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Psychological Models of a Terrorist's Personality as Envisaged by Young Men and Women

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Abstract: In this study, we discuss the results of our research into psychological models of a typical terrorist's personality as envisaged by young men and women. We offer empirical criteria to establish types and structuredness of psychological models related to terrorists' personalities; we also outline and designate certain types of models that are based on domination of invariable or situational manifestations of a terrorist's personality. For each designated type, we disclose its contents and structure as envisaged by young men and women who are leavers of schools, students of technical colleges and an institute from Rostov-on-Don and Taganrog. According to the model type designated on the basis of young men and women's scores, we have established prevailing reasons to commit a terrorist act and sources to obtain information about terrorists.

Key words: Psychological model of a typical terrorist's personality, young women, young men, technical colleges, invariable and situational manifestations of a typical terrorist's personality

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, risks of terrorist threat in Russia today are not reduced, thus, stimulating research interest of psychologists in the problem of various forms of terrorism. Emphasis is placed on the psychological traits of a terrorist's personality including underlying reasons for a terrorist act, ideological and emotional preconditions and representative personality traits. This leads to the creation of different models of a terrorist's personality that are based on various criteria that in their turn, lack classification today.

Different classifications, typologies and models of a terrorist's personality perform cognitive, informational and propaedeutic functions thus bringing researchers closer to more comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon, informing citizens of possible reasons (including psychological) for terrorist activities and contributing to development of anti-extremist and anti-terrorist convictions. These models are criticized as they are formed on the basis of media biased examples; ignore unique character of a terrorist act, etc. which casts doubts on their usefulness. Researchers tend to marry unobviousness of a terrorist act with scientific tradition to analyze terrorist's background and personality. Psychological approach to avoid fundamental attribution mistake coexists with the tendency to establish personality traits of a terrorist on the basis of his/her situational behavior. Division of terrorists' behavior motives into egocentric and socio-economic ones is corroborated by the predominant emphasis on the first-kind motives. It is obvious that young people who are the part of the global information society and truly interested in socio-economic, political and psychological problems could not disregard the designated models along with their contradictions. At the same time, widely represented on the internet and in the media descriptions of terrorist acts together with psychological interpretation of their reasons and consequences are forming the psychological phenomenon named "experiencing threat of a terrorist act" thus extending the number of indirect victims of a terrorist act (Bykhovets *et al*., 2007) and creating specific heroes of our time in our "media awareness"(Tkhostov and Surnov, 2007). In this regard, the study of psychological models of a terrorist's personality together with their structures that are constructed by the youth is truly up-to-date.

The concept of "model" is used in a number of psychological works primarily discussing psychological models constructed by professionals and experts. We think that analysis of psychological model features attempted by Druzhilov (2013) proves that:

- The model serves as a standard or benchmark for its practical use or further study of the phenomenon being modeled

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- Model contains only basic and most important features of the original which implies their correlation
- Model always has some discrepancy, difference from the original

When we developed our procedure to describe psychological model of a terrorist's personality, we relied on the normative, expective and empirical models by professionals first introduced by Platonov (1986) which varied in their content and methods of data obtaining. Our procedure can be described as follows:

- Object of the description
- Method of object data obtaining
- Form of object data presentation

In the psychological model of a terrorist's personality that we research the object is psychological personality traits of an imaginary, representative (typical) or real terrorist as given by people in a narrative form on the basis of information received by them from the media, the Internet, eyewitnesses' stories, personal experience as a victim of a terrorist act (Dzhaneryan *et al*., 2013). The respondents involved in this research having no such direct personal experience relied on the information received from the media and the internet regarding the fact and the content of a terrorist act as well as its participants and consequences. We understand the psychological model of a terrorist's personality as a verbal representation of psychological personality traits of an imaginary, representative (typical) terrorist as given by people on the basis of information received by them from the media, the Internet, eyewitnesses' stories.

Psychological publications contain data regarding socio-demographic, age and psychological (emotional instability, introversion, anxiety) peculiarities of Russian citizens that result in intense character of their emotional experiencing the terrorist threat caused by news reports about terrorism (Bykhovets *et al*., 2007). These publications also discuss the question of how young people's education (Dzhaneryan *et al*., 2013) and students' gender differentiations (Dzhaneryan *et al*., 2009) influence the content of psychological models of a terrorist's personality. However, we think that the question of differences in the content of psychological models constructed by young women and young men requires further analysis. Young women and men perceive the information about terrorism in different ways; then they "return" this information, for example, on the internet filling it with their individual content.

