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Aberrational Socialization as a New Type of Socialization of an Individual in Modern Information Society

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Abstract: The article deals with the substantiation of the notion of "aberrational socialization" as a new type of socialization of an individual in modern information society.

Based on the analysis of the main provisions of the classical theory of socialization of individuals and taking into account the peculiarities of modern information and psychological warfare aimed at unleashing military conflicts, affecting people's mass and individual consciousness that causes transformation of a man's psychic, change of system of values, attitudes, views, thoughts, opinions, activities and behavior, the authors introduce the notion of "aberrational socialization" which they understand as a negative, distorted, misinterpreted, strained socialization, i.e. a formation of an individual with explicit negative and distorted social characteristics under the influence of external factors and aggravated by a person's individual features.

The authors describe the essential characteristics of aberrational socialization of an individual and work out social and psychological mechanisms that can prevent the development of this negative type of socialization in conditions of modern information society.

The conclusion is made about the necessity to work out a social and pedagogical content and technologies of the formation of an individual's psychological resistance, his information and psychological security which have to become a foundation for the transformation of aberrational socialization into a successful socialization and self-realization of a person.

Keywords: *aberrational socialization; information society; information and psychological warfare; information and psychological security; individual.*

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Introduction

In the 21st century the mankind entered a new epoch – the information society which scholars view upon as a consequence of the global social revolution, an exploding development and conversion of information and communication technologies; a system and powerful factor of a political, social and economic modernization, a social and humanitarian development of a country, the creation of a competitive economy, ensuring optimal conditions for the development of the mankind, introduction of efficient democratic procedures, etc. (Hassan, 2008; Karvalics, 2007; Webster, 2002; Willard & Halder, 2003). At the same time, as many researchers believe, the rapid development and expansion of information technologies cause significant risks connected first of all with the information security of a state as well as with the information and psychological security of the society and its citizens (Mansel, 2009; Schauer, 2003; Som, Hilty, & Köhler, 2009).

A real threat for the modern world is represented by information and psychological warfare which leads to the affection of individual and mass consciousness of the population, ethnic and political divisions, internal and external military conflicts, loss of sovereignty by states. One of the examples of the consequences of information and psychological warfare is the military conflict in the east of Ukraine which has been on since 2014 and which has caused the loss of integrity and independence of Ukraine.

In the context of challenges of the information society, it is inevitable to reconsider different scientific paradigms, fundamental achievements in different scientific spheres which used to serve earlier generally recognized patterns, examples of scientific knowledge, methodology of research of social phenomena and problems. The fundamental theory of social and humanitarian sciences – the theory of socialization of an individual – is not an exception in this case.

Materials and methods

Our research is based on the theoretical assumptions and practical results made and achieved by scholars who analyzed the essence, agents and types of the process of socialization, asocialization, desocialization, resocialization of an individual (Carlson, 2008; Engler, 2008; Eysenck, 1997; Friedman & Schustack, 2015; Gersick & Rubenstein, 2017; McLeod, 2017; Kurylo, Savchenko, & Karaman, 2018); who studied the essence and mechanisms of information and psychological warfare in the information

society (Arquilla, 1999; Beccaro, 2018; Libicki, 1996; Molander, Riddile, & Wilson, 1996); who developed the meaning of the interdisciplinary phenomenon of "aberration" (McFarland, 2004; Stephens, 1995; Savchenko & Karaman, 2017).

The aim of the article is to define the new type of the process of socialization of an individual – aberrational socialization – in conditions of the challenges of modern information society.

The main methods of our research are analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization employed to substantiate aberrational socialization as a new type of the process of socialization in conditions of the information society.

Our research is based on the idea that the methodological foundation for defining the notion of "aberrational socialization" is socialization of an individual which takes place during the period of the lifespan of a man in his interaction with the social surrounding.

Types of socialization: a theoretical analysis

Notwithstanding the fact that there exist numerous definitions of socialization of an individual which have been multiplied in geometric progression in the scientific literature for more than 130 years (it was first introduced into the scientific use by the American sociologist Franklin Henry Giddings back in 1887), we find most adequate for the realization of our research the definition suggested by the Russian scholar Anatoliy Mudrik in which socialization is treated as a continuous process of the development and self-changes of a man in his interactions with spontaneous as well as with relatively directed and intentional social conditions at all the age stages (Mudrik, 2006).

