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BOOK REVIEW

DIGITALIZATION AND HYBRIDIZATION OF SOCIAL SPACE:
DISCUSSION ON THE MONOGRAPH:
"SOCIOLOGY OF DIGITAL SOCIETY"

Abstract

The article was prepared as one of the formats of the review of the monograph "Sociology of Digital Society" (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021) as part of the implementation of a comprehensive sociological study conducted with the financial support of Russian Fond for Basic Research, grant 20-011-00694 "Public Administration".

The authors consider interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological foundations for the formation of a digital society. The defining feature of the new stage of social development is hybridization, which implies the interpenetration of the real and virtual worlds, in which the existence of a significant part of society has become equivalent. They justify the fundamental changes that are taking place in a digital society in all key aspects of public life: the transition to a platform economy, a change in the social structure characteristic of industrial society, a new nature of production attitudes and management styles.

Keywords: sociology of digital society, digitalization, hybridization of social space, public governance, smart management, self-organization, synergistic approach.

Introduction

The peer-reviewed monograph "Sociology of Digital Society" is the result of many years of work of the authors. In their monograph, the authors raise the question that the information society has moved to the final stage of its development - a digital society, which will become a direct transition to a post-digital society (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 60). The theoretical foundations of the study of relations between the executive branch and society through the Internet were presented by N. N. Meshcheryakova in 2016 (Meshcheryakova, Lukianova, Kiriyanova & Ivchik, 2016, 74-78). The forerunner of the widespread use of the term "smart management" in the conditions of digitalization was the work of A. Tikhonov and V. Bogdanov (2020) "From" smart regulation to "smart management": the social problem of digitalization of feedback", which allowed the authors of the monograph to

develop this approach in the context of the proactive ability of the management subject to perform managerial functions and duties using the intellectual ones (Vasilenko, 2021), the public and network aspects of the participating management subjects (Vasilenko, Zotov, & Zakharova, 2020), etc.

Methodology

The monograph uses several research approaches developed by the authors in previous publications. Thus, a synergistic approach due to the complexity of the formation of hybrid social space was considered by L. Vasilenko in the work "Fractal-synergetic approach to the research of entrepreneur in the non-profit organizations" (Vasilenko, 2019). A fractal-evolutionary research approach has been applied to addressing the inconsistency of gender relations in digital society (Kashina & Vasilenko, 2019). The an-

throposocietal approach, based on three components - man (anthropos), society (socium) and culture (cultura), determines the peculiarity of the evolutionary nature of social dynamics from the point of view of the self-organization of the social system, which can flexibly change in response to threats and risks (Lapin, 2005).

Results and Discussion
Hybridization of Digital Society

Digital society is a super-smart society, corresponding to the sixth technological framework, in which virtual relations are transgressed into the real socio-cultural world, hybrid collective intelligence accumulates and is smartly used. The nature of relations in a digital society is determined by the hybridization of social interactions and the hybridization of technology, and the infrastructure of social space. The authors of the monograph assign a special role to hybridity as "interpenetrability of the virtual and real worlds" (Vasilenko, & Meshcheryakova, 2021, pp. 62-63) and proceed from the definition of modern society as a network. Therefore, a large volume of the monograph is devoted to social networks. "Network lifestyle" has become a social phenomenon that needs to be studied (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 87). Since both authors of the monograph consistently advance the synergistic paradigm of thinking, they consider social space to be constructed in the process of human interaction. The formation of horizontal relations in the network is the basis for the transition from the hierarchical structure of society, communications to the network. Mediation institutions are born. Due to this, the possibilities of intellectual and spiritual unification are increased, there is an increase in collective intelligence. Sociocultural networks in a digital society can be built as self-organizing multi-attractor networks, or as networks with a controlled attractor and formed in the process of interaction of actors, create, promote and integrate into society new ideals, values and norms, act as resonators

of social innovations, as well as stimulants of increased activity that forms civil society in Russia (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 370)

Philosophical Foundations of Public Governance in Digital Society

The monograph reveals the features of management in a system in which the level of complexity increases under the influence of natural stochastic processes and/or management effects. Options for possible management paradigms are predicted. With these cognitive goals, methods are used based on fractal-evo-logical, systemic-synergistic and informational approaches (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 29). It is postulated that the system needs rational management formation of order to reduce entropy.

