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The features of perception of a person from a photo in the Internet (on the material of the terrorist and anti-terrorist orientation sites)

This article is devoted to a problem of perception of a person from a photo on the material of the sites focused on youth audience. A substantial aspect of contents was chosen as a certain information modality – the directed translation of information connected with the terrorist or anti-terrorist information propaganda.

Keywords: *information society, the Internet resources, directed and mediated technologies, value-sense attitudes.*

In the modern information society the mass media as an important component of a civil society formation play a special role.

The mass media provide communication in society scales, representing itself as a main link between the environment and the person. The subject receives the main stream of facts about the external world through the mass media which not only report what occurs around, but also extend models, public norms serving as a sample at formation of the human relations, values and interests defining an image of the individual way of life in whole. Thanks to it the mass media turn into the most powerful factor of influence on a world picture of both a certain person and public groups.

The phenomenon of the mass media became an object of the fixed research of both Russian and foreign psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, linguists from the fifties of the XIX century, and it was studied within the social learning theory (A. Bandura, J. Rotter, W. Mishel), cultivation theories (G. Gerbner), socialization theories (I. Meirovits, N. Postman, M. Rosenberg), theories of use and satisfaction (J. Blumer, E. Katz, F. Palmgren, K. Rozengren), theories of the agenda imposing (D. Show, M. Mac-Coms), cognitive theory of the mass media.

Despite the distinction of approaches to studying of the mass media, all researchers meet in one: the mass media have a huge psychological effect on audience in the sphere of activity itself in its real implementation and in the personal value–sense sphere, transforming its motives, needs, attitudes, value orientations and forming stereotypes. This process concerning youth as a group subject to the greatest influence owing to a lack of formation of the mechanisms of counteraction to information influence of the mass media appears the strongest and, thus, the mass media practically construct an image of the world of young generation.

The mass media play an important role in creation of a subjective picture of world around of modern youth, in particular social reality in various aspects, i.e. participate in the outlook formation in whole. Studying of an image of various social groups of youth and a degree of influence of the mass media on this image seems an interesting, but insufficiently studied subject.

As A.V. Kostina writes, C. Handy distinguishes three psychological types of the person, guided by the strategies of "survival", "achievement" and "self-expression".

1. The "survival" strategy. They are impelled by search of livelihood; their main objective is financial and social safety; they are inclined to a clan structure, hold that they have strongly; they are archaic and stand pat. They are "a residual product of an agricultural era philosophy, the top, the middle and the basis of a feudal pyramid".

2. The "achievement" strategy. They are dominating in the industrial society, focused on the external world and external symbols of success, clever and educated; they are materialists being a driving force of economically successful societies.

3. The "self-expression" strategy. They are focused on the inner world, aspire to manifestation of own talents and belief, and their system of values includes self-realization, personality development, quality of life. Orientation to internal factors of development of personality doesn't mean a low level of social interaction. On the contrary, these are the people who become a social base of the information society which is characterizing, first of all, by a considerable social unity and a high degree of trust [5].

Further the information society researchers approach to one more important question – features of information perception in the constantly changing information space. A. Toffler notes that in the society of the Third wave the images and associations creating "the mental model of reality", fastening our picture of the world and placing us in space and time and defining "our place in the structure of personal interrelations" are formed by means of information transformation. While in the traditional society, society of "the first wave", there were few messages saturated with information, as well as the images which were really attractive, "the second wave" offered new means of socialization to a society – the mass media, which energy "flew by regional, ethnic, breeding channels, standardizing the images occurring in a society" [8, p. 265]. Some of them have been stereotyped, were transformed into iconic images, and the choice and manipulation with these images catalogued in a "card index" have become the person's task. In spite of the fact that there were quite a lot of these images, and they were very various, their quantity correlated with human abilities of perception, and these "centrally developed images, injected into the mass consciousness by means of the mass media, promoted standardization of the necessary behavior for industrial system". The third "wave" not simply accelerates innovations, it transforms the deep structure of information, and the person loses the ability to update this "image database" according to the time [8].

As A.V. Kostina specifies, this new type of culture, which A. Toffler designates as a clip culture, is based on information "clips": advertisements, teams, scraps of news which are unclassifiable, "partly because they don't keep within old categories, partly because they have a strange, fluid, incoherent form" [8, p. 265]. Thus information users have no possibility to borrow the prepared model of reality, but should construct it

by themselves. Such a way of information consumption forms such unique forms of its perception as "zapping", when by unceasing switching of TV channels it is created a new image consisting of scraps of information and fragments of impressions. This image doesn't demand involvement of imagination, reflection, comprehension; here all the time there occurs "reloading", "updating" of information when everything origi-nally seen loses its value, becomes outdated practically without a time lag. A. Toffler considers the clip culture as a constituent part of information culture; the belonging to it designates the increasing gap between the media users of the Second and the Third waves.

"Past experience can less often serve as a reliable compass in the quickly changing world; more quick learning of the new, great I-reactivity, mobility, ability to act by trial and error are necessary" [4, p. 98].

