Psychological aspects of the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people

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Abstract. In the introduction to the article, the authors justify the relevance of the anti-terrorist consciousness development among the young people in modern realities, formulate the purpose and hypothesis of the research and identify key problems. The research methodology is based on the totality and interrelation of theoretical, empirical and methodological levels of cognition. The discourse, the results of the research are presented in the form of theoretical and empirical data by addressing the problems identified in the article. The key substantive unit of the discussion is the development of recommendations for the anti-terrorist consciousness development among the younger generation. The latter should be based on the factors influencing psychological personality traits, specific features of the socially significant values and behaviors models, the creation of socially valuable reference groups, reference orientations, the involvement of polymorphic socially approved reference personalities in the young people consciousness development and interacting with families. In conclusion, the authors summarize the results of the research.

Keywords: consciousness, values, orientations, reference groups.

1 Introduction

The active spread of extremist philosophy among young people is of serious concern. The ideologists of terrorism seek to attract as many members to their organizations as possible by manipulating the minds of young people. Examination of instruments for influencing the younger generation consciousness through studying the psychological characteristics of the terrorists' personality will be essential in the development of the young people anti-terrorist consciousness.

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The human consciousness study is always fraught with serious difficulties that stand in the way of the researcher, since human consciousness is not a material object, but a mental process of a cognitive nature that forms the image of the "Ego" in the human psyche [1]. Therefore, the building of anti-terrorist consciousness is possible by identifying the psychological aspects of a terrorist's personality development.

The purpose of the research is to identify the psychological aspects of the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people.

Research hypothesis: the identification of psychological aspects will enable to work out recommendations for the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people.

Key research problems: the influence of socio-psychological personality traits on consciousness; identification of personality traits peculiar to terrorists; identification of the regulating specifics of values and behaviors within terrorist groups; the influence of reference groups, reference orientations and reference personalities on the young people consciousness development; the family as the primary reference group for the young people anti-terrorist consciousness development.

2 Materials and methods

The research methodology is based on a combination of three interrelated levels of cognition: theoretical, empirical and methodological [2]. A set of theoretical methods was applied to the research: theoretical analysis and synthesis, abstraction and concretization, analogy, modeling. The analysis decomposes the terrorist's personality into its component parts, while highlighting the psychological characteristics that are units of the complex personality structure. Under the synthesis, the terrorist personality appears as a system of relationships. Abstraction has focused attention on the psychological characteristics of the terrorists' personality and isolated itself from the personality typologies proposed in the scientific literature. The concretization aims at highlighting the psychological features that construct the personality of a terrorist. The analogy method has applied to compare subjective and group factors in identifying the dominant influence factor on the formation of key asocial destructs in antisocial behavior of people who committed terrorist acts.

The following empirical methods were used in the research: the study of literature, documents and the results of terrorist activities, the method of expert estimation. To formulate the findings from the research, such methods as generalization, considered by the authors in the context of studying the existing scientific works on the terrorists personality, and systematization – the mental activity of a person, implying the organization of the studied objects and processes into a very specific system built on the chosen basis were employed [3].

This methodology helped the authors to simulate the psychological characteristics of a terrorist's personality, to reveal the trends and driving forces of the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people, to draw conclusions that allow formulating practical recommendations.

3 Results

The specificity of human consciousness, according to R.K. Merton, is reflected in social attitudes, stereotypes, and a system of values [4]. According to C.H. Cooley, social attitudes, as well as stereotypes of thinking and value orientations, are formed in the primary group (C.H. Cooley, 1909) [5]. By means of the "looking glass self" concept, Cooley explains the process of a person self-identification through the perception of the subject by other people. Making a projection of this statement on the psyche of terrorists, the authors of this article

believe that these subjects have a personality disintegration that manifests itself in over-concentration on protecting their "Ego", an aggressive readiness for self-defense. In the subjective perception of the "Ego" through the opinion of other people, low self–esteem is formed, a person's tendency to project his own failures on society, and, as a result, social isolation and alienation, a sense of rejection by other people. By committing an act of violence against another person, the terrorist feels the power over someone else's life; he feels like the master of someone else's fate, so from a psychological point of view, there appears an overcompensation of that very low self-esteem.

T.S. Shmelkova studied the specifics of anti-terrorist attitudes development among young people, based on socio-psychological characteristics [6].

