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Real Relationships and Virtual Relationships, Complementarıty or Difference

Gerçek İlişkiler ve Sanal İlişkiler, Tamamlılık veya Fark

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze virtual relationships, and to identify the characteristics and indicators of the interactions of electronic spaces, within virtual societies, as a social reality parallel to real social reality, the effect of which appears clearly by undermining the real social relations, which suggests the total alienation of the individual from his society and the possibility of solutions. These relationships are the site of real social relationships, and compare them to current social relationships, in terms of contexts of formation, manifestations of permanence, control and commitment to values.

Social media has changed the way we live: and the pattern of our life: our actions interactions and relationships, woven a new reality that has brought modern societies out of their local geographic features into global spaces, and established the emergence of a virtual cosmic urbanism, entities whose members do not share only their values and cultures, but rather share their thoughts and emotions, their interests and goals, all within a relational network marked by strength and intimacy at times, and fragile and superficial at other times.

And this leads us to ask whether if these virtual relationships are a new type of social ties, whose concepts and connotations go beyond traditional ones, or are they an extension of the real social relationships, so that their concepts remain implicit in the connotation of the larger concept of social relationships, forming a holistic conceptual, overlapping and complementary.

In order to be able to investigate the connotation and dimensions of virtual social relations, we must refer to the sociological heritage related to social ties, to examine the characteristics of virtual relations, and to understand their links to real social relations. And this is what we will try to answer in this research paper.

Keywords: Real, Virtual, Relationships, Interactions, Societies.

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Öz

Bu çalışma, sanal ilişkileri analiz etmeyi ve sanal toplumlar içindeki elektronik mekanların etkileşimlerinin özelliklerini ve göstergelerini gerçek

sosyal gerçekliğe paralel bir sosyal gerçeklik olarak belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. bireyin içinde bulunduğu topluma tamamen yabancılaşmasını ve çözüm olasılıklarını akla getirir. Bu ilişkiler, gerçek sosyal ilişkilerin alanıdır ve bunları oluşum bağlamları, kalıcılığın tezahürleri, kontrol ve değerlere bağlılık açısından mevcut sosyal ilişkilerle karşılaştırır.

Sosyal medya, yaşama şeklimizi ve hayatımızın modelini değiştirdi: eylemlerimiz, etkileşimlerimiz ve ilişkilerimiz, modern toplumları yerel coğrafi özelliklerinden küresel alanlara taşıyan yeni bir gerçeklik ördü ve sanal bir kozmik şehirciliğin ortaya çıkmasını sağladı. Üyeleri yalnızca değerlerini ve kültürlerini değil, düşüncelerini ve duygularını, ilgi alanlarını ve hedeflerini paylaşan, tümü zaman zaman güç ve yakınlık ile işaretlenmiş, diğer zamanlarda kırılgan ve yüzeysel bir ilişkisel ağ içinde olan varlıklar.

Bu da bizi, bu sanal ilişkilerin, kavramları ve çağrışımları geleneksel olanların ötesine geçen yeni bir tür toplumsal bağ olup olmadığını, yoksa gerçek toplumsal ilişkilerin bir uzantısı mı, öyle ki, kavramların toplumsal bağların çağrışımlarında örtük olarak kalmasını mı, diye sormaya götürür. Bütünsel bir kavramsal, örtüşen ve tamamlayıcı oluşturan daha büyük sosyal ilişkiler kavramı.

Sanal sosyal ilişkilerin çağrışımlarını ve boyutlarını araştırabilmek için sosyal bağlarla ilgili sosyolojik mirasa başvurmak, sanal ilişkilerin özelliklerini incelemek ve gerçek sosyal ilişkilerle olan bağlantılarını anlamak gerekir. Ve bu araştırma makalesinde cevaplamaya çalışacağımız şey bu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gerçek, Sanal, İlişkiler, Etkileşimler, Toplumlar.

Introduction

One of the axioms and perceptions of sociology is that any human society is established on the basis of social relations resulting from the interactions between individuals who form it, among themselves, through a prior communication process, which determines the nature of these relations and it is axis which forms the model of these social relations, this makes the communication process a source of changes in those relationships if they undergo any change, making it a source of all changes throughout society, whether on the level of the structural or the functional system.

Any researcher of our social reality today realizes that humanity is living in a historical stage, characterized by the predominance of communication technologies over social life as a whole, in a transformation, which one of the researchers compares it to "the state of transformation from the agricultural society to the industrial one, whose main resource is knowledge and information" (Barney, 2015, p. 20). However, social relationships and ties in terms of existence, nature, concepts and terminology does not form

independently of the social, historical, linguistic and technological contexts of society, rather, it is the result of interactions resulting from the actors' awareness of all the social conditions that affect them and their understanding of them within these contexts.

