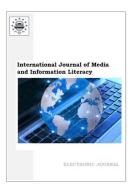
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Structural and Substantial Constructs of "Teenage Extremism" Concept in Syntagma of Modern Media Discourse of Transforming Russian Society

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to the problem of teenage extremism as a form of social deviation in the configuration of modern media texts in the transformation processes of Russia (based on the material of online mass media) and specific features of the media messages embodying extremist materials impact on the consciousness of the adolescent audience. The relevance of the reviewed subject is confirmed by the fact that recently the phenomenology of the concept of "teenage extremism" is a discursive object in the research space. A significant increase in the level of attention to the study of extremist counterculture reflection in the media continuum of Russian society in the context of transformational processes is noticeable. The author revealed that there is a tendency of active disputes regarding the disclosure of the essential features and signs of "extremism" concept, which is a confirmation of the complexity, versatility of this phenomenon.

The basic core of the research work is the implementation of the hermeneutic analysis of Russian media space continuum in the practical segment, which recreates the ideological meaning of the image of teenage extremism manifestation. As a result of the research, the author revealed the main tendencies of extremism among adolescents in modern Russian society, specific features and content characteristics, gender, religious, ideological, worldview context of the text of online mass media. The media educational potential in the context of reducing the level of risks in the media associated with the broadcast of extremist manifestations among adolescents to the society is indicated.

Keywords: extremism, teen audience, media text, mass media, extremist material, media educational component, Russia.

1. Introduction

Today, the problem of extremism among adolescents and youth is one of the global problems, though not so long ago, but already firmly taken a position of international importance.

Recently, the subject of extremism has been one of the central topics in the system of modern media space functioning, which determined the actualization of research in the field of effective countermeasures, reflected constructs of the studied phenomenon in the information field.

Various media channels broadcast negative effects, indirectly accompanied by technologies of consciousness manipulation, propaganda and agitational nature, which significantly affect the audience, first of all, that group that has low level of critical thinking, media culture, distinguished by maximalism and persistent attitude towards systematic self-affirmation. At the same time, it is the teenage audience, due to the age characteristics of the personality and the high level of media contacts that is exposed to especially strong influence.

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Undoubtedly, the media are the most powerful tool for influencing the formation of the worldview matrix as an important behavioral regulator of the younger generation.

Media that pay careful attention to the subject of extremism, thus, reproducing certain events through their content, affect the consciousness of the younger generation, forming a model of behavior in society, as well as increasing cases of cyberspace use for extremist information spreading.

It is obvious that the reproduction of events related to extremist content in publicly available media sources, which are most popular among adolescent audience (the Internet, social networks, television, etc.), contributes to changing in perception and increasing the impact on the subconscious level, which provokes the production of constructs of extremist behavioral patterns in the society by the adolescent audience.

At the same time there is a creation of conditions for the increase of quantitative indicator of "teenage extremism" phenomenon basis.

In this regard, we assume that various media products reflecting the content of an extremist orientation, unconsciously or consciously, popularize the ideological and worldview basis of extremism in a latent way.

In our opinion, the value of the reviewed problem lies in the fact that the importance of comprehending the scientific and cognitive search of the representatives of the research community in the focus of the landscape configuration of the modern continuum of Russian media (namely, online mass media), extremist content in the adolescent environment is clearly beyond doubt. Besides, the problem of adolescent extremism has the status of a critical social phenomenon of the international level.

Moreover, it should be added that the poor knowledge of "teenage extremism" phenomenon in the focus of destructive influence on the consciousness and behavior of the teenage audience by various media channels broadcasting negative forms of social reactions, actions and interactions as legitimate, creates a "ground" for the reviewed problem aggravation.

It means that appeal to modern electronic media texts, reflecting the problems of extremism in the adolescent environment, is determined by the relevance and significance in the context of the semantic content of media messages, destructive influence, and the search for effective tools to "protect" the adolescent audience.

2. Materials and methods

The material of our research: modern texts of the online mass media of Russia, representing the phenomenology of the "teenage extremism" concept: *Interfax, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, RIA Novosti, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, News.ru, Komsomolskaya Pravda* – 110 media texts.

The basic core of the research work is the implementation of the hermeneutic analysis of the Russian media space continuum in the practical segment, which recreates the ideological meaning of the image of extremism manifestation among adolescents.

At the same time, the following methods are very important for our research:

- systematization, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, theoretical analysis and synthesis, abstraction, concretization, generalization;
- empirical: collection of information (information and literary sources: books, archival documents, articles, Internet files on extremism manifestation among adolescents, etc.).