Olshansky D. V. defined "personality qualities that are characteristic to terrorists as dedication to their work and their organization; readiness for self-sacrifice; restraint and discipline"; "secrecy"; obedience; collectivism" [7]. However, modern management psychology points out that employees of modern organizations should be trained in such soft skills as endurance and discipline [8]. At the same time, dedication to the company, readiness for self–sacrifice, "secrecy", obedience, collectivism are typical requirements of large corporations to their subordinates. The management system, especially with rigid structures, contributes to the formation of such staff qualities in organizations. Which implies that the highlighted psychological traits are not only in demand by modern realities, but are also cultivated by corporate cultures. However, it should be noted that Olshansky D.V. emphasizes complete self-sacrifice, complete subordination of a personality to a common cause. In a terrorist organization, the rejection of individuality in the name of a goal is raised into a cult and the cult is imprinted in the consciousness of the individual through his strong need for group identification. Therefore, the integrity of the terrorist's personality is destroyed and then adjusted for the missions of a terrorist organization.

A terrorist group is a reference group for a participant. Examining the norms of reference groups, we believe in Newcomb's approach, which divided the groups into positive reference and negative reference. [9] Positive reference groups are the basis for self-identification, while the negative type implies not only the rejection of the values declared by the group, but also the formulation of counter-norms. From the perspective of people committing the terrorist acts, their group is a positive reference, from the perspective of the public it is a negative one. We should consider this fact when forming the anti-terrorist consciousness among young people.

To understand the specific ways of regulating values and behaviors within terrorist groups, the control systems adopted there are of great importance. The psychology of control in these groups is based on clearly formulated rules elevated to the level of laws, as well as cruelty towards the members of the group. Specially trained agents who are professionally proficient in manipulative psychotechnics imprint these norms into the minds of the participants. In parallel, behavioral models are secured by the corresponding reactions of the other group members. These factors determine the level of the group stability that means the group ability to withstand external influences and maintain its structure.

In addition to the reference groups, the reference personality has an influence on a person's consciousness. The authority of the reference personality determines the attitude of the followers to implementation of the leader's orders without appeal. Therefore, along with the cult of values in terrorist groups, there is also a cult of the leader. The main primary reference group that forms a person's consciousness is the family and those are the family attitudes that the subject accepts on an unconscious level. For the rest of a person's life, attitudes are triggered in the form of a conditioned reflex. The lack of parental care, warmth and respect for the child's personality results in a person's psychological inferiority that leads to hypercompensation of this deficiency as the individual grows up. Therefore, terror becomes a compensatory tool for getting rid of previously inflicted damage. For example,

the more parents demanded complying with any strict behavior standards of their children, the more subjects who joined the terrorists groups demanded complying with such requirements of society.

P.M. Blau put forward the hypothesis of reference orientations, which consists in the socio-political, psychological reorientation of a higher social class to a lower one [10]. In this case, we can observe the perversion of reference coordinates, when a child from a "good family" joins terrorist groups. There may be a shift towards the perceived by an individual power of terrorist groups as a quality of a group to impose its decisions on both its members and the social environment.

4 Discussion

With regard to discourse, the authors of the article put forward two questions: the primacy and dominance of subjective or group factors in the formation of the terrorist psyche; methods and forms of the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people.

Summarizing the data given in the "Results" section, we have formulated a definition of the terrorist identity. This definition looks like this: a terrorist is a borderline, accentuated personality, with a low significance of social norms, possessing a number of psychological characteristics, such as low self-esteem, psychological inferiority, a high level of aggression towards the outside world, a tendency to cruelty, readiness for self-sacrifice, obedience, emotional lability, self-interest. These psychological characteristics determine the social attitudes of the subject, his thinking stereotypes and orientation to terrorist activities. To prevent the formation and development of such a personality, a special and prompt psychological impact is required.

On the first question: the subjective and the group must be considered comprehensively, because any personality develops both independently and under the influence of a group. Consequently, recommendations on the anti-terrorist consciousness building must be developed comprehensively: on the basis of personal and group. This approach is most vividly illustrated by the example of lone terrorists claiming the status of reference personalities. The mental adequacy of such people is questioned, because a terrorist action carried out alone is obviously doomed to failure. A reasonable person understands that at present, a competent state system has been built to respond to the illegal behavior of individuals and any attempts to resist the system alone are perceived not as an instrument of killing another person, but rather as a suicide. However, the recognition of a terrorist as a person with psychopathological abnormalities, in fact, will not change anything from the point of view of social effectiveness and it would be socially unconstructive and unproductive to recognize terrorists as insane in advance, because this recognition will reduce the importance of preventive actions on the part of society and the state system.

