As a manuscript

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The Conception of Gaming Encounter as a Resource for Sociological Interpretation of Location-Based Mobile Games

Thesis Summary for the purpose of obtaining PhD in Sociology HSE

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**Problem Statement**

Videogames go out to the city space. Once limited by the format of personal computers and consoles, now they move with users of mobile devices. At the same time, many other types of urban space that had not previously served as a “place for games” received a new game content.

An unexpected discovery in July 2016 was the sharp worldwide popularity of the location-based mobile game Pokémon Go downloaded more than 100 million times and the average daily use time of which exceeded 33 minutes, that is longer than Facebook (22 minutes) and Twitter (17 minutes). Experts express different versions trying to find answers to the question why a particular game gained such popularity. Some experts note that the game allows you to "re-discover the city", to find new places on the map, to give them additional meanings. Others point out that the easily recognizable history of Pokémon fits well with the format of navigational journeys, after which other adventures of famous characters will be transferred to the city space. Still others talk about the ability of location-based mobile games to smooth out the spatial and social problems of the city turning the routine practices of mobility into exciting game operations that promise new contacts and prestige in the gaming community. Nevertheless, the question of the deep transformations of public interaction in terms of using location-based services in urban space remains open. Have location-based mobile games managed to overcome the limits of the game, overstep its rules and restrictions thereby becoming part of public interaction and proposing new basic mechanisms of behavior in public places of the city? The problem of the dissertation research is the lack of full and consistent conceptual apparatus for analyzing public interaction in the conditions of technically mediated communication between individuals in location-based mobile games.

Since the 1960s the theme of urban games was significantly advanced in situationist and architectural projects. Urban space in these projects was considered as a space of spontaneous interaction, meetings, redefinition and search for new meanings. Situationists and architects had different hopes about the media as a resource for the realization of their ideas. Since the end of the 1990s technologies
and communication devices became widespread and accessible to ordinary users which caused the rise of interest in the gaming filling of urban space due to location-based services, promotions and games. However, the installation to play the city, the organization of spontaneous meetings, provoking a lively and diverse "pretend city" received in location-based mobile games a little far from the situationist plans. The initial desire to bring to the city an element of the unexpected came up against specific technological solutions which imposed specific restrictions on the processes and interactions of users.

Already in our time almost all mobile applications on a regular smartphone use data about the location of the device: starting with maps, navigators, taxi services and ending with social networks, weather, camera, banking applications. Location-based mobile games are a special case of location-based services and are chosen as an object for consideration for the reason that, unlike in other location-based genres, players experience urban space, their location and location in relation to other users and passersby. These aspects are an integral part of the gameplay without which the gameplay simply becomes technically impossible.

Thus location-based mobile games create an important precedent allowing to consider emerging collisions in public interaction which takes place between the participants, but not always in the conditions of direct visual contact. I.e. the participants of the interaction act on the basis of the presence of other players and passers-by experience, whom they may not directly see, but track their actions using mobile devices. The analysis of the emerging public interaction raises questions about the degree of elaboration of the conceptual apparatus which was previously limited to considering situations of face to face interactions.

Trying to understand the theoretical understanding of location-based mobile games, we find that the literature pays a lot of attention to the problems of gamification of everyday processes, the formation of gaming communities and the privacy of user data, while the involvement of location-based mobile games in public behavior receives insufficient coverage. This is largely due to the fact that the work of Erving Goffman - one of the leading theorists in the field of public interaction -
often receive limited interpretation among digital anthropologists and geographers that sometimes prevents the re-actualization of the problem of maintaining public interaction with the participation of technically mediated communication.

Location-based mobile games provide an important technical element that was previously poorly expressed in other theoretical solutions for disclosing mechanisms for maintaining public interaction — location. The use of data on the location of users provides the necessary conditions for considering the reassembled situation of public face to face interaction that nevertheless requires clarifying the conceptual apparatus, adapting methodological techniques and empirically revealing the specifics of public behavior with gadgets. By answering these questions, we end up with a chance to get closer to understanding the situationist projects of gaming intervention in the urban space.

