extremism; chauvinism; discredit; involvement	atrocity; fury; depersonalization; provocation

The research results allow for the diagnosis of the characteristics of the destabilization of the target audience of the online network community in the following aspects:

– the presence of categorical attractors of threats (discrediting public values and the calls for illegal activity) in the network discourse;

– the functioning of the dominant collective reactions, emotionally identified by the ideological construction of aggression, produced by experiences of fears, distrust and hate to subjectively selected objects of reality;

– the growth of malignant aggression (unmotivated cruelty and destructiveness), accompanied by the desire for the greatest possible destructive effect;

– the conduct of socially dangerous informational and propaganda campaigns of a provocative nature, focused on the introduction of aggressive, extremist and separatist sentiments, that is, the threats described in the "Information Security Doctrine" ("Doctrine of Information…", 2016).

The negative emotional reactions identified in the network communications (collective fears, aggression, resentment), as well as the cognitive models of political extremism and intellectual terrorism allowed the author to construct a coding matrix that included a description of destruction phenomena and their linguistic and psychological markers.

Based on the hypothesis that constructive conventionalization of discussion can be achieved with 30% of the conventional positions of authors, a series of experiments was conducted aimed at creating a resource of virtual social capital. First of all, using the example of three discussions that began on May 18, 2019 (dedicated to the confrontation of Yekaterinburg citizens over the construction of the church and the death of the journalist S. Dorenko), the study showed that constructive implantation of the script can be carried out both by the author / moderator of the discussion and by the participant / reader; both unconsciously and consciously (Bakshutova, 2019).

The component analysis of the results of a series of publication texts experiments (such topics as the confrontation of Yekaterinburg citizens over the construction of the church and the death of the journalist S. Dorenko) proved at a qualitative level that the hypothesis of the study was verified. Thus, the experiment with text No. 1 demonstrated the predominance of destructive dominants, that made it impossible to develop the effect of conventionalization fully. Nevertheless, it ensured a decrease in their radicalism due to a change in the intention of the confrontation discussion to the dialogue. Experiment No. 2 is marked by an increase in the conventional intention of the discussion. Experiment No. 3 reached the threshold value of the effect, which can serve as a forecast for changes in the general group setting. In the experiment, scriptorics cognitive models were used (the term was coined by Professor Mikhail Epstein (2016)). The first experiment involved the desensitization of destructiveness, while the second and the third involved the reflective portrayals of the discussion heroes; the installation reinforcement of semantic dominants or their displacement to the consciousness periphery in a situation of deviation of communication subject intentions; the categorical animation of individual and group dominants of group opinion, leading to the multiplication of the virtual social capital of the group.

The results of the study allow to conclude that further experimentation in the field of the discussed script opposition to the aggressive influence of text materials is the most productive on the basis of the models.

8. Conclusion

Thus, the problem of the script productive association of subjects into supra-personal communities in network communications is solvable in universal practices of social interaction for the sake of consent and partnership in the context of the formation of a network society and its stabilization.

The "rallying" capital of communications is formed by the strong internal ties and special interchange relations. The capital of the global networks is "cosmopolitan", connecting participants of different groups and expanding the scope of mutual exchange (Putnam, 1996, p. 20). The rallying social capital, including the virtual one, should primarily contribute to the growth of social ties, while at the same time construct them as an inherent social value.

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