The purpose of the study is to determine the place and role of the teenage extremism problem as a form of social deviation in the configuration of modern media texts in the transformation processes of Russia (based on the material of online mass media) and the specific features of the online media impact, reflecting the extremist content, on the consciousness of teenage audience.

The research object is the development of the "teenage extremism" phenomenon in modern Russian texts on the online mass media.

The research subject is the genesis of concepts, stereotypical models of the subject media interpretations in Russian texts on the online mass media.

The theoretical and methodological syntagma of the problem is presented:

- analysis of creating-media-text authors' stages of concentration to the problem under consideration (dichronic method);
- analysis of expressiveness tools and methods of modeling the conceptual foundations of the "teenage extremism" phenomenon system in modern media products of the transforming Russian society (comparative descriptive method);

– analysis of functional potential of the character in interaction with other characters in the media text structure (structural and semiotic method).

3. Discussion

Analysis of modern Russian media space shows that the problem of extremism among adolescents is in the focus of the socio-cultural, legal, psychological, pedagogical landscape of the ecosystem, determining the growth of actualization of the concept under review in the content of the scientists' research field. In turn, "taking" the subject under consideration to the level of one of the central socio-psychological, political problems of the international level.

The situation associated with the manifestation of various forms of extremist activity among adolescents today is of particular concern. We are convinced that it is not eventual, but a fact confirmed by the research community, stating that adolescence is the most favorable period for informative and psychological impact of negative content.

It is very relevant to focus on the semantic load of the concept of "extremism" in the course of research work.

Content analysis of scientific research reflecting the syntagma of the reviewed problem makes it possible to assert that today the phenomenology of the "extremism" concept includes many definitions, the fact that, in our opinion, creates serious problems, which are aggravated by the processes of media convergence.

Nevertheless, for our study, the definition of the concept of "extremism", which is given by "Shanghai Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism" dated June 15, 2001 (i. 3 p. 1 art. 1) is of particular importance, according to which "..."extremism" is any act aimed at the violent seizure of power or the forcible retention of power, as well as the violent change of the constitutional system of the state, as well as a violent encroachment on public safety, including the organization of illegal armed groups for the above purposes or participation in them, and prosecuted in accordance with the national legislation of the Parties" (Shanghai Convention..., 2001).

In 2003, the convention was ratified and entered into force in Russia.

We found that in different countries and in different historical epochs, many different scientific definitions of the concept of "extremism" were presented. In particular, P.T. Coleman and A. Bartoli in their work "Addressing Extremism" noted that "extremism is an activity, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions and strategies that are far from generally accepted. At the same time, the definition of "generally accepted" is always a subjective and political issue, therefore, in any discussion on the topic of extremism, the following is touched upon: some extremist actions can be viewed by different people positively ("struggle for freedom"), while others — negatively ("terrorism"), it depends on the values, political convictions of the evaluator, as well as on his relationship with the actor" (Coleman, Bartoli, 2003).

In addition, some foreign researchers interpret extremism as a certain kind of pathological disease. Thus, A. Gruen writes: "The lack of identity associated with extremists is the result of self-destructive self-hatred, which leads to a sense of revenge towards life itself and the urge to kill one's own humanity" (Gruen, 2003: 266-272). Thus, extremism is viewed not as a tactic or ideology, but as a pathological disease, which is based on the destructive structure of all spheres of human life.

So, today there is no single definition of the concept of "extremism".

However, we came to the conclusion that adolescent and youth extremism is a mass phenomenon characteristic of modern transforming society, which is expressed in disrespect towards the rules and norms of behavior existing in the society. The fundamental goal of extremism is "to impose certain beliefs on the population and to attract as many like-minded people as possible to their organizations" (Deeva, Korobeynik, 2018).

In general, the problem of extremism is the scientific field of various disciplines, in particular, pedagogy, psychology, sociology, political science and a number of other branches of scientific knowledge.

The conceptual foundations of the extremism problem study among adolescents and youth can be found in the scientific works of many Russian and foreign scientists.