**Degree of problem elaboration**

The problem of games is widely disclosed in the social sciences. The games are considered as a mechanism of socialization (G. H. Mead, J. Piaget), an essential element of culture (J. Huizinga, F. G. Jünger, R. Cailllois), a mechanism for redefining the rules of functioning of urban space (Guy Debor, I. Chtcheglov, W. Benjamin, M. Caverly), a mechanism of transactional analysis (E. Bern), a form of public interaction (E. Goffman), the system of conventional rules of language (L. Wittgenstein). In all these approaches the concept of the game has different meanings and do not always receive unambiguous definitions, sometimes more metaphorical. It is also worth mentioning the theory of games as the direction of strategy analysis (J. von Neumann, O. Morgenstern, J. Nash, T. Schelling), in which the game acts as a modeling tool. By the beginning of the 2000s a critical mass of researchers is accumulating who identify video games as a full-fledged field of research (game studies) and offer two directions for their comprehension: ludology (G. Frasca, I. Bogost) and narratology (E. Aarseth, J. Juul).

Emerged also in the 2000s location-based mobile games were considered primarily not as games, but as a specific genre of location-based services, mobile
and media technologies in general. Key researchers in the field of location-based mobile games originated from the departments of media communications and dealt mainly with the transformation of social relations in the process of using pagers, cell phones, the Internet, etc. in the 1990s. At the moment there are three leading research centers in the field of location-based mobile games: The Digital Games Research Center at North Carolina State University (NCSU) - A. de Souza e Silva, J. Frith, L. Humphreys; Research & Innovation in the School of Media & Communication at the Royal Melbourne University of Technology (RMIT University) - L. Hjorth, S. Pink, H. Horst, I. Richardson, R. Wilken; Institut Mines-Télécom in Telecom ParisTech (ENST) - C. Licoppe, Y. Inada, I. Arminen, A. Spagnolli.

Since the release of Pokémon Go in July 2016 location-based mobile games have received an additional influx of attention from researchers. The most vivid example of this is the hot-lined syllabus prepared by a consortium of authors and incorporated various sources for contextualizing the game (Massanari A., et al. Pokémon Go Syllabus). However, from the point of view of theoretical understanding, the output of Pokémon Go has little effect on the concepts of key authors, some of whom have been working in this field since the early 2000s. The special issue of Mobile Media & Communication 5 (1) 2017 edited by Larissa Hjorth and Ingrid Richardson and entirely devoted to Pokémon Go incorporates replicas of many authors, who for the most part include the phenomenon of the game in the framework of their previous research. Adriana de Souza e Silva mentions three major directions for studying location-based mobile games (connection between game and everyday life, the emergence of gaming communities, the problem of surveillance and security) at the same time noting that Pokémon Go is significantly inferior to Ingress the Game in terms of the possibility of establishing primary contact between players. Frans Mäyrä suggests that Pokémon Go promotes the culture of the public game and the gaming (ludic) society. Christian Licoppe, Lee Humphreys and Sebastian Deterding apply to Pokémon Go continued the line of Goffmanian research focused on the transformation of public interactions of players experiencing the co-presence of others on the mobile phone screen. In turn, Miguel
Sicart explains the success of Pokémon Go by the fact that augmented reality mechanisms have already existed and actively used before its appearance. According to Jordan Frith, even during the Foursquare times business repeatedly turned these mechanisms into tools to increase the attractiveness of certain places due to virtual geotags and gamification of player movements (playbour).

In the Russian academic context location-based mobile games are mainly placed in the field of studying urban navigation, digitalization of urban space, community self-organization, methods of mobile and digital ethnography (O. Zaporozhets, E. Lapina-Krataisky, A. Strelnikova, L. Presnyakova).

