

## **‘Misanthropic Division’ Phenomenon as a Member of Virtual Resources of the Internet-Space**

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**Abstract:** The ultra-right network ideology under the common name ‘Misanthropic Division’ (which means ‘man-hateful’ division; hereinafter referred to as ‘MD’) was worked out in the social networks of Runet. Involvement in the MD ideology proceeds through accentuation and enhancement by this movement of the common and social misanthropy, the opportunity for a young man to throw down a challenge to the ‘unfair world’ in the proposed demonstrative forms. All stages of involvement are accompanied by the visual symbols means to psych a person maintaining and increasing his interest in the ideology of the movement. The distinctive marker of a beginning common and social misanthrope is the sign with the crossed human silhouette or on which one man gets rid of another one by ‘throwing’ him into a trash can. It is common to many misanthropic groups and tends to the wide use in social networks.

**Key words:** Misanthropic division, misanthrope, virtual conflict, virtual space, extremism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The MD phenomenon in the virtual reality consists in the attempt to unite various destructive and extremist movements enjoying followers in Russian internet space. These are different Neo-Nazi groups and related youth subcultures confessing paganism cults, hard rock music fans, football fans, etc. Despite the substantial disperse of interests and concepts, all these groups have one uniting factor non-acceptance of common norms and standards established in the society and the state.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The virtual reality in which MD is to be found can be described as the set of consequent objects with respect to the actual, material reality giving birth to them. Ontologically, these objects are equal to reality and autonomous (Khoruzhiy, 1997). In sociology and philosophy, the term ‘virtualistics’ is used as the trend investigating convergence of the real and (Solopov, 2000) Psychology considers the virtual reality through the lens of the inner world of an individual, his fantasy reality and in this case, the conflicts of reality considered by us gain the image of the intrapersonal problem of a person, his conflict with the own selfness (Nosov, 2000). Within the context of our study virtual reality is made equivalent to the cyberspace of the internet network and virtual conflicts are the processes taking place during interaction with this virtual platform.

The problem of the virtualized individual and the society became actual since the middle of the 20th century as the result of rapid development of cyber-technologies. The sociologist M. Castells introduced the theory of the network community according to which ‘not individuals but the business, financial, information networks created due to the innovation information technologies in the virtual space actually shape the future of the modern world’ (Eidman, 2007).

In terms of communication processes one may distinguish the advantages of virtual communication over the real one (Afanasyeva, 2010). Firstly, a user can appear not a passive recipient only but as an idea machine, control processes evolving in the virtual reality. Secondly, cancellation of the social, material, age, national and other markers takes place. Internet allows appearing at this communication platform in unrestricted number of roles. Thirdly, quick data transmission without spatial-temporal restrictions became possible. Fourthly, the virtual world can guarantee an individual identity anonymity and physical security that are not always possible or even absolutely impossible in case of real communication. Fifthly, a dialogue within the virtual space does not require significant ‘energy-consuming’ expenditures a person does not need to apply efforts for real meetings, does not need to get prepared, think about how the others estimate the person.

The MD phenomenon beyond the internet space and within virtual is based on rather controversial grounds due to its a social orientation. It seems to be topical to

consider it as the 'conflict within the internet space mediated through multimedia devices' (Kucherenko, 2013). Internet-conflicts involving MD distinguish through a number of features differing from the conflicts in the real life.

The key feature of the conflicts involving MD is the platform for escalation thereof, the virtual reality that is understood as the internet space within the context of this study. This space is quite vast and is able to gather a lot of parties to the conflict 'right here and right now' mobilizing their efforts promptly and increasing the number. Such phenomena in a real conflict are nearly impossible or problematic.

