

**DESTRUCTIVE CONTENT OF MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AS A FACTOR OF FORMING TERRORIST ATTITUDES IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

***CONTEÚDO DESTRUTIVO DA COMUNICAÇÃO NA MÍDIA COMO FATOR DE FORMAÇÃO DE ATITUDES TERRORISTAS NO SISTEMA EDUCACIONAL***

***CONTENIDO DESTRUCTIVO DE LAS COMUNICACIONES MEDIÁTICAS COMO FACTOR DE FORMACIÓN DE ACTITUDES TERRORISTAS EN EL SISTEMA EDUCATIVO***

Andrey V. RACHIPA<sup>1</sup>  
Elena A. KARAPETYAN<sup>2</sup>  
Valery V. KASYANOV<sup>3</sup>  
Victoria V. KOTLYAROVA<sup>4</sup>  
Svetlana V. YUSHINA<sup>5</sup>  
Darya M. GLUKHOVSKAYA<sup>6</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** Currently, modern social institutions are undergoing active transformation. The transformation of society, especially in educational system, leads to changes in the views of young people, which is reflected in their social behavior. Since young people have an unstable social position in their educational age and labile consciousness, information content received through media communication can cause young people to become inclined to irrational social behavior, including extremist behavior and terrorism. The analysis revealed that media channels allow terrorist organizations to create and promote blogs and discussion forums aimed at spreading terrorist orientations on sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Vkontakte, Instagram, Telegram, which post content that incites violent actions. Analytics in social networks allows us to investigate the "digital traces" of social network participants, which can become an effective technology for identifying terrorist communities in social media and curbing the spread of destructive content, which means combating terrorism.

**KEYWORDS:** Youth. Educational system. Communication. Media communication. Media channels. Destructive content. Internet.

<sup>1</sup> Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University), Moscow – Russia. Doctor of Sociological sciences, professor of department of sociology, History and political science of Institute of management in economic, Ecological and social systems at the Southern federal university, Professor-associate of the department 109 «b» FGBOU. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7404-520X>. E-mail: [rachipa@sfedu.ru](mailto:rachipa@sfedu.ru)

<sup>2</sup> Kuban State Technological University, AIMT (branch) of KubSTU, Krasnodar – Russia. PhD in philology, associate professor of Armavir Institute of Mechanics and Technology (branch). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3935-4095>. E-mail: [karapetyan7@yandex.ru](mailto:karapetyan7@yandex.ru)

<sup>3</sup> Russia Kuban State University, Krasnodar – Russia. Doctor of Social Sciences, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, head of chair of history. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6870-7673>. E-mail: [culture@kubsu.ru](mailto:culture@kubsu.ru)

<sup>4</sup> Don State Technical University in Shakhty, Shakhty – Russia. Doctor of Philosophy, professor of department Social and Humanitarian Disciplines, Institute of Service and Business (branch). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6419-6119>. E-mail: [biktorija66@mail.ru](mailto:biktorija66@mail.ru)

<sup>5</sup> Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don – Russia. PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor of the Department of History and Cultural Studies. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1849-3048>. E-mail: [yushinasv@mail.ru](mailto:yushinasv@mail.ru)

<sup>6</sup> Southern Federal University, Rostov-On-Don – Russia. Graduate student in Sociology, Department of Regional Sociology and Social Process Modeling Institute of Sociology and Regional Studies. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6759-0442>. E-mail: [bru.dasha@yandex.ru](mailto:bru.dasha@yandex.ru)

**RESUMO:** Atualmente, as instituições sociais modernas estão passando por uma transformação ativa. A transformação da sociedade, principalmente no sistema educacional, leva a mudanças na visão dos jovens, o que se reflete em seu comportamento social. Uma vez que os jovens têm uma posição social instável em sua idade educacional e consciência instável, o conteúdo da informação recebido por meio da comunicação da mídia pode fazer com que os jovens se tornem inclinados a comportamentos sociais irracionais, incluindo comportamento extremista e terrorismo. A análise revelou que os canais de mídia permitem que organizações terroristas criem e promovam blogs e fóruns de discussão com o objetivo de divulgar orientações terroristas em sites como Twitter, YouTube, Vkontakte, Instagram, Telegram, que postam conteúdo que incita ações violentas. A análise em redes sociais nos permite investigar os “rastros digitais” dos participantes das redes sociais, o que pode se tornar uma tecnologia eficaz para identificar comunidades terroristas nas redes sociais e coibir a disseminação de conteúdo destrutivo, o que significa combater o terrorismo.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Juventude. Sistema educacional. Comunicação. Comunicação de mídia. Canais de mídia. Conteúdo destrutivo. Internet.