Despite the wide range of topics presented in both foreign and domestic studies of location-based mobile games, the aspect of the involvement of the user of mobile applications in public interaction in the urban space does not receive sufficient elaboration. The present work is aimed at proposing a consistent conceptual apparatus for analyzing public interaction within location-based gaming in the framework of E. Goffman's interactional conception. The works of E. Goffman are widely accepted among both foreign (A. Rawls, D. Maynard, D. Shalin, N. Denzin, M. Jacobsen, R. Ling) and among domestic researchers (A. Kovalev, G. Batygin, E. Nikolaeva, E. Kravchenko, M. Sokolov, V. Vakhshytyn, M. Erofeeva). However, the theoretical legacy of E. Goffman is usually reduced to a dramaturgical approach and frame-analysis assigning secondary importance to the structuralist\(^1\) logic of considering public interaction using the concepts of “encounter”, “gathering”, “situation”\(^2\) (see definitions in Appendix A). In turn, E. Goffman’s structuralist approach allows finding the most basic mechanisms for the emergence of social relations between users accompanying the

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\(^1\) Talking about Goffman’s structuralist approach, we mean his distinctive desire to distinguish universal elements of interaction, fixing oppositions, a passion for classifications and typologies, for which G. Gonos is inclined to consider Goffmanian sociology as a specific American version of structuralism.

\(^2\) A more common version of structural elements of interaction triad is “gathering - situation - occasion”. In our version, we tend to concentrate more on aspects of (de)focusing attention (encounter) and less on the external symbolic aspect of interaction (occasion) thereby reflecting situational (inherent in the situation) mechanisms of public behavior.
above-mentioned aspects (navigation, perception of urban space, the formation of gaming communities), also broadening the context for considering the experience of using mobile applications beyond the technical nuances and putting them in the plane of conduct in public places.

**Purpose and the objectives of the study**

Purpose of the study: to develop, adapt and test a consistent conceptual apparatus in the framework of E. Goffman's interactionist concept for analyzing public interaction in the conditions of technically mediated communication between individuals in location-based mobile games.

The following tasks are solved to achieve this goal:
1. Description of the cultural-historical and theoretical context of the origin of location-based mobile games.
2. Clarification of key concepts included in the concept of public interaction on the basis of “gaming encounter” by E. Goffman.
4. Identification of theoretical and methodological problems arising within the adaptation of Goffmanian approach for the analysis of public interaction in location-based mobile games.
5. Evaluation of game intervention projects in urban space in terms of changing mechanisms of behavior in public places on the example of Ingress the Game and Pokémon Go.

**Personal contribution of the author to problem development and data collection**

1. The main directions of theorizing game interventions in the urban space in the context of situationist and architectural projects are revealed. In particular, the connection of location-based mobile games with the
intellectual tradition of game redefinition of urban space in situationist projects is indicated. The common grounds for connecting situationist projects and Goffmanian sociology of public interaction are marked.

2. The categorical apparatus for the analysis of public interaction on the basis of Goffmanian “gaming encounter” is reconstructed. In particular, the fundamental difference between the conceptual scheme “encounter - gathering - situation” from the early dramatic approach and the late frame analysis is emphasized.

3. The specificity of E. Goffman's approach to the analysis of public interaction in relation to adjacent approaches (symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, game theory) is indicated. In particular, it is shown which ideas of E. Goffman are most perceived in related approaches and which, on the contrary, become a stumbling block for their integration into other theoretical constructs.

4. An adaptation of E. Goffman's approach to the analysis of public interaction mediated by the use of location-based mobile games is performed. In particular, the problems of corporeality, presence and demeanor in E. Goffman's approach are actualized. The work of the three mechanisms for maintaining presence (monitoring, ignoring and total exclusion) and three methods of performing demeanor (demonstrating the reserves of involvement, hiding the game and playing together) in location-based mobile games is disclosed on the bases of video material.

5. Three logic of gaming strategies in different parts of the city are revealed: forcing, control and journey. In particular, the materials of the survey and interviews of players show what attracts and repels players in location-based mobile games, how players combine gaming actions with everyday movements around the city, as far as players are open to spontaneous interactions in public places.

The results of the dissertation research were presented at Media City 5 conference (University of Plymouth, Plymouth, England, 1-3 May 2015), at the
International April Conference (HSE, Moscow, April 17, 2017 and April 13, 2018), at the regular seminar of the STS Center (European University, St. Petersburg, October 11, 2017).