A virtual internet conflict is only possible upon the presence of the direct participants that may perform different roles during the conflict process. Firstly, there shall be the opponents entering into a conflict these may be both separate individuals and whole groups and communities. Secondly, a virtual dispute is possible under conditions of the passive observation by viewers. In case, if the opponents enter into a conflict before a great number of observers it shall be assumed that these opponents do it intentionally seeking to find support or demonstrate their strength and dignity. In the conditions of the advanced technologies viewers may support one of the conflict participants strengthening his self-righteousness or provide a negative evaluation, thereby instigating new conflicts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

By its ideological principles the Misanthropic Divisions is related to the national-socialistic associations asserting the ideas of supremacy of one race, nation or ethnic group over another one, calling for the open confrontation with the 'aliens' and recruiting the new members also by means of the social networks. Such movements often speak out against the legitimate power and substantiate the plans of overthrowing of the government and establishment of the new statehood.

The MD members define themselves as a 'paramilitary group of the white racials and national-socialists originating from the Euromaidan-union with the passionate world perception' (Anonymous, 2014).

One of the efficient mechanisms of psychological effect on young people is exploiting the issue of the social and physical vulnerability. As the solutions proposed to the youth the MD ideology formulates the following simple rules that are widely popularized among anyone who wants to:

- Wherever you are always have a weapon on
- Hide own faces
- To keep and act in a group only

The weapon cult being formed is the fundamental concept to the followers of the MD ideology. According to the estimates by the researchers of the study, today the MD counts in 'Vkontakte' about 16000 active participants and there are about 40 MD communities to be found.

The historical experience of the fascism dissemination during the 30-40's of the 20th century shows the high level of aggression and intolerance of the national-socialistic views. In the modern world, the concepts of neo-fascism, prevalence of some nations and races over the others become especially, topical and popular during the period of political transformations induced by the by violent and revolutionary methods.

In the main group of MD, the charter of the organization is presented that holds itself out as the 'special National-Socialistic Brotherhood of Europeans and Europe-oriented people living according to the laws of nature and criticizing the modern political and corrupted system with its propaganda of multicultural society this is not a gang or a terroristic organization (Anonymous, 2015a).

The main objective of the organization is based on the Nietzsche's ideals relating to becoming an overhuman (Übermensch). The religious component is based on the concepts of paganism and rejects all modern confessions.

One of the main MD principles is the autonomy and equality of all its members, commitment to the MD views, seeking popularization, thereof as well as the ideals of brotherhood and readiness to provide assistance to members under investigation or committed to prison.

The most relevant to the MD movement is statement of supremacy of the white race that includes the Slavic and European nations being the brotherly nations that should unite for the purposes of fighting against the alien representatives of the other nations and races, for example, the Jewish people, Afro-Americans, etc. (Anonymous, 2015b).

The important principle is the Anti-Russian propaganda expressed in numerous publications on the issues of the Russian society in particular, poverty, corruption, alcoholism, abuse of power by officials. The foreign policy of Russia in respect of Ukraine is subjected to detailed analysis.

The analysis of MD groups in 'Vkontakte' showed the high level of conflictogenity of external and internal nature. Aggression against the common enemy is aimed not only towards the government institutions of the Russian Federation acting, according to the movement, against the human freedoms and fighting against dissidence of citizens but also against any individual who does not share the opinion of the white supremacy. The

internal segregation of the team within different misanthropic groups is mostly expressed in disapproval of activity of some or other community members that failed to remain devoted to the MD views. Along with that, one shall emphasize the high level of the members' solidarity on the basis of the well-organized work aimed at development of the information content of the MD groups expressed in the presence of the common heroes as separate individuals as well as the single military unit 'Azov' and the commonly accepted principles of unity and brotherhood of the community members.

The attractiveness of the organization to the youth consists in the possible proximity of the views consisting in the principles of the equality, love and brotherhood among the white nations, striving for discovering another experience including the illegal one and identifying oneself as a specific social group. In the social networks, a particular fashion is taking on among the minors for the attractiveness of the MD views.

In the social network 'Vkontakte', a huge unit of information materials was found that called the youth to always have cold or any other weapon on.

The principle of anonymity of members and those feeling sympathetic to MD is implemented by means of developing the mechanisms of conspiracy for communication of members between each other or demonstration of the theatrical forms of anonymity for the purpose of formation of the primary interest in teenagers. In the internet-space publishing of the own pictures on which the face is replaced through a skull with bones using the graphic editor. One of the markers by which a MD follower may be identified in the internet.