In general, the research of scientists, considering a certain amount of conventionality, can be divided into the following directions in the context of interpreting different aspects of the extremism problem:

-study of the causes, essence, types and directions of extremism, the characteristics of responsibility for committing illegal actions of extremist orientation (Russian scientists: Afanasyev, 2007; Borisov, 2011; Chuprov, 2003; Donika, 2008; Kozlov, 2003; Kubyakin, 2014; Tomalintsev, 1996; Valeev, 2011; Zubok, 2005 and others; foreign scientists: Christmann, 2012; Gearon, 2013; Hamilton, Pinel, 2002; Moulin, 2012; Quartermaine, 2016; Schneider, 2002; Staub, 2001; Stein, 2001; Toscano, 1998 and others);

-research on the transformation of the "extremism" phenomenon in the context of modern post-industrial society and the development of global Internet (Emelin, 2018; Kilyaskhanova, 2008; Korosteleva, 2016; Panin, 2002; Podkatilina, 2008; Rudik, Volkov, 2017; Samoshin, Gorovoy, 2016; Vasenina, 2005 and others);

- analysis of aggressive communicative impact on the mass audience (Fedorov, 2003; 2004; Kadyat-Murza, 2000; Sheremet, 2003; Sheynov, 2010 and others);

-study of the specifics of television functioning on the Internet within the framework of the extremist materials coverage (Osipov, 2003; Perfilyev, 2003 and others).

So, a review of scientific researches on the considered problem allows us to assert that today there is a fairly large number of fundamental scientific works, at the same time, there is a tendency of active disputes regarding the disclosure of the essential features and signs of the concept of "extremism", which is a confirmation of the complexity, the versatility of this phenomenon. At the same time, an insignificant share is taken by the works reflecting the relationship between the dysfunctional state of the media texts (first of all, research covers television, the Internet network) and aggravation of the problem of extremism.

As it was stated above, adolescents and young people, of course, are the active target audience of the Internet space in Russia, in this context the risk of being involved into the extremist organizations increases.

E. Puchkova quite reasonably asserts that recruitment via the Internet is much more dangerous for a modern teenager than via the live dialogue. "For a modern child, the worst punishment is separation from the Internet... Teenagers have no filter in terms of digestion of the information flow coming from the Web. In reality, a teenager spends 8-12 hours per day on the Internet. Of course, a hyperactive student cannot surf the Web without performing intellectual activity there" (Priymak, 2019).

In addition, on October 27, 2021, at the meeting, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation – N. Patrushev noted that "criminal subculture, disregard towards the norms of public morality and ethics, the cultivation of individualism, excessive consumption – all this is imposed on the adolescent environment by various destructive groups, including through the Internet" (Sysoev, 2021).

In this regard, the establishment of effective "contact" of the media with the authorities and society is very important when covering the extremist subject. This conclusion is confirmed in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 31, 2015 No. 683 "On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation". The document says that in order to provide the national security, the mechanisms are being created to counteract the participation of Russian citizens in the activities of criminal and terrorist groups abroad, "the system of identifying and analyzing the threats in the information sphere, and countering them is being improved"; "measures to protect the population against destructive informational influences from extremist and terrorist organizations are being taken..." (Decree..., 2015). Thus, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation reflects the multi-aspect counteraction to extremist/terrorist threats; special attention is paid to the information space.

In our opinion, a significant role is assigned to the integration of media educational potential aimed at reducing the level of risks in the mass media associated with the extremist manifestations broadcast to the society among adolescents. The need for the development of analytical skills, independent, critical thinking among the teenage audience in understanding the media texts that include extremist materials is indisputable. We are convinced that the development of media competence of the younger generation is able to solve the important problems not only of an educational and upbringing nature, but also of media proficiency.

4. Results

In the course of research work on the considered issues, we carried out a hermeneutic analysis of modern Internet media texts in the conditions of transformational processes of Russian

society, representing the "teenage extremism" concept phenomenology (1992-2021): *Interfax, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, RIA Novosti, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, News.ru, Komsomolskaya Pravda* – 110 media texts.

Typing a query in *Yandex* search system for informational news containing the keywords "Cases of extremism among adolescents", we got the result of 10 million messages. Obviously, most of the events were presented in criminal informational view.

Today, events related to the extremist actions, which sometimes end tragically in the online versions of the mass media, receive a great resonance and, of course, cause a discussion of the need to strengthen the preventive system and preventive measures aimed at "protecting" teenagers and young people against the effects of the media space having content filled with extremist materials.

As a result of the analysis of media messages on the subject of extremism manifestation among adolescents (based on the material of online media texts) there were determined the substantial features and it was stated that episodic reports are mostly observed in the Russian information flow, while the messages are informative by nature. Moreover, news reports are accompanied by photo and video materials stating the situations of liquidation of extremist organizations, informal groups by law enforcement authorities, highlighting the essence and main directions of the extremist activities by the members of the groups, demonstrating the arsenal of weapons for achieving their goals, indicating the surnames of the main organizers and participants, as well as the names of extremist organizations. An abstract from the news report can be given as an example: "Late January evening, Krasnov and his associates sprayed tear-exciting gas into the faces of two passers-by and severely beat them. The leader filmed the massacre on the camera, then, he took a knife and hit one of the victims with it several times... In December, four Saratov residents (three of them adolescents), who do not hide their extremist views, united in Pravaya Gvardiya group, or Obyedineniye Slavyan Saratovskoy Oblasti (Association of Slavs in the Saratov Region). Two openly admitted themselves to be the supporters of the pro-Ukrainian neo-Nazi community M.K.U. ("Maniacs. The Cult of Assassins") (Marikyan, 2021).