Whereupon spontaneous socialization of an individual takes place in combination and under the influence of objective circumstances of the life of a society, the essence, character and results of which are predetermined by the socio-economic and socio-cultural realia. A relatively directed socialization of an individual occurs under the influence of the state and economic, legislative and organizational mechanisms initiated by it which make an objective impact on the development of different strata of the population and separate individuals. An intentional (or socially controlled) socialization takes place in the process of upbringing – a methodical creation by the society and the state of the legal, organizational, material and spiritual conditions for the development of an individual.

At the same time many scholars make an emphasis on the fact that in the process of socialization a contemporary individual faces numerous

objective and subjective risks which become obstacles on the way to reach the harmony with the environment and personal self-improvement making him a victim of the unfavorable conditions of socialization. Such risks are called victimogenous factors; they are studied by victimology (from Lat. *victime* – victim and Greek *logos* – word, notions, doctrine) which analyzes different categories of people – real or potential victims of unfavorable conditions of socialization.

In this connection, scholars (Awan & Gauntlett, 2013; Boldakova, 2015; Smith & Travis, 2001; Kashima, 2019; Zizek, 2017) differentiate between the following three main groups of factors that hinder a positive socialization of an individual starting from childhood:

- social macro- and meso-factors – worsening of social problems (social and economic instability, decrease of the level of life and impoverishment of a significant part of the population, problems with employment and housing, etc.); inefficiency of functioning of the social and cultural sphere, limited possibilities for spending spare time rich in content; the crises of the system of defense of the population, problems with education and health protection, violation of rights; criminalization of the society, etc;

- social micro-factors (unfavorable conditions of the surrounding and upbringing) – upbringing in conflict, crisis, problem, disadvantaged families; inadequate approaches to a person in institutions of education and at work, a negative influence on an individual by informal groups of asocial types, etc.;

- personal (individual and psychological) factors – the process of sexual maturation and instability of various physiological systems, first of all the nervous one; psycho-physiological malfunctions; unsatisfied needs (physiological, lack of security, lack of love, impossibility to belong to a group, lack of acknowledgement, self-assertion and self-realization); aggravation of certain negative features of character; deviations in the motivational, emotional, volitional, cognitive, communicative, interpersonal, creative spheres of an individual; accentuations of character; asocial orientations of a person, stereotypes of an asocial and addictive behavior; mistaken ideas and beliefs; unsolved personal problems, self-distrust, inadequate self-evaluation; external locus of control; a low cultural level, unformed socially useful interests, age peculiarities, etc.

The factors mentioned above cause deviations in people's behavior; in the theory of socialization there exist two notions for their indication: asocialization and desocialization.

Asocialization (from Greek *a*… - prefix which means negation, absence + Lat. *socialis* – social) is viewed upon as a process of an individual's acquisition of norms, values, negative roles and stereotypes of behavior that cause a deformation of social relations, a disharmony in the interaction between a man and a society. Thus, we can call people to be asocial if they were brought up in a deformed environment from the very beginning or if they appeared in such an environment due to certain reasons and got asocial features at all the levels of an individual which are revealed in his behavior and actions.

Desocialization (from Lat. *de*… - a prefix which means estrangement, cancellation + *socialis* – social) is a process opposite to socialization which is characterized by the estrangement of an individual from the main mass of people, by his entering asocial or anti-social informal groups.

The process of desocialization indicates that at a certain stage of the development there occurs a deformation of an individual's socialization (mainly under the influence of the negative micro-environment and personal factors) which results in the wrack and ruin of positive norms and values and acquisition of anti-social patterns of behavior.

At the same time scholars emphasize that the results of socialization have a mobile character: it can easily switch from the successful one to the unfavorable one and vice versa. In this case the possibility to achieve success much depends on an individual's ability to adapt to new conditions of life. Therefore, at a certain stage of the development of different sciences on society the notion of resocialization is introduced which characterizes a transitional link from desocialization to socialization; one of the non-interruptible process of socialization (Kurylo et al., 2018).