The results of the study are used as part of the author's course “Digital City in Details and Practices” for second-year students of the HSE program in Managing of Spatial Urban Development in 2016–2018. The results of the dissertation work form the basis of 7 articles published in Russian and foreign scientific journals, one of them in the collection of articles on the results of the international conference in Plymouth (England), two in the leading peer-reviewed journals included in the international bibliographic database Scopus, four in leading peer-reviewed journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Theoretical grounds of research

The basic method of the dissertation research is the reconstruction of the concept “gaming encounter” in E. Goffman’s works that allows revealing its connections with other concepts and tracing the reception of this concept in related approaches (symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, game theory).

Similar works which also engage the Goffmanian approach to consider the location-based effects on social relations (C. Licoppe, Y. Inada, L. Humphreys, S. Deterding) are used to adapt the conceptual apparatus of describing public interaction mediated by location-based mobile games.

Video analysis is used as a method for working with data on the direct aspects of public behavior in the process of using location-based mobile games. The theoretical and methodological possibilities of video analysis are best described in the works of S. Bankovskaya, A. Korbut, A. Maximova, and options for practical implementation for the study of mediated communication - in the works of K C. Licoppe, E. Laurier, B. Brown, M. McGregor, P. Luuf, C. Heath, L. Mondada.
Methods of data collection and analysis

The empirical data of the dissertation research consists of:

1. Multi-perspective video recording of five gaming episodes (total duration of 244 minutes) as part of Ingress the Game and Pokémon Go (for a description of the characteristics of gaming episodes, links to video and methodological notes see Appendix B-D). The shooting includes a perspective on the players from the side, a first-person perspective with the camera mounted at the level of the player’s head and screen recording of what is happening on the screen of mobile devices. Video materials were collected from May 2016 to June 2017.

2. Semi-structured interviews with Ingress the Game players (eight informants) and Pokémon Go players (two informants). The average interview duration is 70 minutes. The sample of informants was carried out using the snowball method with equal gender and team proportions (for a description of informants, see Appendix E). Interviews with Ingress the Game players were conducted in November-December 2014, with Pokémon Go players - in June 2017.

3. Online-survey of Ingress the Game players (497 respondents) living mainly in major cities of the Central Federal District of Russia. The survey was conducted in April 2015.

Video recording allows to demonstrate the work of three mechanisms for maintaining the presence and three methods of performing demeanor, while the interviews and the online-survey provide an opportunity to reveal the position of the players in terms of changing the ways of experiencing public places and other citizens.

Below we make some methodical remarks concerning video recording of gaming episodes.

The gaming episodes differ from each other in terms of: 1) the game application (Ingress the Game and Pokémon Go), 2) the passing of confrontation between teams, 3) the location in the center or on the periphery of the city, 4) the
existence of preliminary plan of action among players. All the perspectives described above were involved according available conditions. Thus, we tried to cover most fully what was happening during the game. We touched all the main perspectives of the gaming situation which were subsequently synchronized. That allowed in some cases to more accurately convey the meaning of occurring actions.

Separately, we note the fixation of the camera for shooting from the first person. Here it is important to choose the correct vertical tilt of the camera. Specifically, it is more adequate to shift the viewing angle significantly lower than the eye line parallel to the surface. This viewing angle most correctly conveys the player's visible area, because an individual most often looks either in front of him or down in front of him - at the phone screen - in the gaming process of using mobile devices. The player rarely raises her/his head and looks up. Therefore, it is required to give the priority in shooting to the direction of gaze down, otherwise the screen of the mobile device will be covered only partially.

Thus, if we turn to the four principles of organizing video recording proposed by A. Maximova (camera mobility, choice of angle, audio fixation, openness of the research position), our version of the survey is based on:

1. a mobile camera following the players in their movements around the city;
2. three perspectives of what is happening including the position of the participant;
3. audio recording including the speeches of the participants, sounds of the environment and the game;
4. open shooting, where all players are warned to participate in the study.