In addition, one more feature can be distinguished. In media texts, the news content does not cover the information that would consider the problem of extremism among adolescents in the correlation of the destinies of people and families, someway or other, who are in the ranks of extremist associates. However, all reviewed media texts, without exception, fully perform an informational function, to some extent, stimulating a certain category of citizens to manifest special alertness, rethinking the value dominant, the importance of forming interethnic tolerance, and on the other hand, have a negative impact on the adolescent target audience, in a certain way, forming an interest in this activity.

At the same time, one-aspect nature of extremist content presentation, which is specific for a significant number of the considered media texts, can be designated as one more specific feature. Here we speak about the cases of extremism manifestation among adolescents through the prism of incident and its subjects, without affecting the object and other categories of information sources (parents, victims, etc.) in order to obtain complete information picture. In this context, we can say that the presented media content fully correlates with the RF legislation observance by the media in terms of countering extremism.

The news reports have references to government officials, such as, the Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the President of the Association of Foreign Students in Russia, etc. Namely, N. Patrushev, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, declared that "criminal statistics show that the number of adolescents, who have committed crimes in the total number of crime participants, remains quite high... The perception of such information from the Internet by immature individuals often leads to asocial behavior, the manifestation of aggression, immoral and rude behavior in public places. It is due to these reasons that, unfortunately, there are frequent cases of tragic events, including attacks by adolescents on their peers in educational institutions" (Sysoev, 2021).

Moreover, the President of the Association of Foreign Students in Russia, K.A. Gabrieel, wrote a letter to the Minister of Education, in which he accused the media of publishing provocative information and inciting nationalist sentiments. "There has never been racism in Russia... we hope that... measures... will be taken to resolve... the issue" (V Rossii..., 2021).

It was determined that news reports actively display the cited sources coming from the criminal justice system, using the statements of representatives of these structural units, law enforcement authorities, the FSB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, various Associations aimed at preventing extremism and terrorism, for example, the Association of Veterans of the Anti-Terrorism Group "Alpha".

A significant place in the news content of online media texts is occupied by the materials related to taking measures to reduce the growth of extremist manifestations in Russian society; in this segment, there is mainly thematic coverage of the content. As an example, let us take the following: "It is extremely important to strictly suppress the spread of extremist ideas among young people, to take preventive measures to protect them from destructive information and psychological influences, to form in the younger generation a rejection of various forms of antisocial behavior" (Sysoev, 2021).

In general, the author's position in online media texts: to make a product reflecting the extremism subject in modern Russian society in different configurations.

At the same time, we found that there is clearly open religious and ideological subtext in the news material. Since, we believe that, in general, the phenomenon of "extremism" has a religious and ideological construct by its exclusive nature.

Thus, the ideological matrix of the characters presented in the media texts is adolescents with deliberate inhuman expressions and extremist attitudes.

Among the characters/adolescents we can distinguish the following:

- leaders coordinating the actions of participants demonstrating the extremist manifestations;
 - energetic, mobile persons, actively committing systematic extremist actions;
- extroverts characters open to communication with the aim of involving "new" participants into the extremist groups and promoting extremist views.

The value dominants of the main characters – adolescents/young people – are lack of spirituality, aggressiveness, ferocity, merciless cruelty, while resilience, determination in achieving the set extremist goals.

The landscape of reasons for the implementing extremist actions is reduced to: social immaturity, lack of demand; desire to assert itself; underdevelopment of moral and resolute qualities; lack of positive ethno-cultural identity.

The genre color is very diverse: reportage, interview, note, chronicle message.

Methods of reality creation are shown in different versions of presenting the news message storyline, in particular, the characters are demonstrated during the operation of organization liquidation, interrogating the subjects of extremist actions.

Categories of the main characters – the initiators of extremist group/organization foundation are, as a rule, young people aged 30 and over, the participants in the implementation of targeted anti-social actions are adolescents and youth from 14 to 30 years old, who have extremist and terrorist attitudes.