For successful social and information adaptation in the qualitatively changed con-ditions the subject of the new culture has to update own "database" constantly. In such conditions, according to A. Toffler's remark, a transition to the identity of a new type becomes a reality; it is inevitable in a modern situation. This identity is informa-tion adapted; its main characteristics are natural inclusion in information processes, ability to adequate perception of received information and aiming for its effective use in own activity.

The special section of the problem of the mass media influence on formation of value orientations is connected with the Internet. The Internet modifies (and some-times even essentially deforms) traditional forms of people's interaction and knowl-edge of each other. "Increases in volume of available information and acceleration in the rates of life define current tendencies of ephemerization of relations" (A. Tof-fler, 2008). As a result the importance of signs demanding a long period of time for studying decreases, and the importance of evident signs, first of all, all characteristics of a physical appearance which is positioned as the embodiment and carrier of any idea on a site is intensified. "These signs allow to estimate the stranger's personality" (A.A. Meleshnikov, 2010) and as a result, can appreciably influence, and sometimes they become the defining in the course of formation of certain personal appraisals and value orientations. From here there is a problem of research of influence of cer-tain information with using of images of appearance of people as certain carriers of ideology. What is a transformation of the personal appraisals, connected with certain value-sense attitudes of an extremist character, on the basis of the mediated percep-tion of the physical look (after all it concerns photos)?

In the native psychology traditionally it is considered that the perception of indi-vidual and psychological features is closely connected with a phenomenon of physi-cal appeal (A.A. Bodalev, L.Y. Gozman, S.I. Erina, V.A. Labunskaya. V.N. Panferova). The external physical appeal is the most important factor of formation of both emotional relations and value-sense appraisals. "Due to the deep penetration of the global net-work into all spheres of interpersonal interaction, availability and popularity of the digital photo, the role of perception of the person from a photo increases" (A.A. Me-

leshnikov, 2010). Hundreds of thousands of sites, resources of social networks, blogs and even business Internet resources worldwide use photos of people for the most different purposes: economic (sites on sales of something), utilitarian (acquaintances) etc. However the special type of presentation through the photo is characteristic for contents with ideological background. There are certain technologies of the directed and mediated influence on values of youth audience which in the open or hidden position call for the opposition to public and state values.

In recent years, in the society there was an obvious need for formation of a frame of orientation and idea directed on a change of people's legal consciousness, rejection of the thought on a possibility of violence for achievement of political and any other goals. Along with public authorities as a main part of such a system there are institutes of a civil society, educational institutions of different levels, mass media, representatives of science, culture, clergy and business.

The counteraction to the ideology of terrorism includes a complex of organizational, sociopolitical, information and propaganda measures for prevention of distribution of views, ideas, moods, motives, attitudes directed on a basic change of existing social and political institutes of the state. Information and propaganda measures can be considered as a measure for opening of an essence and explanation of the danger of terrorism and the influence rendering on citizens (groups of citizens, especially youth) for the purpose of education of their rejection of the ideology of violence and their involvement in the participation in counteraction to terrorism. And certainly the Intern appears that epicenter where ideological opposition can reach its extreme forms.

In the conducted study of revealing of personal features of perception of photos presented in the Internet on sites opposite according to contents: focused on ideological counteraction to the ideology of terrorism and, on the contrary, containing information popularizing (or justifying) the ideology of terrorism and extremism. In the research there were some stages. On the first of them we created 3 age groups (317 people at the age from 21 to 63 years took part in this diagnostics; all people had higher education or undergraduate education; in the analysis of the questionnaires the respondents who asserted that didn't listen to the news and weren't interested in ideology in any form were leaved out of account) which were offered to fill the questionnaire of 12 questions which can be grouped as the following subject blocks.

The first block consists of the questions connected with revealing of the main sources of information acquisition. The group "63-45" answered as follows: 62 % – TV is a source of information, 17 % – newspapers, 11 % – radio (generally "Ekho Moskvi" and news which is listened by the respondents being in a transport), 6 % – the Internet, 4 % – stories of acquaintances or colleagues; the group "44-30" showed an essentially other picture: 52 % – TV, 30 % – the Internet, 13 % – radio in the car, 5 % – the press; answers of the respondents of the third group "29-21" are even more different: 78 % considers the Internet as the main source of news information, 14 % – radio in the car, 5 % – TV (generally morning information programs and the concluding programs

of a week), and only 3 % of the respondents of this group prefers to receive the last information through the print media (newspapers, magazines). The results received by means of the questionnaire , show that the youth sample considers the Internet resources as the main source of information, actively uses its various resources and perceives them not as the "clip" phenomenon and as the high-grade content which operatively issues information necessary for appraisal of what really occurs in public, political and economic life. The senior group considers that information presented in the Internet needs to be compared to the data from TV, radio and newspapers (only then it is possible to understand truth and to distinguish it from lie). The youth group doesn't use such a method. The overwhelming majority of them consider information presented in the Internet as reliable (or in any case deserving greater trust than that from TV). From the character of their answers it is possible to assume, that the Internet (both by the volume and influence type) influences on knowledge and attitudes of this sample of respondents.