The subsequent processing is carried out with the help of the selection of small video clips, on which one or another mechanism for maintaining situational propriety is most clearly observed. The selected fragment is supported by the study of what is happening in the fragment taken from other angles. Then the fragments are transcribed according to the accepted conventions of speech (Atkinson, Heritage), switching views (Goodwin), other visual conducts (Heath, Hindmarsh, Luff).
In the framework of the study, the choice of video fragments is made exclusively by the researcher and has a goal to indicate the existence of objective mechanisms of behavior with a mobile phone in public places, rather than finally prove them. Nevertheless, there is confidence that video analysis has a methodological potential for the formal detection and even quantitative description of repetitive patterns of behavior. In particular, there are some attempts to make short video collections that demonstrate the diversity of occurring practices that are embedded in the same situations that shows their universality and objective significance. However, the limitations of paper and online publications not suitable for playing video clips strongly hamper the persuasiveness of such arguments.

**Main results of the study**

1. The early location-based mobile games are inspired by the situationist and architectural projects of the game intervention in the urban space. As location-based services are introduced into other functions of a mobile phone, the operations of co-location of users and the experience of someone else’s presence lose their critical focus on revising urban space and bringing new meanings that gives way to gamification and customization of user movements. Nevertheless, the large-scale launch of Ingress the Game and especially Pokémon Go on the city streets turns their consideration into the plane of exploring mechanisms for maintaining public interaction in conditions of mediated communication. From the point of view of studying aspects of meeting, alienation and presence, Goffmanian gaming conception of public interaction is the closest position in relation to the situationist approach.

2. Goffmanian gaming conception of everyday life includes a comprehensive analytical model for studying public interaction, which differs from the dramatic approach and frame analysis. It is based on the structuralist logic of the analysis of public interaction built on the relationship between the concepts of "encounter", "gathering", "situation". The term situation
outlines the boundaries of the spatial interaction environment, the term gathering specifies the membership of participants of the situation, while the term encounter indicates episodes of focused interaction between the participants of gathering. The tautological definition of one concept through another allows Goffman to select the formal elements of interaction and classify the mechanisms for its maintenance.

3. The reception of Goffman’s ideas in related approaches is hampered by fundamental differences. Unlike symbolic interactionism, Goffman prefers to separate the symbolic content of communication from the forms in which communication takes place. The difference with ethnomethodology lies in various understanding of the nature of interaction rules. Goffman is inclined to believe that there is an external context of interaction and the ability of individuals to strategically consider the situation. In contrast to game theory, Goffman stresses the absence of a strict calculation of outcomes among participants and the fundamentally uncertain nature of interaction.

4. Goffman's structuralist approach leaves unclear the problems of corporeality, presence and demeanor that requires clarification in relation to situations of public interaction involving location-based mobile games. If in Goffmanian approach the body acts as an unambiguous marker of the situation, now the body is not only an object located in the actual interaction plane, but also a source of location data that place the individual in completely different contexts sometimes quite alien to her/his immediate environment. Presence implies not only the physical location in a specific situation that makes possible mutual monitoring of all participants of the gathering, but also proper involvement in what is happening. As part of the gameplay, players spend a significant amount of time and effort on maintaining demeanor of public interaction. To achieve this goal, players have to demonstrate the reserves of involvement switching attention from time to time from the phone to others, or hide the
fact of the game masking it for other activities, or playing together. Thus, the players are constantly engaged in maintaining their presence among other players and passers-by. The violations of incorrect presence are associated with the loss of the necessary degree of involvement in what is happening in the current and virtual interaction plane.

5. The possibility of spontaneous interaction with counter players remains a key aspect of location-based mobile games. On the one hand, it is mediated by technical limitations associated with experiencing urban space through the screen of a mobile device, on the other hand, it challenges the game rules broadcast by developers and allows the gaming community to develop its own logic of gaming interaction. The central city parts are characterized by the logic of forcing with attempts to perform a bright and large-scale operation and a focus on high-density interaction. In the peripheral areas of the city there is the logic of control implying continuous possession of one team by the territory of its district and low density of interaction with representatives of other teams. The logic of journey implies a single and out-of-competition game aimed at knowing new places, not people.