The goal of this research comprising 210 respondents (88 schoolchildren, 34 students of a Rostov-on-Don University, 88 students of technical schools from Rostov-on-Don and Taganrog) was to analyze the content of psychological models of a typical terrorist's personality and the reasons for terrorist acts as envisaged by urban young people, men and women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Polling (Dzhaneryan *et al*., 2009); testing ("Correlation rate between "value" and "availability" in various spheres of life" technique by Fantalova (2001). A. Maslow's list of values-motivations, scale of differential emotions by Izard (2008), "Personal Differential" (PD) technique, rating of personality traits based on R. Kettel's 16PF test); content analysis; statistical methods (principal components' R-mode factor analysis, Shapiro-Wilk's criteria, Friedman's criterion, Spearman rank correlation coefficient, quartering, binomial distribution).

We used the model of unity of general mental image of a person and his/her personality offered by Rubinshtein (1989) together with the concept of changeable and invariable in the personality offered by Chesnokova (1977) to describe empirically psychological traits of a terrorist's personality. We studied mental image of a terrorist's personality assessing its invariable or specific situational manifestations of orientation (personal terminal values, vital motives, fundamental emotions) and character (personality traits). Important terminal values, vital motives and personality traits form the invariable; emotional experience and available values form the situational in the personality's orientation and character.

In order to determine structuredness of the psychological model of a terrorist's personality, we offered a criterion according to which the model was considered highly structured if assessment of leading invariable or situational specific manifestation of the prototype's personality was simultaneously associated with assessment of his/her other invariable and situational specific manifestations. The link between assessment of the leading invariable or situational specific manifestation of the prototype's personality and assessment of at least one other invariable and one other situational manifestation was regarded as an empirical indicator of partial structuredness of the model; no established link between these assessments was regarded as an empirical indicator of disintegration of the corresponding model. Other types of relationship were attributed to low structuredness of the model.

According to the typology of personality based on dominating values offered by Yanitsky (2012), we divided

the values in the following manner: adaptation values affluence, health; values of socialization interesting job, family, friends and love; values of individualization; active life, freedom, confidence, cognition and creativity.

In order to analyze the psychological model of a typical terrorist's personality, we offered a questionnaire containing the following sections: socio-demographic data regarding a typical terrorist; his/her orientation and motivation; his/her personality traits (list of factors based on R. Kettel's test and personal factors based on PD test), emotions in the situation of a terrorist act; external reasons to commit a terrorist act (related to the nature of interpersonal relationship, organizational, economic, etc. conditions in the areas of job, education, family, communication, hobbies) and internal reasons (specific features of the motives, abilities, character of the prototype being assessed that are manifested in various spheres of life); measures to prevent terrorism (open-ended question of the questionnaire).

As a result of the factor analysis of the indicators that designate (as assessed by the respondents) psychological characteristics of a terrorist's personality we obtained 7-factorial solution explaining 63.82% of the variance. Subsequent analysis of terrorists' leading personality traits that obtained high weight (>0.5) in each of the factors as assessed by the respondents and the relationship between these assessments and assessments of terrorists' other personality traits allowed us to designate the following types of psychological models of a terrorist's personality: axiologically socialized personality (type 1); extremely altruistic personality (type 2); personality's deficiency motives (type 3); situational emotional repentance (type 4); intellectual terrorist (type 5); situational emotional hostility (type 6); strong-willed personality (type 7). Empirical criteria to establish the types were (as assessed by the respondents urban students) the content of the leading psychological trait (invariable or situational) of a typical terrorist's personality interconnected with respondents' assessments of other psychological personality traits (Dzhaneryan *et al*., 2013). The models of types 1, 3 and 5 are the models of invariable manifestations of a terrorist's personality; the models of types 2, 4 and 6 are the models of its situational manifestations; the model of type 7 is the model of situational-invariable manifestations of a terrorist's personality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses the results of our research into the content of model types depending on the gender of young people presenting these models.

In the model of the first type, a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of the significant value of friends interconnected with high scores in the significant adaptation value (health), socialization value (love), individualization values (confidence, cognition, freedom, creativity) and accessible value of individualization (freedom). According to women's, scores importance of each of the designated values is significantly higher than its accessibility which proves an internal conflict in a typical terrorist's value-semantic sphere. Women describe a typical terrorist as a person with frustrated values of adaptation, individualization and mainly socialization.