**RESUMEN:** Actualmente, las instituciones sociales modernas están experimentando una transformación activa. La transformación de la sociedad, especialmente en el sistema educativo, conlleva cambios en la visión de los jóvenes, lo que se refleja en su comportamiento social. Dado que los jóvenes tienen una posición social inestable en su edad educativa y una conciencia lábil, el contenido de la información recibida a través de los medios de comunicación puede hacer que los jóvenes se inclinen hacia un comportamiento social irracional, incluido el comportamiento extremista y el terrorismo. El análisis reveló que los canales de medios permiten a las organizaciones terroristas crear y promover blogs y foros de discusión destinados a difundir orientaciones terroristas en sitios como Twitter, YouTube, Vkontakte, Instagram, Telegram, que publican contenido que incita a acciones violentas. La analítica en las redes sociales nos permite investigar los "rastros digitales" de los participantes de las redes sociales, lo que puede convertirse en una tecnología eficaz para identificar comunidades terroristas en las redes sociales y frenar la difusión de contenido destructivo, lo que significa combatir el terrorismo.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Juventud. Sistema educativo. Comunicación. Medios de comunicación. Canales de medios. Contenido destructivo. Internet.

## **Introduction**

Youth issues are one of the most urgent topics in Russia, since young people act as the very social group that can and should actively participate in the development of society (CHIKAEVA *et al.*, 2018; YUSHINA; BRUSENTSEVA, 2020).

When studying youth, the interest of researchers is aimed at considering the problems of youth and studying the prospects for the development of society in terms of the participation of young people in this process. The aspect of forming the consciousness of young people also attracts the attention of researchers. The value orientations, attitudes, perceptions of young people are formed under the influence of various external and internal factors including the activities of social institutions. We are witnessing how modern social institutions are being transformed, which sometimes causes disorganization and deformation of the social system. In turn, the transformation of society leads to changes in the views of young people, which are reflected in their social behavior (GAFIATULINA *et al.*, 2018; KARAPETYAN *et al.*, 2019; LUGININA, 2017).

One of the important roles in the formation of young people's perceptions is played by the communicative institute, which can create distorted pictures of the world, manipulate the consciousness of the young part of the population and even have a destructive effect on the socio-psychological state of young audience (BELIKOVA *et al.*, 2020; KOTLYAROVA; BERMUS, 2020).

The problem of terrorism has been traced since the late 90s of the 20th century (YUSHINA, 2010), but now, when high-speed Internet is available to young people in almost every home, the situation with the formation of terrorist attitudes in the youth environment has become more complicated. This is due to the fact that international terrorist movements have actively entered the Internet space, and with the help of modern information and communication technologies, terrorism is broadcast on a global scale.

Thus, the problem of terrorism among young people has been very relevant over the past decades, and in light of the fact that media communications are actively developing at present, the formation of terrorist attitudes in the youth environment is gaining the greatest significance.

## Methodology

Youth issues have been of interest to researchers for a long period. Young people became an independent object of research within the framework of sociological science a little over 100 years ago. As noted by M. K. Gorshkov and F. E. Sheregi, this is due to the fact that only “at the stage of the formation of market relations, young people were able to declare themselves as the main structure-reviving factor of society” (GORSHKOV; SHEREGI, 2012).

Currently, youth problems remain very relevant and socially significant. It should be noted that social reality is changing very quickly and the views and perceptions of young people on objects of changing reality are being transformed, which in turn finds a great response in modern studies of domestic scientists.

The interest of researchers is directed to the consideration of the educational and professional trajectories of youth. A. G. Cherednichenko in his writings refers to the processes of transformation of social structures and institutions that affect the educational and professional start of young people (CHEREDNICHENKO, 2016). These processes include the demographic situation, the situation on the labor market and the structure of employment, the structure of the education system. Educational and professional trajectories of young people also depend on the social practices of young people themselves in the course of obtaining general, professional, additional education and the beginning of professional activity (Dynamics of youth employment, 2017; Youth: construction of a labor biography, 2018). In addition, scientists pay active attention to the value orientations of youth, noting that youth are not a homogeneous group with a single system of value orientations (Value orientations of Russian youth, 2017). When considering the social health of young people, the authors note that it is actively influenced by the information network environment, since this environment is a source of risks and threats to the social well-being and health of young people (KASYANOV *et al.*, 2019).

