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The new illusions of security

Summary

The most important thing nowadays is that the process of security modeling, security systems modeling and the conduction of security politics keep on being characterized with the presence of numerous illusions about the word, security and development. The comprehension of the illusions generation process, including the illusion of security, is a basic one and it serves as a condition for successful minimization of their presence in a contemporary individual's spiritual world and the limitation of the devastating impact of social illusions.

Key words: security, truth, social illusions, the illusion of security, cultural identity

In our contemporary world it is getting more and more difficult to apprehend what is happening around us and with us, and more and more frequently we turn out to be deceived and confused, victims of manipulation and we find it harder and harder to assemble the overall picture of the world.

Increasing the distance between illusions we live with and reality puts on the agenda the extremely significant question how to shorten that particular distance. That as if refers to a greater extent to the illusion of security, and its theoretical observation and practical limitation are definitely useful. The need for security, but also for self-expression makes people search for rational explanations of the world and models for meeting/satisfaction those and other needs they have, to hope and believe it is possible. The picture of our spiritual essence would not be complete unless we analyze people's illusions and one of the most significant and probably the most resistant one among them – the illusion of security.

By the term illusion I designate a certain part of our spiritual attitude (the cognitive and the values) towards the world and towards ourselves. Illusion is falsehood but such a falsehood that is assumed as a completely satisfactory explanation of existence and the existing. Knowledge is both a result and a premise for cognition as a process and its interpretation depends on the accent put. Truth and untruth are characteristics of this process. Therefore we can talk about veracity of cognition as well as veracity of knowledge.

The most important feature/characteristic of illusions is that we use them as a means of fixing our refusal from further searching of an alternative explanation. In this sense the main thing for every illusion is not so the truth-untruth opposition but the attempt to achieve personal and emotional balance, tranquillization, stability. We may say illusion results from non-knowledge, but mostly it is non-knowledge and untruth fixed as knowledge and truth.

Illusions may be divided in two large groups. I place in the first one those which not specifically/exactly but often are defined as illusions related to perception (“when senses lie to us”) or with certain techniques (“somebody makes our senses perceive in a certain way objects from reality or their images”). Those illusions would not be a subject of the current analysis.

The second group includes the so called social illusions. Of course, there are reasons for their existence in everyday consciousness, including: not being familiar with processes taking place in society, the complexity of economical, social, political, etc. relations. In addition to the perception of desired as real, illusion obtains a classical finished state. Standing against the desired – real opposition, each individual has another option – to take the desired for real, not to be convinced but namely to assume in order to find tranquillization, a port in the storm of questions. Therefore we seldom break up with our illusions when listening to an argument; we break up with them in the actual process of living,

because our illusions crash together with a real catastrophe, which has objective personal and social dimensions.

The first condition to minimize illusions is to apprehend the most important illusion – the illusion for possible eternity of human existence. A human who accepts at ease the absurd never forgets about death but neither summons death nor hopes to postpone it for an indefinite time.

While during the Enlightenment period the thesis that people may not wish to understand the world and themselves was totally unacceptable, nowadays reflection of social processes in mass consciousness is not only far from what is typical for scientific cognition but it has its logic and consequences which are more likely to generate illusions rather than minimize them. However surprising this conclusion may be, it refers fully to information society, which by definition is related to development at the territory of knowledge.

The contemporary scientific assumption for security of course is innerly contradictory, but if there is anything relatively established, that is, security is no more interpreted as an ability for defense, just as a condition of the state, as a condition of lacking hazards, etc.

Even the slightest view over the development of the security concept and the national security concept in particular helps us get convinced in the dramatic change of the paradigm in which security has been explored. Briefly, in my opinion, however disputable the content of concepts like security and insecurity remains, yet their explanation would be as an end in itself unless we use it to describe contemporary society, changes taking place in it, and certainly changes affecting the main characters – people.

Instead of listing the immense amount of definitions the term “security” has, I will try to present my synthesis of the same definitions. The purpose of the following synthesis is to find out those key terms used to define the term “security” – “condition”, “process”, “system”, “risk”, “threat”, “interest”, “conflict”, “power”.

While searching for the objective side of security, we would like particularly to imply that security exists in a direct correlation with interest, interest, on its part, in the long run is a conscious need, and what else can be more objective than needs. Security is a dynamic state of society and humans where risks and threats for existence and development are met by a dependable system, i.e. there is the essential potential needed and organization for reflecting threats, civilians’ rights and freedom are guaranteed as well as economical and social prosperity.