The assumptions of the theory of socialization stated above have been accumulated by humanitarian sciences for ages; they have been tested and checked by time. Still, they can function in conditions of a usual and regular development of a society whether it is a successful one or not; with all its social and economic crises, ecological and anthropogenic catastrophes, even during wars in their classical understanding, etc.

Aberrational socialization in conditions of modern information society

However, when it goes about the modern stage of the development of the information society, there appears a new type of wars – hybrid warfare the main component of which is the information and psychological war.

According to the ideas of many scholars whose object of investigation is hybrid warfare (Allison, 2014; Hoffman, 2007; Hoogensen, 2018; Hurkovskyi, 2016; Jones, 2014; Lynch, 2018; Malksoo, 2018; Puyvelde, 2015; Renz, 2016; Renz & Smith, 2016), the information and psychological war is an intentional wide-ranging manipulation of a common sense of individuals, an influence on their consciousness by informational psychological means which causes a transformation of their psychics, a change of the system of values, attitudes, views, thoughts, relations, motifs, stereotypes of individuals aimed at effecting their activities and behaviors.

For instance V. Hurkovskyi (2016) emphasizes that information and psychological warfare is aimed at receiving advantages over the opponent by means of:

- destruction, modification or deformation of information, non-sanctioned intrusion into the informational systems of the opponent;
- actions of a propaganda influence on the consciousness of a man in the ideological and emotional spheres.

Thus, information and psychological warfare is connected with the blockage of common sense by informational means. The destructions brought by such a warfare to the social psychology, the consciousness of a person are equal to consequences of military wars and often exceed them in their scope and significance (Hurkovskyi, 2016).

We insist that the targets of information and psychological warfare are as follows:

1) an individual's self-identification, his social and role identification which specify the general intentionality of a separate individual and the society as a whole;

2) self-awareness as an individual's understanding of his own uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of a community in the society which are reflected in the cultural traditions, faiths, mentality and which are represented in the language;

3) a man's basic values which lie in the foundation of his evaluations and opinions.

It is worth mentioning that the basis of information and psychological warfare lies in the manipulation influence on mass consciousness aimed at:

1) bringing in hostile and harmful ideas and attitudes to the social and individual consciousness;

2) disorienting and misinforming masses;

3) weakening certain convictions and principles;

4) threatening the nation with the image of the enemy;

5) intimidating the opponent with the power of the state;

6) providing the trade area for the aggressor's economy (in this case information and psychological warfare becomes a component of a competitive struggle).

In other words, being a victim of information and psychological warfare, a man gets into an alternative reality in which distorted, misinterpreted ideas about the objective reality are being formed.

In such conditions of information and psychological warfare, the traditional theory of socialization faced the following question: how can we define the vector of socialization in the existing row that includes "socialization – asocialization – desocialization – resocialization"?

Experiencing a deficit of the conceptual and terminological instruments of the theory of socialization for the explanation of the peculiarities of this process in condition of information and psychological warfare, we would like to introduce the notion of "aberrational socialization". Let us reveal its essence.

The term "aberration" (from Latin *aberration* – deviation) is viewed upon as falseness, deviation from truth, distortion, fallacy. It was suggested by the British scholar Dennis H. Stephens, the author of the famous book "The Resolution of the Mind" (TROM) (Stephens, 1995).

"Aberration" is used in different spheres of science: physics, medicine, psychology, sociology, etc.

In psychology and sociology, it is treated as a deviation from rational thinking or behavior.

Speaking about the aberrational thinking, it is worth mentioning that under the influence of information warfare and propaganda a man perceives the results of his thinking and his ideas as those which might really exist. It seems to him that the results of the activity of his mind define the reality whereas actually they are unconsciously wrong and represent the wry reflections of the really existing phenomena and relations. Aberrational thinking is a consciousness remote from the reality which lost the connection with this reality and which reflects the latter incorrectly, in an inverted and distorted way. Aberration as a matter of fact means that a man is infected with mistaken and obsessional ideas which do not correspond to the reality.

In its turn, aberrational behavior is the one that is not based on mind and cannot be explained from the point of view of common sense. Aberrational behavior arises as a result of aberration of values, attitudes, motifs and needs which represent a driving force of behavior and actions. An individual's aberration can easily occur if there are malfunctions of the

psychological stability of a man when the manipulator appeals to the voluptuous or primitive inclinations of a person or when a man is seized by an animal fear for his life, his own future and the future of his children.