Analysis of scientific literature on youth issues of recent decades allows us to note the following trends of modern research in this area: professional self-determination of young people, youth employment, the structure of values determining the semantic content of the life of modern Russian youth, the design of strategies and lifestyles, value orientations and attitudes of youth, radicalization of youth.

In our opinion, the fact that there are a large number of radical young people among today's youth, and some of them are ready to join terrorist communities, is the fault of a large complex of social processes in which many factors work together. In order to understand the

reasons why young people are ready to join terrorist groups, it is necessary to understand how terrorist attitudes of young people are formed, and to consider technologies for the dissemination of destructive content, where the media communication space plays a significant role.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to consider the destructive content of media communication as a factor in the formation of terrorist attitudes in the youth environment.

To achieve this goal, we rely on P. Bourdieu's theory of social fields, which allows us to determine the role and importance of media communications in the process of radicalization of youth consciousness and the formation of terrorist attitudes (BOURDIEU, 2007). Since the modern risk society is a fertile ground for recruiting young people into terrorist organizations, we also rely on riskological concept of youth by Yu. A. Zubok, which allows us to identify the essence, distinctive features, forms of manifestation and main social determinants, conditions for the conversion of extreme typical of youth into extremism, as well as the sources of its escalation and localization (CHUPROV *et al.*, 2007).

## **Results**

Since in the conditions of the modern digital space, Russian youth is cut off from the objective social reality, the very conditions of communication of young people change and media channels, through which young people interact, come to the fore in interpersonal communication among young people, the problem of the formation of social attitudes of young people through media communication, in our opinion, is very urgent.

Considering the social attitudes of young people, it is possible to carry out a deep reflection on the social behavior of Russian youth, since "social behavior is carried out on the basis of both internal and external regulators" (LUBSKY, 2017). Such regulators of social behavior are social attitudes that describe the internal state of readiness of a particular individual or social group to perform a social action. "Social behavior means a form of interaction inherent in a person with the surrounding social environment, mediated both by its external structure and organization, and by the phenomena of consciousness of the person himself" (LUBSKY *et al.*, 2017).

In psychological science, the term attitude was considered by D.N. Uznadze in the 60s of the 20th century. Within social and humanitarian sciences, the attitude is considered as the readiness, predisposition of the subject to perform a certain kind of activity. In psychology, many researchers work with this term. Attitudes are present in all spheres of the psychosocial

life of people. Psychologists clarify that a person who is prepared for a certain action, that is, has this or that attitude, can perform an activity faster and more efficiently than someone who is not prepared for this. Specialists in the field of social psychology believe that attitudes can work wrongly, and then a person will become a hostage of existing attitudes.

The term "social attitudes" was first used by W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki in order to show what the individual is oriented towards as a member of the group in relation to the values of this group. The social attitude, according to W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, is a system of views that prepare an individual to perform certain actions, expressed in the form of reflected judgments (THOMAS; ZNANIECKI, 1927).

That is, the attitude denotes the general name of the mechanism that guides the behavior of a person in certain situations. Thought processes act as the content of the attitude. The attitude shows how a person is ready to react to a particular situation - positively or negatively. Attitudes help a person to filter incoming information. With the help of social attitudes, human activity acquires a purposeful character, and a person sometimes unconsciously makes a decision to perform an act.

It is very important for modern sociological thought to study aspects of the social attitudes of young people that affect the construction and reproduction of social reality by young people, their social behavior, which in some cases is associated with the radicalization of young people. The problem of radical attitudes of young people is often caused by their terrorist attitudes, which can lead to terrorist actions.

Turning to the term terrorism, we note that this is a rather complex phenomenon that includes various aspects: social, psychological, historical, ethnic, ethical, religious and legal. According to the regulatory framework of the Russian Federation, terrorism is defined as "the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing decision-making by public authorities, local authorities or international organizations associated with intimidation of the population and (or) other forms of unlawful violent actions" (RUSSIA, 2006). M.A. Komarova notes that terrorism is "a systemic politically or socially motivated, ideologically grounded use of violence or the threat of violence, whereby through the intimidation of individuals, their behavior is controlled in a direction favorable to terrorists in order to achieve their goals" (KOMAROVA, 2003).

Based on the definition of "social attitude" and "terrorism", it follows that a terrorist attitude is a readiness (mental process) to carry out terrorist activities. That is, the terrorist attitudes of young people are the radical views of young people that prepare the individual for terrorist actions and guide his behavior.