**General conclusions of the research**

Within the dissertation research the question is raised whether location-based mobile games, in particular Ingress the Game and Pokémon Go, succeed to overcome the closure of the game world, become part of public interaction and propose new mechanisms of behavior in public places.

The review of work in the field of situationist and architectural projects demonstrates that gaming intervention is based on the potential for redefining urban space associated with elements of suddenness and sociality (H. Lefebvre, Guy Debord, M. de Certeau, M. Tuters). The city is an object that changes as a result of social interactions, where the gaming community acts as the author-interpreter of urban meanings embedded in the common social context. Gaming behavior has a
constructive character, has the goal of routine urban experience "estrangement", also it is in search of alternative forms of citizen association.

At the turn of the XX and XXI centuries a renaissance of situationist ideas arises with emerging location-based mobile projects using various media platforms (sms, walkie-talkies, mobile applications) and user geodata. However, the subsequent introduction of location-based technologies into other user services (navigation, transport, social networks, banking, shopping) reduces the critical message of location-based mobile games turning them more into a tool to compensate for spatial and social gaps in urban space than into a tool for radical updating of public interaction mechanisms on the urban streets.

Nevertheless, the large-scale entry of Ingress the Game and especially Pokémon Go onto the urban streets creates an important precedent for intensifying interaction in public places, experiencing the presence of unfamiliar players and making new acquaintances. These aspects put consideration of location-based mobile games on the plane of analyzing public interaction.

The gaming conception of E. Goffman's public interaction takes the closest position in relation to the situationist approach with elements of alienation, exclusion, meeting and presence. This conception stands out in a separate approach from the dramaturgical metaphor and frame analysis.

For Goffman, games as a theoretical resource become an intermediate link between the pictures of the social world, where the social requirements of a particular party performance are distributed over different zones of communication or where what is happening makes sense only in relation to the external interaction frame. The game itself highlights the outlined situational order and thus allows to relieve the tension dictated by the discrepancy between what is happening and the external context. At the same time, it is impossible to say that the gaming conception is somewhat inferior to the subsequent frame analysis in terms of explaining what is happening. Simply, this explanation is based on the emergent properties of gaming activity, which offers participants a range of events and roles. And if the fragility of
theatrical visibility depends on the quality of performance, then the fragility of the
game depends on the fact that it is not interesting anymore.

The main terms of Goffmanian gaming conception are “encounter”,
“gathering” and “situation”. The term situation outlines the boundaries of the spatial
interaction environment, the term gathering specifies the membership of participants
of the situation, while the term encounter indicates episodes of focused interaction
between the participants of gathering. The tautological definition of one concept
through another allows Goffman to propose a specific structuralist approach to the
analysis of public interaction built on the formal identification of interaction
elements and the classification of mechanisms for its maintenance.

The reception of Goffman's ideas in related approaches faces a number of
limitations and internal contradictions.

Unlike symbolic interactionism, Goffman prefers to separate the symbolic
content of communication from the forms in which communication takes place.
Goffman is primarily interested in the forms of interaction, the sequence of exchange
of moves, the tools and techniques involved, and not the processes of meaning
developing. The difference with ethnomethodology lies in the various ideas about
the origin of the interaction rules. Goffman is inclined to believe that there is an
external context of interaction and the ability of individuals to strategically consider
the situation, while ethnomethodologists adhere to the option of developing rules
here and now. In contrast to game theory, Goffman stresses the absence of a strict
calculation of outcomes among participants and the fundamentally uncertain nature
of interaction.

Primarily focused on the analyze face-to-face interaction Goffmanian
conception becomes relevant again with the growing popularity of location-based
services. Location-based services return an element of location to mediated
communication thereby constructing a new type of here and now interaction.

However, some obvious for face-to-face interaction plots require clarification
with respect to location-based services. We highlight the problems of corporeality,
presence and demeanor among them.
The problem of bodily experience by users of location-based mobile games get a new round of development. According to Goffman, corporeality is a necessary criterion for recognizing an individual as a participant of a situation. The switching attention to oneself and garments is a dangerous manifestation of auto-involvement and increases the risk of categorizing an individual as “abnormal”.