The authors show how in the phase of differentiation in the process of formation of the social system, organizational-managerial and normative subsystems are formed, the core of the fractal in the format of social constructs, which, through subsequent recursive distribution, can further influence the formation of the social system (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 36). There is a transition from a vertical management and activity organization to a mainly horizontal network one, in which fractals of remote and distributed work of teams of employees cleverly use hybrid intelligence and reproduce themselves in business, science and all other areas of activity.

At the same time, the existing management models are inert, and they are based on the established tradition and the obliqueness of the management apparatus. They show mechanisms, excessive rationalism, suppress staff motivation, feedback mechanisms do not work, contacts with the external environment and customer orientation are lost. The authors state the need to move in management to a phase of integration based on human development. Vasilenko and Meshcheryakova (2021) highlight such key points of the new management paradigm as the formation of social relations on the principles of partnership

and not hierarchy, proactive expansion of public spheres, the ability to create and use time-stable social networks to form conditions for understanding, animation of new meanings (p. 34).

It is postulated that the leadership style should also be changed: from the rigid consolidation of duties and control to the encouragement of initiative, the formation of horizontal ties, the formation of a senior management team that interacts with teams of other levels of management, to the cooperative resolution of problems, taking into account the interests and proposals of all members of the team.

The Public Nature of Smart Governance in a Digital Society

As the role and place of a person in the management system changes in a digital society, the authors of the monograph wonder whether the actors of the social space are able to constructively and jointly participate in smart management? They conclude that the key to a positive response is to gain the quality of the subjectivity of the representatives of Homo digitals, that is, their ability to realize and implement their interests, define and adjust goals, make decisions, make plans for the future, achieve them, determine their social roles and statuses, since this is the main quality of the subject, that is, the ability to transform the surrounding world with his practical active actions (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 90).

The authors believe that the modern transition to smart management technologies involves the use of artificial intelligence in management decisions, and they call the symbiosis of human and artificial intelligence hybrid collective intelligence (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 9), for which they see the future. So far, artificial intelligence performs an assisting function in relation to humans, but its development promises humanity both prospects and threats. Already today, as the authors show, artificial intelligence

and machine learning allow you to identify and extract information from large sets of structured data and use data mining functions to create models that allow you to conduct descriptive, predictive and prescriptive analytics (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 177). With the development of this technology, it is expected that the computer will learn to do something that a person cannot do. The authors believe that sociologists need to master artificial intelligence algorithms to make the right management decisions: assessing effectiveness, failure to perform, etc. Management decisions can be made in a system of distributed situation centres with the virtual participation of expert communities using predictive analytics, analytics of Big Data, Thick Data user behaviour (Vasilenko & Meshcheryakova, 2021, p. 49). The authors insist on the revival of the critical function of sociology, crushed by naked empirics (Meshcheryakova, 2021), necessary for the development of the sphere of public administration.

Conclusion

Vasilenko and Meshcheryakova argue that classical sociology with its arsenal of theories, methods and techniques is not enough to know modern hybrid reality, partially virtualized. The monograph lays the theoretical and methodological foundations of the sociology of digital society. They are built on a flexible combination of classical and digital sociology. A large amount of research is devoted to modern methods of cognition. Despite some eclecticism of the monograph, it stands completely separate in the breadth and depth of coverage of issues related to the modern stage of the existence of both society and sociological science. The work is based on an interdisciplinary approach, so it can be interesting for a wide range of scientists of different specialities, teachers, students, graduate students and everyone who conducts research on the effects of digitalization on humans, society, nature.

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