Problematic

Sociologists who have a constructivist inclination, and network of relationships theorists see that, If the interest of sociologists is to study the social structures, they should analyze the relationships between members of society as one of the most important of these structures, "so that social actors and their behaviors are seen as dependent on these structures, and therefore, attention is not focused on the actors with their voluntary choices and actions, but rather on the limits and structural obligations" (Aljouhary, 2002, p. 352), and thus, the association of the social behavior of the individual is evident in all its interactions, with everything related to the construction of the group, to the type of the group, characteristics and objectives that constitute it.

By projecting the constructivist perspective on modern social media, we find that today's electronic spaces have woven a reality that has moved modern societies out of local geographic features towards globalization, the communicative relationships and interactions in them are determined according to the context of the individuals and the training objectives of each group, and so, social relations arise, and the least that can be said about them is that they are subject to the formation objectives of this group, although the actors or interactors are individuals and groups, like social relationships resulting from real social interaction, this suggests that studying virtual societies from a constructive approach may not lead to significant and valuable results, taking into account the importance of the individual act in the interaction and the formation of relationships.

This reality leads us to question the reality of social links and relationships resulting from these electronic spaces:

- Is this a new type of communicative social bond, we called it: virtual relationships, its concepts and connotations go beyond traditional concepts and connotations?

- Or is it an expansion and extension of real social relations, and one of its aspects, so that the concept of virtual relations remains included under the connotation of the broader concept of real social relations, forming an integral and nested conceptual whole?

In this study, we will try to highlight the reality of virtual relationships, and explore the contexts that shape it, and its representations to members of the virtual community.

The social background of real social relations

Most sociologists see social ties and relationships as the primary topic of sociology, as it is the product of all social interactions, and it reflects the mutual influences between individuals and groups, and at personal and collective relationships, the features of society are determined, and the cohesion of the group becomes evident, and the mechanisms of social participation are activated, and The nature of relationships between members of society elevates the levels of mental compatibility between them, thus contributing to the crystallization and consolidation of shared values. And thus, we draw the characteristics of the identity of the real community, which is characterized by structural characteristics represented by the existence of: individuals, interactions, relationships and space-time.

And with reference to the classical definitions of the concept of group, which assert that the group is "a social unit made up of a group of individuals, arise between them social bonds and relationships, and sharing similar values and beliefs, subjected to standards that govern the existing relationship between them, and they strive to achieve well-defined goals" (Gharib, 2009, p. 70), we see how social ties form one of the basic structures on which any society rests, in light of the implications of interactions between individuals in the group within their own time and place.

And in sociology, social ties and relationships are defined as "whose takes place and brings people together face-to-face, whether they were personal or impersonal" (Khawadja, 2018, p. 13), this gives it the characteristic of spontaneous emergence, it means, that they are subject to a social context prior in its existence to the existence and the desire of the individual himself, and it is also necessary that the two interactors meet to fulfill the condition of this concept, and it is **"**an obligatory relation between two or more elements during a period which is relatively long, with a direct contact between them" (Khawadja, 2018, p. 14).

The presence of an individual within his family, his school, or his community makes him - spontaneously and automatically - belonging to this group and it is subject to the values or legal controls to which it is subject, as if these relationships were the ones that worked to adapt the behavior of the individual and get him to adhere to the norms of the group, and for that, Max Weber sees that **"**The pattern of behavior is functionally related to the pattern of social relationships", (Hamdaoui, 2015, p. 158) which makes the individual becomes less free and more engaged in real social relations, and the model of relationships that bind the individual to his entourage determines his behavior with them, because the real social interaction within the community is characterized by depth, sustainability, strength and commitment, which make the individual's attitudes and interactions here not arbitrary, rather, it is a source to assess his behavior and determine his position in it, and free him from any stigma that could affect his stability and continuity within the group.

Real social relations are also characterized by permanence and continuity, and the individual does not have the possibility of escaping it when he wishes, he cannot, for example, sever his relationship with his family, school or group for no reason, because the conditions and terms of commitment and emotional bond are the basis of this type of relationships, and **"there is no identity of: me without the identity of: us" (**Imad, 2017, p. 49)**, which means that the individual cannot be separated from the group, and also, the domination of the social meaning of the individual over his individual meaning.

In the context of their views on the reality of the existence of any society, Richard Osborn and Born Van Loon see that **"**if you accept that people can do whatever they want, you must also accept all kinds of abusive behavior, including murder**"** (Osborn and Van loon, 2005, p. 16). This indicates that in real society the individual must be subject to behavioral controls and practical obligations, which would guarantee the longevity, stability and development of the society and would devote its membership to it, and it constitutes a support for his social and political participation in public life.