Firstly, the body acts as a source of location data of other participants thereby determining the composition of the gathering indirectly, via coordinates on the map. Secondly, the body turns out to be a “supreme” argument, which debunks dubious inclusions into the situation of unscrupulous participants. Thirdly, the corporeality expands to a constantly involved mobile device that is always at hand and requires a constant shift of attention. The starting point for discovering the concept of corporeality in location-based mobile games is the problem of presence. The boundaries of the body are determined including in relation to other objects and people whom are faced with at the moments of co-presence.

Turning to Goffmanian analysis of the public interaction, we show how a player experiences own body depending on the ways how she/he controls her/his presence in various situations. Some of these methods are connected with the screening (shielding) of other people and activities, others - with the need to cope with "physical fatigue" due to discharge and new body postures, and still others - with the behavior in situations of "false presence" in the game.

We make a comparison of two approaches to definition of demeanor by Goffman. Both approaches proceed from the fact that there are rules for focused interaction (conducting a polite conversation or its equivalent, showing respect to a particular individual) and for unfocused interaction (behavior in sight, making propriety in relation to a gathering). The difference between them lies in the answer to the question of where these rules come from. In the first case, the source of the rules is placed in the institutional context of interaction providing the necessary information about status dispositions and role expectations that are “unpacked” in the right situations. In the second case, the rules are taken from a conditional transaction between the individual and society, the essence of which is the sacred
need to maintain respect for other individuals and gatherings. Both variants are compelled to refer to metaphysical entities, which we will never find in a situation of public interaction. Nevertheless, accepting the restriction to analyze only what can be taken out of the situation we decide to reduce the analysis of public demeanor to considering the “respectful” distribution of the individual's attention between what is happening and other participants.

In the case of participants in location-based mobile games, the distribution of attention requires clarification of the circle of persons in relation to whom demeanor will be performed. Firstly, players can meet here and now other players. The experience of others’ presence is transferred due to location factors and online changes on the game map in a mobile application. Secondly, the calculation of other players among passers-by requires constant correlation between online changes and the location of oncoming people on the street. Thirdly, the behavior in relation to ordinary passers-by is also governed by the rules of behavior in public. The execution of respectful behavior is no less important than the fulfillment of game goals and objectives.

We show that compliance with propriety in public interaction requires maintaining presence among others. In turn, presence means not only physical location in a specific situation that itself gives an individual the “right” to public interaction from other members of the public, but also the degree of involvement in situational activity. We manage to find out that despite considerable enthusiasm for mobile devices players spend a significant part of the gameplay on keeping public demeanor with other passersby. To achieve this goal, players have to demonstrate the reserves of involvement, switching attention from time to time from the phone to others, or hide the fact of the game, masking it for other activities, or playing together. Thus, the players are constantly engaged in maintaining their presence in a situation. The violations of incorrect presence are associated with the loss of the necessary degree of involvement in what is happening in the current and virtual interaction plane.
We scrutinize five gaming episodes in Ingress the Game and Pokémon Go using video analysis. We distinguish the specifics of the three mechanisms for maintaining presence in location-based mobile games: monitoring, ignoring and total exclusion. Players take a distanced position in relation to passers-by by reducing the likelihood of reciprocal inclusions from both the passers-by and the player. An intense immersion in the gameplay creates the appearance of the players' detachment essentially turning them off from what is happening in the actual situation. However, this does not mean that the players do not consider the presence of ordinary passers-by. On the contrary, episodic demonstration of the reserves of involvement, the ability to switch to what is happening at the right moments, to pretend that you notice other people, are an integral part of the gameplay occupying a significant part of it.

In addition to the ceremonial aspect of respecting casual street gatherings, players track the presence of passers-by following the game goals of finding other players. The need for such identification requires the player to be able to coordinate incoming online changes on the screen of the mobile device and the location of the counterparties, as well as the ability to read their violations of engagement. In the event of a mismatch between the location of other passers-by and actions taken on the online map players try to eliminate suspicions of changing the coordinates by providing evidence of their presence in a particular location (photo, direct acquaintance). Otherwise, a suspicious player risks being perceived as a cheater or bot, which entails a total exclusion from public interaction. This is expressed in the fact that the cheaters' playing actions do not deserve responses from “live” players, and the cheaters cease to be part of the public.