Any social attitudes, including terrorist attitudes, do not arise without reason, they are formed under the influence of certain factors, among which media communication occupies a significant place.

Media communication is “the process of creating, broadcasting, exchanging media information in an individual, group, mass format through various channels using various communicative means (verbal, non-verbal, auditory, visual, etc.)” (SHILINA, 2009).

Within this article, it is important for us to show how terrorist attitudes of young people are formed through the destructive content of media communications.

The financial resources of terrorist organizations are most often spent not on preparing and conducting an anti-social action, but on the processes of informing citizens about destructive activities. Terrorist organizations model the media space around themselves and use it as one of the mechanisms for the dissemination of terrorist content.

Mass media resources that contribute to the formation of terrorist attitudes can be conditionally divided into those that spread the ideas of separatism and extremism, resources that call for terrorist actions, and resources that incite xenophobia based on nationality or race.

Which media channels are used by terrorist organizations to broadcast destructive content influencing the formation of terrorist attitudes? These organizations seek to recruit young people and to publicize their work through controlled news agencies, print and electronic media.

For example, the terrorist group "ISIL" (IS) banned on the territory of the Russian Federation cooperates with professional journalists, providing them with modern means of communication and transport, paying for publications. Journalists organize online broadcasts from hot spots, where they show daily life, militants, and their training. Due to the fragile psyche, young people perceive this content ambiguously - many of them are attracted by such pictures and arouse great interest, they want to be among the militants. The technology of broadcasting the real life of terrorists indirectly influences the formation of terrorist attitudes among young people, arousing their interest in this topic, casting a "bait" for further acquaintance with the terrorist theme.

With the spread of high-speed and accessible Internet throughout the world, the recruitment and broadcast of terrorism ideas has become faster. The Internet has become the platform where terrorist organizations have learned to actively promote their destructive ideas, attracting new adherents, including many young women and children. “It is believed that the main recruiters of new supporters are the militants who took part in the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. They become active preachers of the ideas of "jihad" and conduct

secret work on the preparation and implementation of terrorist acts” (GAFIATULINA; BRUSENTSEVA, 2017).

Currently, on the Internet, there are a huge number of sites containing terrorist content, in the most common social networks (Vkontakte, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram), communities and separate accounts have been created to consecrate the destructive activities of terrorists. For example, in 2014 in the city of Bangalore (India), 24-year-old Mehdi Masrura Biswasa, an engineer of an international Internet corporation, was detained. At the time of his arrest, his Twitter account had over 17 thousand subscribers and a monthly audience of about 2 million people. Through this social network, Mehdi Masrura Biswas became the mouthpiece of jihadist propaganda, a source of information for thousands of extremist supporters. On his account, tweets were posted on average every five minutes. In this way, he told his followers about what was happening in Syria around the world, igniting their interest in terrorism. Among the tweets were various videos, photographs, official IS "news", as well as *nasheeds* - chants that directly call for jihad.

In 2015, a large amount of terrorist content spilled over into Telegram channels, which attracted terrorist organizations by allowing them to store materials - videos, photos, and posters without limitation in quantity and volume.

Another platform that allows spreading terrorism propaganda is Instagram. At the end of 2013, Israfil Ilmaz's Instagram account began to publish interesting photos with unobtrusive calls to come to Syria and join IS. Thus, the Dutchman of Turkish origin did not act on the audience with the help of moralizing posters, but simply began to show "life". This method turned out to be much more effective than the official accounts of jihadist leaders, because the subscribers of Israfil Ilmaz saw in the life of a militant no danger and death, but they felt a kind of "romance" of such a life.

Now there are a huge number of groups and accounts in different social networks that are dedicated to "Islam", they are not directly related to ISIS and may not contain direct calls for "jihad", but they lay a powerful foundation for the radicalization of youth, for the formation of terrorist attitudes in youth environment.

Groups that contain information-instructions on how to make explosives from improvised means, how to equip a camp and a shelter in the mountains, how to learn shooting from different types of weapons are especially dangerous. Such training videos are also available on YouTube hosting. Representatives of radical groups use such communities and channels to train their followers.



Information has become as valuable weapons for terrorist organizations as Kalashnikovs and explosives, and those who support them on social networks and broadcast terrorist ideas are considered the group's fighters.

How do terrorist groups influence the minds of young people and form terrorist attitudes in youth environment?