A common disadvantage of the theoretical interpretation of security, I think, is the excessive stress on the objective processes. Maybe it would be more specific to claim the objective approach by definition contains an analysis of security spiritual dimensions. In brief, in our overall spiritual attitude towards reality we also include we also include our attitude towards security. We have our views about this state (whether scientific or not), we have our feelings, because we, humans,

are those who are secure or insecure, threatened or safe, confident or unconfident. There is no security where a human being lives in dissatisfaction, anxiety, fear, even without serious reasons for them.

There is no way to understand illusions without concerning the spiritual aspects of security. The modern understanding of security (both national and international) is not only based on various economical interests, political goals and social consequences. Security also contains cultural integrity, and insecurity – the threat of identity and of our value attitude towards the world. Additionally, security is related to a society's ability to preserve its substantial character in changing conditions, to the resistance of the traditional models for language, culture, association, religious identity and customs, and it means that security "refers mostly to identity, the ability of a certain people to maintain their own culture, their own institutions and lifestyle" [1, p. 231]. Security refers to "situations in which societies consider threats in terms of identity" [2, p. 46].

The significance of cultural identity for the national security is obvious and as if it should not be specially reasoned. Usually the consequences from eventual erosion of cultural identity are examined, the accent is on the fact that destruction of identity is one of the risks for national security and serious and adequate precautions are needed, including on behalf of the state, in order to meet that risk.

The combination "cultural identity" is used to narrow and specify the content of identity, as acknowledgement, integration and identification with a certain type of culture. Cultural identity stays at the foundations of the individual human security and is a supporting point for every national security. The loss of cultural identity reflects on a nation's security and generates hostility towards the alien. When people lose their identity, they try to get the feeling of security back by finding a perpetrator for their condition. We should cope with the two contradictory threats: to save the exclusive cultural diversity created by humankind, and at the same time to feed up a mutual global culture. According to Claude Levi-Strauss creating diversity what should be saved, not the historical content that each époque has brought in and nether from the oncoming will be able to continue [3].

I would like especially to underline that the role of modern means for mass information in the formation of illusionary awareness is crucial, since, I think, they ought to be considered as powerful retranslators and illusion generators. I am aware that the use of technical terms such as "generators" and "retranslators" may lead to additional confusion but the main thesis I attempt to promote is that there is a difference between a deliberate and an organized process of creating illusions and their mass distribution.

Actually such a conditional distinction we may find in the whole human history. In my opinion the comprehension of the illusions generation process, including the illusion of security, is a basic one and it serves as a condition for successful minimization of their presence in a contemporary individual's spiritual world and the

limitation of the devastating impact of social illusions. Naturally, an individual who is not attracted by scientific analysis is very frequently unaware that fabricating illusions is in fact an organized and deliberate process having its own laws and rules.

In the archaic, traditional and even modern society the main illusionary systems generating illusions are mythology, religion and ideology. If it is suitable at all to talk about some idea or feeling of security in the mythological consciousness, it is the idea that the only person to be secure is the one who is completely merged with the tribe and the mass of people. According to mythological consciousness misfortune happens and nothing can be done about it, secret powers always manage people's destiny. It is understandable for the archaic times, but a peculiar renaissance of the mythological thinking may be detected in the modern world. This renaissance is related to media's enormous abilities to establish clichés and myths about various aspects of social life. Even in information society, and probably exactly in it, people agree easily with myths considering security and its guarantees, they aim at merging with the majority and thus they feel more secure.

Today we witness a global renaissance of religions in their complete and multi-facial diversity. Samuel Huntington explains the reason for that renaissance is identical to the reason that had caused religion's death: the processes of social, economical and cultural modernization, which flooded the world in the second half of the twentieth century. They (humans) need new sources of identity, new forms of stable community and a new system of moral principles which may give them a feeling for meaning and purpose [4].

However, if it is unacceptable to explain clashes among humans and the condition of insecurity only as irreconcilability towards the alien religious model of the world, at this moment we should not underestimate the fact one of religion's key functions is to bring hope in our insecure world.

The main motive in formulating each ideology is the private interest to be represented as universal interest, the private viewpoint for the world as universal, a certain model of security as universal. An ideologically "dazzled" person could not stand the critical attitude of common sense, of science and philosophy towards the foundations of his ideology, however, he is most vulnerable to/against the security model he has assumed wholeheartedly.