The described three mechanisms for maintaining demeanor and presence in public places are valid for situations of both indirect and direct communication. Nevertheless, the increasing penetration and addition of online and offline media challenges us. On the example of the interaction of players we noticed that the two components of presence (location and involvement) can still remain mismatched with each other that jeopardizes the adherence of public demeanor to street gatherings. However, if previously the risk of inappropriate “presence” lurks in the
degree of involvement, then in the case of location-based interactions presence can be undermined from the point of view of location. “Are the changes that I see on the screen of my phone, and the resistance that the enemy gives me, caused by the physical presence of another person?” - this is the question that the user has to ask again and again. Imaginary participants of the gathering who manage to keep themselves involved in what is happening “somewhere and now” face with the dry and insistent demand “Show yourself!” from other players. As a result, the performance of public demeanor implies a gradual development of public skills in recognizing visible manipulations with gadgets. Thus, the spread of mobile technologies and services is associated with the accumulation of experience of their public use, the ability to demonstrate own presence, share location and prove publicity.

The described mechanisms for maintaining demeanor and presence in public places need to be clarified from the position of the players and their vision of the changes with them in the game.

According to the results of the online-survey and interviews of players, it can be argued that more than two thirds of the players turn to the game during everyday movements. Gaming activity is dissolved in everyday affairs. Nevertheless, the game is conducted not only along the usual routes, but it allows players to visit both “unclaimed” parts of the city (other periphery) and new places in already familiar areas. The game primarily reveals the potential of motion allowing players to update the unexplored urban space through simple movement. These results indicate that playing activity leads to saturation of public places at the expense of extremely mobile participants who are used to perform all actions on the go. At the same time, tactics of reacting to a random meeting with other players are rather strongly oriented towards contact and acquaintance.

Despite the uniform rules, the game takes place in different parts of the city in different ways. We distinguish three logic of gaming strategies: forcing, control, and journey.
The forcing logic occurs predominantly in the central part of the city and implies the highly competitive nature of the struggle between players from different teams. None of the teams does not claim long-term control of the occupied territories. The main desire - to make a bright and large-scale operation, which will touch the representatives of other teams forcing them to take countermeasures. During the gaming activity players are focused on random encounters with other players and a high density of interaction.

The control logic is characteristic for resident (peripheral) parts of the city. The control logic arises due to the historically high number of players from one of the teams living in this area, which forces players from other teams to either throw a game or go into a dominant team in the area. As part of control, the team tries to continuously own the territory of its district suppressing (sometimes quite roughly) the actions of other teams. The players of the controlling team are well acquainted with each other, they support newcomers, but they are poorly oriented towards familiarity with representatives of other teams.

The journey logic is beyond the competition teams and dating with other players. Journey involves a single player game that can flow to any part of the city and beyond. Following this logic, players try to pay more attention to new places, their names and features.

Returning to the initial question of whether location-based mobile games can change the interaction order of public places, it is important to accept that the Goffmanian conceptual scheme imposes additional restrictions on the consideration of location-based mobile games. It does not answer the questions why these games are popular, but it allows us to find that the public and ludic is strongly interconnected with each other. Therefore not only the games redefine the city introducing new mechanisms of co-presence and corporeality, but also the city redefines the games imposing different gaming logics in different urban parts.
List of publications, which reflects the main scientific results of the thesis


5. Glazkov K., Strelnikova A. Mobil'nye metody: dvizhenie kak chast' issledovatel'skoj strategii // INTERaction, INTERview, INTERpretation. 2015. № 10. P. 79-90. (1 a.s., author contribution – 0,5 a.s.)

6. Glazkov K., Shmeleva E. The formats of struggle for the city in new media (cases of the “Local blogs” project and the mobile application “Ingress the Game”) // Media City 5 Conference. Plymouth University. 2015. P. 208-223. (1 a.s., author contribution – 0,5 a.s.)