For example, as a consequence of the military conflict in the east of Ukraine in 2014, the psychic of many people was ruined, it became vulnerable and unable to resist psychological attacks. Their socialization went an aberrational way. Until now a part of the population of the east of Ukraine remains under the hidden influence which is represented by the selfish aims of the manipulator and causes material and psychological damages to his victims.

At the same time the course of modern information and psychological warfare proves that it is not the whole population of a certain territory of the country that becomes the victim of aberrational socialization but a part of it. Why does it happen so?

We assume that in the process of a successful socialization and self-development of an individual the main role is played by attitudes which psychologists treat as an integral state of a personality, his readiness to strongly react to the predictable objects or situations worked out on the basis of his life experience, a selective activity aimed at satisfying his needs. Individual's attitudes show his readiness to act in a certain way which presupposes the speed of such a reaction on a situation and certain illusions of perception. One of the most important forms of attitudes is a social attitude – an internal state of a man's readiness to act which precedes behavior.

That is why every individual depending on the level of the formed social attitudes has his own way in the process of socialization. External circumstances or external factors of socialization influence this process as much as it is allowed by the internal factor – a man's individuality itself and the level of its development. It is possible to give a great many of examples when people regardless the circumstances in which they found themselves still remained unchanged and did not betray their convictions in any way. Take, for instance, the dissidents (political prisoners, writers and poets, priests, etc.) of the times of totalitarian regimes.

Besides, aberration of a significant part of the population and separate individuals in conditions of information and psychological warfare does not only depend on different social and psychological factors described above but on the level of the psychological development of an individual in the basis of which lies the level of his psychological resistance, flexibility, development of reflection and self-regulation, presence of value orientations and attitudes as well as on the level of the development of his externalization

(a man's inclination to explain everything that happens to him exclusively by external circumstances) and internalization (his readiness to take responsibility for his own life, behavior and actions).

The psychological science states that a man with a low level of the development of attitudes, psychological firmness, with a weakly developed reflection and with an exaggerated externalization can easily become a victim of inducement – a direct suggestion at which he turns into a creature that can easily be managed and manipulated up to making him commit crimes in the name of some leader or artificially created idea.

On the other hand, a person with a high level of the development of attitudes, psychological resistance and reflection can switch on the mechanisms of psychological defense from a negative influence of information which ensure an individual's information and psychological security.

Among such mechanisms we single out the following ones: blocking, distancing, controlling, banning and ignoring.

For example, using the mechanism of blocking there come to activation psychological barriers and automatic defense of psychic from the external negative informational influence. The actions of psychic which are executed at blocking are as follows: critical analysis of the received information, emotional rejection of information, "psychological barriers" (diminishing the source of information, ironic attitude to information, discrowning the authority of information, non-serious perception of information, disbelief, suspicion, inattentiveness, distraction of attention or switching over to other objects not connected with the content of the informational influence).

The mechanism of distancing increases the distance between the source of the information and its recipient, interrupts the contact, makes the receiver go beyond the limits of action of the informational impact. Controlling is expressed in handling the process of the informational influence (turning off certain channels of mass media (a TV channel that may irritate the viewer, Internet resources that look disgusting, etc.), refusal to watch certain TV programs or to listen to certain radio programs, rejection to read certain newspapers and magazines; leaving mass entertainments – theater, cinema and concert halls, meetings, rallies, etc.).

Conclusions

Thus, modern information society gave birth to the new type of socialization of an individual – aberrational socialization which is understood

as a negative, distorted, misinterpreted, strained socialization, i.e. a formation of an individual with explicit negative and distorted social characteristics under the influence of external factors and aggravated by a person's individual features.

Aberrational socialization as well as other types of socialization (asocialization, desocialization, resocialization) are united in one logical construction of notions the semantic pivot of which is the notion of socialization whereas the sense-directed vectors are represented by antonymous prefixes *a-*, *de-*, *re-* and the word "aberration" which as a matter of fact inflate the meaningful and functional outline of the key terms.

The object of our further analysis is connected with working out a social and pedagogical content and technologies of the formation of an individual's psychological resistance, his information and psychological security which have to become a foundation for the transformation of aberrational socialization into a successful socialization and self-realization of a person.

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