Ideologists, and why not politicians as well, manifest the weakness to exaggerate the importance of specific aspects from social life and at the same time to keep others in the background – for example: "economy is more important than culture", "market cannot tolerate state regulations", "the more the security, the less the freedom", etc. The fabricated and assumed ideologemes are of high importance especially for the Bulgaria's transition, that are brilliantly analyzed by Vasil Prodanov. The following are the most substantial among them: "the democracy ideologeme", "the ideologeme for transition from a world of violence to a world

of nonviolence”, as well as the manipulative schemes for overcoming the cognitive dissonance from the conflict between ideologemes and realities [5, pp. 608–697].

Consequently a lot of the illusions mentioned above can be defined as existing in both the traditional and the modern society, but they surely gain a new meaning and content in the information post-modern society.

I think the most important thing nowadays is that the process of security modeling, security systems modeling and the conduction of security politics keep on being characterized with the presence of numerous illusions about the word, security and development. All that illusiveness may be categorized, although it actually is symbolized with two stable and mutually incompatible illusions. One of them in brief can be summarized with the phrase – “only power can guarantee security” or, which is the same – “only those who are powerful can be secure”, whilst the other – “only integration leads to security”.

I presume to be exaggerating, although I think these illusions of security are structure determining in the whole modern security illusiveness. Power nowadays keeps on having a high importance in international relations and also in internal security maintenance. The state, despite functional and resource transformations, remains in being also as an institution having and using means of violence legitimately. The value attitude towards the relation power – security is changing slower than expected. On the other hand, the “security through integration” model obviously is not unfounded and it has vital significance in achieving a new national and international security level, but considering integration as a cure-all against insecurity is obviously groundless.

The reasons for originating new social illusions, including illusions of security, as a whole do not differ significantly from these presented in the current report so far, but what should be by all means remarked is the serious impact of the identities formed in Internet, which can also be determined as fabricated and unreal. Every consumer is both a director and an actor of their own identity. A consumer develops one or more characters and plays the corresponding roles simultaneously. People in information society start living in a (self) imposed partiality, even in a partial information eclipse leading directly to formation and distribution of illusions. Many researchers define this phenomenon as “democratic censorship”. It neither deprives of nor prohibits information but it takes control or forces to juncture opinion through selection and disregard.

Modern social networks besides everything else may and should also be analyzed as illusion generators. It is not their most considerable characteristics for sure, nevertheless, it could not be interpreted as an accidental effect, a negligible role, let alone to be rejected. What is a social network? For most people the answer is obvious: “For example Facebook and Twitter”, but that is not a definition. Networks are what form our societies’ new social morphology, and network logic to a great extent influences the course and the results of the processes related to pro-

duction, everyday life, culture and power. Additionally, another important matter is which illusions are fabricated mostly in social networks, as well as those related to the role of social networks in society.

The first distinctly illusion is the concept and the recognition of social networks as social communities. Since each illusion is an alloy of truth and untruth, it is not necessary to give further arguments there is plenty of reasons to interpret social networks namely in network society as virtual (i.e. unreal) social communities. The problem is that a virtual community in its own meaning of the term suggests firstly a social particularism by status, interests, purposes, common activities and, afterwards or at least at the same time, its presence in social networks.

The second serious illusion generated by social networks and totally popularized by all media is the illusion of networks being the new type of civil community and, even more impressive, "the new civil society". It is symptomatic that such illusions are generated (of course, from the viewpoint of certain interests) mostly concerning the so called new democracies in Eastern Europe, Middle and Far East. In other words, at those areas where forming and development of civil society are not trouble-free at all. To avoid a partial interpretation of our understanding for this type of social illusions, we will specify that social networks surely provide plenty of new opportunities in this complex and contradictory process of civil society's development and recognition. Furthermore, long before the emerge of social networks the process of forming the so called virtual civil communities was noticed and analyzed. Their priorities are the involvement, the freedom of communicating and sharing ideas with people all over the world. According to the author, if the traditional type of community is determined based on ethnical, racial, linguistic, political, economical or gender differences, in virtual communities origin, gender, economical status or political beliefs are not so important. Is that the case though? Action is the most substantial component of the functioning of civil movements and civil society as a whole. Publicity does not reject self-defense, but it cares about the Self's autonomy, not about the Self's anonymousness. As Noam Chomsky remarks, "Citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control and to lay the foundations of a more real democracy." [6, p. 10].

Another illusion generated by social networks is that in the hostile outside world a human is less defended than in front of his compute at home and in his network. Currently we merely do not have the opportunity to enter the exceptionally crucial matter about social isolation, about problems of communication in the real world, even the already proved psychological addictions. The question is whether we will protect ourselves from the inertia to impart to the new information technologies a meaning that could result in destructiveness and fragmentation of personal identity.

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