A terrorist's personality is described by young men through dominance of the significant value of individualization (confidence) interconnected with high scores in the significant adaptation value (health), socialization value (interesting job, friends) and individualization value (cognition), vital motives of physiological comfort and safety, personality factor type "B" and low scores in personality factor type "I". According to young men, importance of each of the designated values is significantly higher than its accessibility which also proves an internal conflict in a typical terrorist's value-semantic sphere.

Young men describe a typical terrorist as a person unrealized in a number of values of adaptation, socialization and mainly individualization who demonstrates developed formal-logical thinking and callousness towards others.

Thus, men and women characterize a typical terrorist through frustration of a number of values associated primarily with socialization (as assessed by women) and with individualization (as assessed by men).

Men think that a terrorist act can be provoked by external reasons connected with changes in relationship in the spheres of family, education, communication, hobbies as well as by internal reasons connected with peculiarities of motives, character, abilities manifested in the said areas. Women outline internal reasons connected with the abilities of the prototype in the sphere of hobbies and interests.

In the model of the second type, a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of the accessible value of socialization (love) interconnected with high scores in the significant adaptation value (health), socialization value (friends), accessible adaptation value (health), vital motives of physiological comfort, safety and self-realization, personality factors types "A", "B","E", "F" and the emotion of interest.

Scores in accessibility of each of the values (love, health, friends) were significantly higher than those in

their significance. Women describe a typical terrorist as a person who does not appreciate health, love; he/she is aimed at finding friends and characterized by spontaneity in communication and developed formal-logical thinking; he/she feels curiosity in the situation of a terrorist attack.

Men also describe a terrorist's personality through dominance of the accessible value of socialization (love) interconnected with high scores in the significant value of individualization (active life) and with low scores in the significant value of confidence in personality factor type "I" and emotions of shame. Men's scores in accessibility of each value (love, active life, confidence) were significantly higher than those in their significance.

According to young men a typical terrorist is a person who has no lack of love, idealizes activity is self-assured and feels no shame in the situation of a terrorist attack.

Women think that the reasons prompting a terrorist act can include external reasons associated with changes in family relationship, communication and hobby spheres and internal reasons connected with peculiarities of the motives and abilities manifested in the spheres of communication and hobbies. Men note individually variable reasons.

In the model of the third type, a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of the motive of belonging interconnected with high scores in significant values of socialization (interesting work, love, friends, family) and accessible socialization value of family. Scores in significance and accessibility of these values do not differ significantly. Women emphasize that a typical terrorist aspires to gain friendship; this aspiration increases with increasing of his/her frustration of socialization values and especially that of family.

Men describe a terrorist's personality through dominance of the status motive interconnected with a low score in the accessible value of socialization (friends) and with high scores in the significant adaptation value (affluence), individualization value (creativity), expressed motive of self-realization and personality factors types "Q1" and "Q2". Differences between the scores in significance and accessibility of the designated values are only detected for the value of affluence, significance of which is much higher than its accessibility.

Thus, young men emphasize that terrorists aspire to achieve recognition; this aspiration increases with increasing of dominance of the self-realization motive that results in the gap between significance and accessibility of values of friends and creativity and especially with frustration of the value of affluence. According to men personality traits of a terrorist include his/her increased criticality and non-conformism.

Women think that terrorism provoking reasons can include external reasons related to changes in communication and hobbies; young men include both internal (abilities to communicate) and external reasons connected with the stability of relationship in the working team in the job organization and in the sphere of hobbies.

In the model of the fourth type a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of emotions of shame interconnected with low scores in personality factors types "O" and "C", in the significant individualization value of creativity as well as with high scores in personality factors types "M" and "I" in emotions of joy and surprise in the accessible value of cognition. We should note absence of significant differences between the scores in significance and accessibility of the values of creativity and cognition.

Women describe a typical terrorist as a person who feels shame accompanied by surprise and joy in the situation of a terrorist attack. This shame increases under such conditions as depreciation of creativity and knowledge combined with developed imagination and sensitivity.

Men describe a terrorist's personality through dominance of the emotion of shame interconnected with low scores in fear, as well as with high scores in interest, guilt and significant adaptation value of health. Scores in significance and accessibility of the value of health do not differ significantly. Men focus on the fear of the prototype accompanied by the emotions of interest and guilt. This fear increases with increasing of frustration of the value of health. Possible reasons for a terrorist act according to men have individual variability. Women name internal reasons connected with job activity motives.