Following the Newcomb's approach to the classification of reference groups [9], we emphasize that positive reference groups should be associated with a positive social orientation and significance. At the same time, terrorist groups should represent an image of a negative reference type among young people. Such situation will form a model not only of the terrorist values rejection in the consciousness of young people, but also the positioning of counter-norms in relation to such groups. That is, private attitudes, values and knowledge of people should be in opposition because of their broadcasting by a negative reference group. Thus, by forming an image of terrorist movements in people's consciousness (with the help of socio-psychological tools) as negative reference groups we can influence the perception of their dysfunctionality, and, accordingly, the denial of such behaviors by the majority of the population.

The group stability largely depends on external pressure: the higher the environmental pressure, the more unstable the group. Consequently, the impact, which is focused and

organized, can shake the psychological component of the terrorist group stability, hence, it is so important to use various environmental tools for pressure, including psychological interventions in mass consciousness. Such impact effectiveness will depend on the criminal group adaptability to internal and external stresses, and this factor is of least concern to terrorists, because it is not their key task, but it is inferior in importance to direct terrorist targets.

Regarding the leaders of terrorist groups and the perception of them as reference personalities, it makes sense to take into account that these subjects for the most part are significant only in terrorist activities. This fact substantially reduces the possibility of their broad public influence. In contrast, society is able to counter leaders of terrorist groups with polymorphic leaders who declare universal social values, and the latter will have the most significant impact on the consciousness of young people. Moreover, the higher the social status and authority of a person, the wider the range of his influence on others. The involvement of youth movements leaders and public figures that are popular among youth in anti-terrorist activities will help develop a socially oriented consciousness among young people through social networking.

Shmelkova T.S. developed a method of direct impact on the formation of young people attitudes through special methods of influencing the cognitive, emotional and behavioral component of personality [6]. We suggest using the introspection method with regard to the specific challenges of working with human consciousness. The specialist can predict and correct the elements of human consciousness using self-reports of the subjects about their experiences [11]. Such linguistic methods as "the semantic differential method, the incomplete sentences method, the associative experiment method" can be effective for indirect study of consciousness as well [12].

Work on the anti-terrorist consciousness development and anti-terrorist education should become the norm when shaping behaviors of young people not only in educational organizations, but also in organizations of various forms of ownership. The building of anti-terrorist consciousness should become an important part of the technologies for the implementation of corporate social responsibility [13].

The key reference group is the family. Behavioral patterns, relationships between parents, attitudes towards oneself, the outside world and other people are shaped in the family, and are carried into adult life as unconscious images from childhood. Working with the family is a key substantive unit of the anti-terrorist consciousness development [14]. It is necessary to control and prevent family violence at the state level. Early professional orientation of children from disadvantaged families should take place to facilitate their early mastery of working professions [15].

5 Conclusion

The hypothesis put forward by the authors has completely proved to be true. Psychological aspects resulted in recommendations on the anti-terrorist consciousness development among young people are identified. Psychological traits of the terrorist's personality are revealed. To generate the anti-terrorist consciousness among young people, a special and prompt impact changing individual's psychological characteristics is necessary. At the same time, it is essential to consider comprehensively the aspects of the subjective and group in the individual's consciousness. While creating the attitudes in the youth environment through the impact on the cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of the personality, introspection methods are actively used.

It is necessary to build the perception of terrorist movements as negative reference groups, emphasizing their dysfunctionality, thereby destroying the reference orientations on terrorism. The disorganization of a terrorist group structure will enable to unbalance its

internal stability. Involvement polymorphic leaders of youth movements, public figures popular among young people into anti-terrorist activities will assist in developing a socially-oriented consciousness among young people, at the same time social networks can be very helpful in this process.

The key reference group, where reference orientations are formed, is the family. A dysfunctional family is a risk zone for the development of a deviant personality, which is the terrorist. Diagnostics of deviant families and deviant behavior at the early stages of human development will enable to build a system of early psychological correction.

Work on the anti-terrorist consciousness development and anti-terrorist education should not end with a person's maturity, but should become part of the corporate culture and the culture of society as a whole.

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