In addition, the attitudes and behaviors of the individual in the context of real societies are characterized by rationality during interaction, given the importance of the consequences of these behaviors which can be negative or positive for the individual as for the group, in an interactive environment characterized by commitment, seriousness, and clarity of objectives and calculation of consequences.

This type of social relationships in real societies, with everything that characterizes it like its depth, resistance, durability and obligation, suggests the dominance of the constructivist perspective over sociological studies, which assumes the strength of the group and its constraint in the formation and crystallization of individual behaviors, by detriment of the role of individual behavior in the interpretation and analysis of social reality.

But humanity, in the context of its relentless pursuit of forms of perfection and the well-being of social life, and to achieve maximum cognitive and material satisfaction, it has often pushed itself, with all its material and immaterial potential, to exploration and innovation. But, in measuring innovation and achieving saturation, a hidden dimension is produced with negative, undesirable and originally untargeted effects, which "its impact goes beyond the physical dimensions of human life", (Saadoaui, 2018, p. 7), like for modern society: modernist and postmodernist, who fell in captivity of technological development, swept away by the extension of its currents in time and nowhere, where the world is without walls, space and time are limitless.

The sociological context of virtual relationships

The above-mentioned description of social relationships is only a description of it in traditional societies, with the direct mode of communication, and without technological means that deny the existence of geographical borders, and destroy the effects of time.

However, the historical pursuit of the development of societies does not stop, and at each stage, new social arrangements are created, with unknown social dimensions, and form the interface of current social reality, and give it a particular and distinct context in its dimensions, concepts, connotations and procedures, and new visions and methods of studying.

And what we are experiencing today from the total domination of the technological system over the general course of the social life of individuals, is just one of those arrangements that emerged from this domination, which has affected the structure of societies and the role of individuals within them, and changed the model of social relations and the methods and styles of interaction between them.

If we distinguish the discussion on what resulted from the influence of the communicative technological system, through its different media and social networks, and the depth of his penetration into social life, we can say that we live in a period characterized by the alienation of the individual, joining to mysterious affiliations, which eliminates the dialectic of the triple relationship between: place, time and society, and a step that excelled in drawing a new map of social interactions, for social relations and for society as a whole.

"When a person, a company, a work or an information turns into a virtual entity, they are located outside of here, and they become without a specific place" (Lévy, 2018, p. 22), transforming from one type of existence to another mode of being, as Pierre Levy says, and a mode of interaction that produces "Virtual relationships, that are not characterized by participation and spatial convergence" (Hiba, 2017, p. 158), but it is characterized by fragility and superficiality, and even occasional at sometimes, and denies all the social dimensions of participation and values, and remove the most important clues of individual identity and the components of his social belonging, and expresses a false or illusory affiliation, which can ends as soon as its objective changes or the objectives of the group changes, within an existing and active cosmic dimension, but unclear features.

"Several studies have indicated the loss of the concept of local society in the transformations of modernization of human societies" (Rahouma, 2008, p. 64), thus, we find many sociological studies linked to modern societies, includes a new conceptual devices, which expresses the evolutions of social life; and the intention here is the domination of the technological system of communication, and the emergence of so-called social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, where it appeared new procedural

concepts, with connotations linked to the technical transformation of the interactive communication of individuals and groups; we find the concept of mediatic communication versus the concept of direct communication, virtual relationships versus real social relationships, and symbols or icons, have often replaced the use of languages, and all of this in turn led to the emergence of another new concept of society: it is the virtual community.

The study of the socio-technical dimension of the system of social relations in virtual society, forces us to study this dimension in holistic approaches, which treats globalized society, or the cosmic community, as O. Beck calls it, which depends on the means of communication and social networks in his daily interactions, which is by "Culture of transitory and ephemeral" (Barney, 2015, p. 47).

And if this description feeds a negative suggestion about the nature of virtual society, because it is transitory and ephemeral, however, it establishes "What Muhammad Karim Fariha, a specialist in the sociology of social institutions, called: virtual urbanization" (Zekkagh, 2019, p. 16), formed by societies characterized by intimacy relationship with unexpected consequences, within the frame of the independence of individuals from any obligation towards the group of which they are part.

The Internet, and behind it, all the virtual communication medias, "has been instrumental in setting up a virtual community, in which it has become operational on social networking sites as new mechanisms for building relationships and forming digital groups" (Hadj, 2018, p. 235), where the index of acculturation and the exchange of ideas and opinions is very high, and it decreases if it is about group cohesion, identity and the promotion of belonging.