In the model of the fifth type (for women only) high scores by respondents in the "N" personality trait are positively linked with the scores in accessible for a terrorist values of affluence and creativity as well as in the emotion of interest; they are negatively linked with the scores in the accessible value of love in the motive of physiological comfort and the emotion of fear. Almost all the respondents gave very high scores to the prototype in the "B" factor. Scores in significance and accessibility of each of the values do not differ significantly.

The psychological portrait of a terrorist looks as follows: a shrewd, intelligent, affluent and active in life, depreciating comfort and creativity, frustrated with the value of love person who in the situation of a terrorist act does not feel fear and acts as an interested observer. The reasons for committing a terrorist act can be individual.

In the model of the sixth type a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of the emotion of contempt interconnected with high scores in the disgust emotion, in the personality "Q1" factor, in the accessible value of socialization "friends" and the motive of belonging. Scores in the significance and accessibility of the value "friends" do not differ significantly.

Women think that in the situation of a terrorist act a terrorist feels affective complex of contempt-disgust which becomes stronger with growing indifference to friendly relationship put against the background of his/her need to overcome loneliness and isolation.

A terrorist's personality is described by men through the emotion of disgust interconnected with low scores in personality factors of "B", "C", "N" and high scores in the accessible adaptation value (affluence) together with the individualization value (confidence). Scores in significance and accessibility of each of the values do not differ considerably.

Men think that in the situation of a terrorist act a terrorist feels disgust which is typical of a confident, affluent, emotionally labile, specific and direct in his/her judgment and behavior person.

The reasons for a terrorist act according to women can include both internal reasons (related to spheres of job, education, communication, family and culture) and external reasons (related to spheres of job, family, communication and culture). Men name only external reasons related to education.

In the model of the seventh type, a terrorist's personality is described by women through dominance of the accessible value of freedom interconnected with high scores in "A" factor (PD test), the significant values of individualization (active life, freedom), the accessible value of individualization (active life) and the motive of physiological comfort. We should note that absolute scores in significance and accessibility of the value active life differed considerably in favor of its significance; similar scores in the value of freedom were not different.

A terrorist's personality is described by men through dominance of the accessible value of confidence interconnected with low scores in personality factor of "L" and low scores in the emotion of joy.

Women envisage a terrorist as a person who feels freedom but at the same time experiences an internal conflict regarding the value of active life; he/she is also a marked extrovert lacking physiological comfort. Young men see a confident and suspicious-looking person who does not express joy in the situation of a terrorist act.

The reasons for terrorism as seen by women include both internal reasons (related to the spheres of education and family) and external reasons (related to the spheres of job, education, family and hobbies); young men think that these reasons can vary individually.

The analyzed psychological models differ in their content and structuredness. According to the empirical criterion offered by us the most structured of these models is the model of the second type as constructed by women. Low-structured models are those of the first and fourth types as constructed by young men as well as the model of the seventh type as constructed by women. All other models are partly structured. However, judging by the number of interconnections established between the leading manifestations of the prototype's personality and other personal traits attributed to him/her, we can speak about the following trend. If we consider the models of invariable manifestations of a terrorist's personality, we can see that their male options, compared to female options, distinguish themselves as having great number of designated interconnections. In the case of the models of situational manifestations of a terrorist's personality, on the contrary, their female options distinguish themselves as having great number of designated interconnections.

Respondents' gender also influences the number of a typical terrorist's personality traits given by them in the models as well as the number of reasons for a terrorist act. As to the models of invariable manifestations of a terrorist's personality, young men designate a big number of his/her personal characteristics interconnected with his/her leading feature in the model; they outline external and internal reasons for a terrorist act specifying them and noting problems in the sphere of communication as a provoking reason for a terrorist act. Women tend to limit the number of personality traits of a terrorist associated with his/her leading feature; they distinguish either external or internal reasons focusing on the problems in the sphere of hobbies as the reason for a terrorist act.

As to the models of situational manifestations of a terrorist's personality women, as different from men, designate a greater number of his/her personal traits interconnected with his/her leading feature in the model; they specify the reasons for a terrorist act finding them in the spheres of family, job, communication and hobbies of the prototype.

Regardless of the respondents' gender dominant sources of information about a typical terrorist were, as one might expect, TV and the internet. However, the model type influences the variety and content of other sources of this kind. Men as different from women, name

more sources of information; in the case of models of invariable manifestations of a terrorist's personality men more often discuss the information about terrorism and terrorists with friends and more often "complete" it in their imagination.

CONCLUSION

Men and women depending on the type of psychological models of a typical terrorist's personality that they construct rely on different sources of information about the problems of terrorism; they designate various in content reasons for a terrorist act and personality traits of a typical terrorist.

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