The second block of questions was more specifically connected with the subject of the present research. There were questions concerning where exactly the respondents acquire information on the activity of terrorist organizations and details of the acts of violence connected with terrorism, whether they often face information of an informal sense, which contains (may be in a latent form) the propaganda or popularization of the ideas connected with the ideology of terrorism. The senior and average group of the respondents in the majority (more than 80 %) receive information connected with information on terrorist manifestations and their appraisal from official sources (TV, radio, newspapers). The representatives of older generation if they received information of this modality through the Internet, more often these were the sites of the most popular newspapers and magazines ("Novaya Gazeta", "Moskovsky Komsomolets", "Kommersant"). They appraise these sites as convenient and well grouped, thus they found difficulty in naming of the specialized sites connected with the propaganda or counteraction to the terrorist ideology.

The third block of questions is connected with revealing of a level of knowledge concerning concrete sites. The youth sample showed much more erudition in questions of the acquaintance with the sites focused on counteraction to the ideology of terrorism. Their answers show that the Network situation on advancement of the violence ideology (of terrorist, extremist, nationalist, and other orientations) has a persistent, aggressive character; it differs by a good theoretical base, considered range of methods of controllable information and psychological influence on users and the immunity of resources. According to the respondents of this sample, the greatest danger for the Russian society consists in the Russian-language Internet resources involving youth in the extremist and terrorist activity, including popularizing an image of a "terrorist-hero". The aiming of such resources is directed first of all on youth of those republics in which Islam is a traditional religion, and also regions with compact residence of the Muslim population (almost all sites which were named in the answers were focused on propaganda of ideas not only terrorist, but also supported

by theoretical ideas from the fundamentalist Islamic theories). They gave a high appraisal of the portal "Science and Education Against Terror» (http://www.scienceport. ru/) intended for the most prepared audience of users in the Internet and meant for participation in its work of the faculties of the institutes of higher education of Russia and the near abroad, young teachers, students of postgraduate courses, advanced students of the humanities and technical high education institutions, academic circles of Russia and the near abroad, who are interested in the problems of society development on the way of rejection of the ideology of terrorism, extremism, national and religious chauvinism, respect for the ideology of various religious confessions on the basis of the ideas of civil identity (we all are the citizens of the Russian state) and preservation of cultural wealth, intellectuals and the experts of the sociological sphere who are interested in the relation of these social national groups to the above-listed problems. The blogs «http://truenet.livejournal.com/» and «http://scienceport.ru/ blog» are meant for discussion of the problems of terrorism, extremism, national and religious chauvinism, distribution of child pornography, struggle against drug and alcoholic addiction and drug-distribution in on-line mode and a participant of our inquiry sometimes participates in discussions on questions connected with formation of antiterrorist values in the youth environment.

The fourth block of questions was connected with how they perceive the photos which are used in the Network for propaganda or counter-propaganda of the terrorist ideology. In this part of the inquiry the greatest awareness was shown by the youth sample. The majority of them consider that it is an absolutely correct method; if there is a specific visual line or concrete photos, the subjective image of information perception appears quicker and the appraisal opinion is better formed. (An example of answers: if I see the photo of the person who is charged with violence, it can interest me; I start to examine the photo and probably once again I will address to the more detailed reading of the text presented on a site). The traditional psychological stereotype that "a key component in the structure of a subjective image of personality, which is forming at perception of a photo, is a complex of the features reflecting the content of a stereotype of physical appeal" (A.A. Meleshnikov, 2010) in this case doesn't work. On a question, "What exactly have attracted you in the photos of people on these sites?" there were given answers with a positive tendency of appraisal (charismatic face; determined look; beautiful girl etc.), and also the answers where the effect of alternative positioning (such a puny creature, but have made such a thing; such a petty person; they make an impression of badly developed people etc.) was emphasized. However, the character of answers gives the opportunity to draw quite an important conclusion: the perception of the stranger's personality from a photo, by consideration of contents of the sites focused on propaganda or counter-propaganda of the ideology of terrorism, provides enough social and psychological information for a certain appraisal which influences the attitude of value-sense perception of presented information in whole. Visible morphological characters determine attributing of personal features and appeal appraisal, and personal attribution (endowing the person from

the photo with individual and psychological features which is characteristic neither for him/her, nor for the observer as a subject of estimation) together with physical appeal or unattractiveness determine further tendencies in the appraisal and semantic choice. The great role in the specifics of appraisal is played by the sex of the one who is on photos and the sex of the one who perceives. The photos of young soldiers who were participants of anti-terrorist actions and appraised by girls were most positively perceived. Girls don't appraise men (judging by the answers of our inquiry) who take part in terrorist actions as attractive; on the contrary young men in a number of answers showed a sympathy to those girls or women who were represented on sites connected with a terrorist subject (she has sad eyes; what can get such a young being to perform such an awful act; she was certainly forced etc.).

The findings show that the use of video images is an important component in the course of formation of anti-terrorist values which are priorities for our society today. If we can correctly use this psychological resource of convincing influence, the directed and mediated influence of the contents, directed on formation of antiterrorist values at a level of a subject acceptance of the Internet users, will be considerably more productive.

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