The group form of the demonstrative collective anonymity also enjoys popularity. In this case, the determining indicator is belonging of a person to one of the youth subcultures (pagans, football fans, neo-Nazi organizations, etc.).

It is suggested that, through tending to weapon, commitment to alternative music, paganism or football fan clubs a teenager accepting the MD ideology will gradually approach the Neo-Nazism. It shall be emphasized that, the MD ideology has a strong influence primarily on the audience of teenagers of 12-14 that join the ranks of the radicals as they grow up.

It shall be noted that, the developers of the MD ideology intentionally use the symbolics of different counter cultures for involvement of their members in the own movement. One of the most popular and promoted visual symbols of MD is the so-called sign of the 'black sun' also used by the Neo-Nazis and Satanists. The Neo-Nazi interpretation of this symbol dates back to the history of the third Reich where the term of the "black

sun' as such had a Pan-Germanic meaning. There was a belief that the light of the 'black sun' contributing specific features to the Nordic race.

Today, the 'black sun' is used as emblem in numerous Neo-Nazi groups involved in the occultism. This symbol is also presented in the heavy rock music, is one of the symbols of the Ukrainian rag tag army 'Azov'.

The cornerstone of the MD movement is the Nazi study of the 'racial purity' and ultra-nationalism. The concept of the so-called 'white force' aimed at uniting all the MD followers for opposition to carriers of another world view and confession is borrowed from the Neo-Nazism in its pure form. In the social networks, there is the ideological opposition of the MD followers to Islam in general and to representatives of the non-slavic nations and followers of the so-called 'Eurasian orientation' committed to rejecting the European integration of Russia towards integration with the Central-Asian countries. This opposition gains more and more followers among the nationalistic youth.

One of the viable mechanisms of the youth recruitment in the ranks of the followers is organization of different themed campaigns aimed at demonstration of conditional courage and inventive power within the framework of the ideological values declared. The result of implementation of the specified political technology is consolidation of representatives of different destructive and protester's movements and subcultures under the single extremists' ideology based on the views of racism and Neo-Nazism. The specified negative trends require timely and decisive reaction for prevention of further increase in the number of the radically-oriented groups of young people that under certain circumstances can significantly destabilize the situation in the society.

**Summary:** Conflictogenity of the virtual space shows itself most significantly in the social networks due to the fact they are kind of projection of the real communications as well as the social-economic and political realias in the society. General availability and simplicity of the technical design of the social networks promote to the mass uniting of people in the communities that form the unity of their views and opinions based on some or other grounds that not always feature constructive and legal nature. Such forms of collectivism create virtual platforms for realization of a virtual conflict. The mass character of the internet-audience is attractive to administrators of some or other illegal or most aggressive communities not only due to the possibility of attracting new like-minded but also searching for the 'enemy of the community'.

Such an aggressive association is the ultra-right movement 'Misanthropic Division' that originated in the virtual and then moved to the real space during the Ukrainian crisis of the 2013-2014's.

### CONCLUSION

Comprehensive analysis of activity of the specified themed groups upon the obvious content-related differences allows identifying the community of mechanisms and methods of the audience impact. Among them:

- Focus on visualization of the mass content
- Simplified and definitive interpretation of the information provided
- Opposing the own group to the rest of the society by the principle of chosenness

Such methods of impact resonate mostly with the young audience due to the lower threshold of critical perception of anything new that is determined by the age, sensitive maximalist perception of the surrounding social reality and striving for the unique often remonstrative identification.

Analysis of the general trends in the internet over the last years shows that the social networks became the main virtual platform for propaganda of radicalism for a variety of causes. Firstly, the huge human resource was initially concentrated here. Secondly, creation and promotion of a themed group requires significantly less time and financial expenditures than promotion of a separate web-site and finally, rather loyal policy of administration of particular social networks in respect of the content being posted and promoted.

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