The attempt to research the foundations of the virtual community and its components, and explore its structural problematic, allows us to understand the reality of these virtual relationships within it, depending on the identification of the reasons and conditions of its origin and formation, which is always according to predetermined objectives and purposes, its individuals aim to achieve it, because the emergence of virtual societies is based on the existence of a common interest between individuals who may not have real prior social links and relationships, and "selves seeking to fulfill desires and aspirations that have been excluded from real life and prevented from being fulfilled" (Zekkagh, 2019, p. 18), Therefore, the mode of interaction and the basis for forming relationships within it, are related to the type of virtual community and the objectives of its formation, and subjected to these objectives, and it embodies only what the individual wishes to accomplish by belonging to this group, so that behaviors escape structural obligations, and the individual action becomes the dimension in which the extent of the individual's membership in this group is explained, and determines the level of its participation in its formation and its continuity.

On top of that, membership in virtual groups and the interaction within it are rather based on what has excluded from achieving in the life of the individual; this indicates that the group's goal may be to achieve something that is prohibited or socially unacceptable or outside the value system and the individual couldn't do it in his real life.

And thus, the individual lives in this virtual space in an environment outside of all social norms, characterized by emancipation and independence from all social restrictions, given the confidentiality and privacy of its membership, and "the interaction takes symbolic images, expressing the characters of the interactors instead of meeting face to face" (Aaradji and Kazim, 2012, p. 18), and this is a context which gives the individual a multiple and different existence at the same time, in other words, the acquisition of multiple and different identities, often fashioned to have fun and undermine the emotional and personal gap that the individual lives, and this can provide an opportunity for wild behavior, and enter into virtual interactions that have nothing to do with what the individual living in his real and current society.

The undesirable or negative aspect in all that, is the transformation of these liberated interactions into real attitudes and actions, it can create disastrous effects due to incomplete thoughts and unintended consequences.

And the most prominent example of this, is the change movements called the Arab Spring, to know the extent of the chaos and fragility that we have referred to, and what it showed of arbitrary behavior of virtual groups, because, if individuals have succeeded in overthrowing strong political systems, their visions were neither well thought out nor forward looking, and their plan was not complete, because they didn't provide an alternative to the systems that brought him down, but contrary, it made those societies enter tunnels more dark and ambiguous than before, thus, the relative effectiveness of these virtual societies to achieve the purposes and objectives for which they are formed, has been proven.

If real social relationships are characterized by being subject to control, then virtual relationships are characterized by "being ruled by secrecy, and shrouded in secrecy and with seemingly sure consequences" (Okbi and Barakat 2016, p. 225), and their effects can only be seen or studied through the wildness or weirdness of individual behaviors in actual interactions, which often reflects the effects of membership in virtual groups and virtual relationships, to say the least, these are reactions out of all norms.

And from this point of view, it is not possible to study and understand virtual interactions and relationships in virtual societies except from the hermeneutical perspective of social action, and the methodological alternatives involved, including symbolic interactionism, ethnography and phenomenology.

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Conclusion

"Living in a time of uncertainty", with this sentence, Sigmund Bowman linked the title of his book "Liquid Times", expressing the postmodern period, that one of its appearances and manifestations is the wave of interaction, acculturation and exchange of views and ideas on a global level, and the flow of information and knowledge in an endless global way, between different cultures and civilizations, in an indication of what characterizes the life of the individual today, such as the ease and accessibility of information, and the broadening of his knowledge and his cultural and cognitive horizons.

According to what has been said before, all realistic evidences confirm that we live in a hybrid space, between the real and the virtual, because, each of us has a social life that he lives with his family, neighbors, colleagues, friends and community, with ties and relationships that attach him to them, and participations that express his social identity. In the same time, we all have virtual affiliations, required by the conditions of knowledge, learning or work at sometimes, or entertainments and needs-satisfactions affiliations that are not available in the environment in which he lives, at other times, and that these virtual interactions and relationships in virtual society are only one of the appearances of the postmodern period, and the manifestations of the technological evolution of the communication system, and an extension of actual social interactions and relationships.

And so, this is only one aspect of real social life, and no matter how much affiliation, interaction, and gratification, its existence is still dependent on the push of the button.

Therefore, - from our point of view -, and to answer our problematic questions, virtual relationships cannot - in no way - be considered as substitute for real social relationships, rather, it is another opportunity for the individual to form relationships with specific characteristics, which differ deeply from the characteristics of real social relationships, this opportunity results from the multiple identities of the same individual in both of the real and the virtual societies, especially if it is about continuity, depth and obligation, along with his real relationships, and forming an extension of them.

Thus, virtual societies can only be studied from an approach of the effects of the use of social media and networks on social life, either at individual or societal level, and how does the behavior of the individual change as a result of the state of alienation he becomes, after the heavy dependence on it in his life, whether for culture, for business or for leisure, and the extent of its influence on its values, attitudes, language and behavior, and also by the emergence of unruly social behaviors, individual or collective, directly linked to the positions taken and opinions agreed to be implemented in

reality by the members of the group, requires research, understanding and treatment.

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