There is practically no question of appearance, only in some news reports you can find some accents of clothing type, due to the presence of photo or video material. At the same time, the characteristics of appearance of the representatives of younger generation/characters can be represented in several aspects:

- 1. Visual signs of race. The characters are of European personality type. At the same time, they are characterized by the expression of negative personal characteristics.
- 2. Constitution and physical health of the characters. The characters are of different bodybuilt types, some of them are in good physical shape, while there are no obvious signs of physical disabilities.
- 3. Characters' clothing. Some dress not brightly, neatly, others in accordance with their own need for self-expression.

If we speak about the image of the characters, then in general it is characterized by liberation, openness, propaganda of extremist views, ideas on social networks, in society in the form of distribution of leaflets reflecting the prohibited content.

In addition, the news content very rarely puts emphasis on the marital status of the characters, but this aspect is presented in fragments, without much accentuation, and often, according to the reports, adolescents come from wealthy families.

The story content of the reality of adolescent/adult characters is expressed:

- in the transformation from a relatively calm, balanced person into a cruel, merciless one having in its arsenal sometimes terrible weapons for the implementation of his conceived extremist plans: an ax, a pistol, a knife, homemade explosives;

- characters who eliminate various expression of extremist actions.

At the same time, the problem is settled in two directions:

- firstly, the character, to some extent, implements the conceived plan, of course, this kind of event ends in a tragic way (bodily harm, murder, suicide);
- secondly, the elimination of prepared attacks by extremist motives, which resulted in modification in the context of committing violent crimes, propaganda of extremism, as well as the preparation of the bombing of administrative buildings of government bodies and armed attacks on citizens.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the result of revealing the structural and substantive foundations of the "teenage extremism" concept in the context of modern Russian mass media coverage in the transforming society allows us to make several conclusions:

1. Today, the problem of adolescent extremism is one of the most acute problems at the international level.

In this regard, recently the phenomenology of the "teenage extremism" concept is a discursive object in the scientific and research space. A significant increase in the level of attention towards the study of extremist counterculture reflection in the media continuum of Russian society in the context of transformational processes is noticeable.

- 2. Today there is no single definition of the phenomenon of "extremism". The tendency of active disputes regarding the disclosure of the essential features and signs of the concept of "extremism" remains, which is a confirmation of the complexity and versatility of this phenomenon.
- 3. Extremism and the content of modern media are interdependent phenomena that can function in the landscape of subject-object relations, which complicates the severity and depth of the problem under consideration in the context of the transforming processes of Russian society.
 - 4. Analyzing the content of online mass media, we found that:
- a tendency towards the growth of the "level of extremeness" of adolescents and young people behavior is observed all over the world;
- there is a significant shift in gender manifestations of extremist behavior, which consists in the fact that girls show an active position in maintaining the views and extreme behavior typical for the focus of extremism;
- there was a change not only in the dynamics of attacks, but also in the tactics of such actions;
 - the number of deaths as a result of nationalist-motivated violence increased;
- attempts of foreign non-governmental non-commercial organizations and international organizations to use youths to carry out extremist activities have intensified.
- 5. Substantive features have been determined as a result of online media texts analysis and it has been established that:
- episodic reports are mostly observed; news reports are accompanied by photo and video materials, the essence and main directions of the extremist activities are covered by the group members, an arsenal of weapons is demonstrated, main organizers and participants names, as well as the names of extremist organizations are indicated;
- -review of cases of extremism among adolescents does not affect the object of extremist actions and other categories of information sources (parents, victims, etc.);
- mass media texts perform an informational function, on the one hand, to some extent, stimulating a certain category of citizens to show special alertness, and on the other hand, having a negative impact on the adolescent target audience, in a certain way, forming an interest to this activity.
- 6. The author's position in media texts consists in creation of a product, reflecting the subject of extremism in modern Russian society in different configurations. At the same time, there is clearly open religious and ideological implication in the news material.

Worldview matrix of characters presented in the media texts – adolescents with intended inhuman manifestations and extremist attitudes.

- 7. The problem is settled in two directions:
- firstly, the character, to some extent, implements the conceived plan, of course, this kind of event ends in a tragic way (bodily harm, murder, suicide);

- secondly, the elimination of prepared attacks by extremist motives, which resulted in modification in the context of committing violent crimes, propaganda of extremism, as well as the preparation of the bombing of administrative buildings of government bodies and armed attacks on citizens.
- 8. A significant role is assigned to the integration of media educational potential aimed at reducing the level of risks in the mass media associated with the broadcast of extremist manifestations to society among the adolescents. The need for the development of analytical skills, independent, critical thinking among the teenage audience in understanding media texts that include extremist materials is indisputable. We are convinced that the development of media competence of the younger generation is able to solve important problems not only of educational and upbringing nature, but also of media proficiency.

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