In addition to the fact that the content itself, which is destructive in nature and arouses the interest of young people in the topic of terrorism, there is a direct recruitment of young people through social networks. Here is an example: on a social network, a young person receives a message from another person whose photo on his personal page can be replaced with an attractive picture. In the course of communication, it turns out that the people texting has many common interests or hobbies. This new acquaintance knows the person to whom he writes so well that he is quite capable of becoming his friend, loved one, or even a teacher. The second stage will be motivation. For example, many young girls are looking for love, so the motivator will promise to find a real man, or he himself will act as the most courageous, reliable one. If a young person is not confident in himself, then the motivator will become a real friend for him who will inspire confidence. Motivators allow informal people to realize their exclusivity. Thus, a new acquaintance from a social network for any young person will find what he needs. Through personal correspondence, the motivator collects information about the person, analyzes it and then begins recruiting. Note that the stronger a person's emotional ties with family, with children, with parents, with a loved one, the higher the degree of satisfaction with life, the more difficult it is for the motivator to recruit. The risk group includes such young people: closed people, those who have just experienced grief, who have found themselves in a stressful situation (conflicts, quarrels, a series of failures, their own or their parents' divorce), young people who are looking for meaning in life, authority, easily inspired people, and people who feel misunderstood. When a motivator recruits a young person, he gradually attunes him to the fact that life is not fair, that others are behaving incorrectly. Thus, the border between the recruited and the real world is growing. The young person moves away from reality and completely immerses himself in virtuality. The task of the motivator is to lead the young person to the idea that there is a way out of everything, that he can make a personal contribution, change his world towards justice and do something important. By this time, the young person will have formed terrorist attitudes. This may be followed by a personal meeting with the motivator and an invitation to the circle of the "chosen ones".

One example of recruiting on social networks is the case of Varvara Karaulova, a student at Moscow State University, who in 2015 wanted to leave for Syria for personal communication

with recruiter Airat Samatov, with whom she communicated on social networks for several years. According to the student, her correspondence with the recruiter began in 2012, when she was still a schoolgirl. Acquaintance occurred in one of the groups in the social network "Vkontakte", which was dedicated to the football theme. The girl herself claims that all communication took place only on the Internet, but gradually A. Samatov began to completely control the girl: he forbade her to communicate with other men, did not recommend maintaining relationships with some girls and greatly reduced her circle of communication. The correspondence on the Internet pushed Varvara Karaulova to fall in love with the virtual young man and make two attempts to go to Syria.

Thus, the material we have analyzed shows that the content created on the Internet - on video hosting and social networks, can carry terrorist propaganda: educating young people about terrorist activities, details from the real life of militants in the form of photos and videos, instructions on production explosives and other radical ideas.

Terrorist evil will be committed as long as terrorist attitudes are broadcast through media channels, since this method covers a huge number of people and is very difficult to limit. It is very important for the whole world to limit coverage of terrorist activities in the media space. This will minimize the incitement to a terrorist act, the recruitment, arming, training and use of terrorists.

## **Conclusions**

Our analysis shows that the attention of modern scientists is attracted by the aspect of the formation of the youth`s consciousness: value orientations, attitudes, ideas of young people. The problem of the formation of terrorist attitudes is very significant for modern society, since the readiness of young people for radicalism, under certain conditions, turns into an activity form - the commission of terrorist acts. In the modern world, such conditions provide media communication channels with the content available in their arsenal, most often Internet resources, which allow a heterogeneous and dispersed audience to quickly receive various information, including of a destructive nature.

The Internet allows terrorist organizations to create and promote blogs and discussion forums for spreading terrorist attitudes, promoting radicalization, recruiting, and creating virtual online communities that share the terrorist agenda on sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Vkontakte, Instagram, and Telegram with content that incites to violent actions.

The use of the media space for broadcasting the terrorist ideology of young people actively attracts researchers to this problem. Currently, “an interdisciplinary research area is actively developing, which is aimed at combining, expanding and adapting methods for analyzing social media data” (ZENG; CHEN; LUSCH, 2011), since tracking the presence of terrorist content on social networks in real time is important for security analysts. This research team has created a prototype of a software system for identifying ultra-right communities in the social network VKontakte. The developed method combines the speed of computer analysis of big data, a mathematical model for identifying the target group based on a characteristic change in the group's activity in the “vicinity” of key events, and a knowledge base. Using this algorithm, it is possible to identify radicalization predictors to develop criteria for the selection and labeling of trigger objects. The use of such algorithms will also help identify lone terrorists who are highly radicalized.

Thus, the developed method can become an effective technology for identifying terrorist communities in social media and act as one of the mechanisms for countering youth terrorism in the media space, which will help curb the spread of destructive content.

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