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# Identification of Advertising Trends in The Mass Media and On the Internet Used by Modern Terrorism

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## Abstract

The authors have set themselves the goal of analyzing the mass media and coverage of terrorist attacks on the Internet, to assess their impact on the growing number of terrorists in the world based on this analysis. The methodological basis of this research is represented by the comprehensive approach, which allowed identifying and corroborating the need to restructure the media and the Internet to combat modern terrorism. The epistemological potential of the statistical and sociological methods used within quantitative and qualitative research makes it possible to properly interpret the results of scientific research devoted to the subject of analysis. The results suggest that current activity by the media and Internet users encourages the growth in the number of terrorist acts in the world and improves the efficiency of recruiting newcomers to terrorist organizations. Furthermore, optimal ways of restructuring social media and expanding the scope of control of the operation of the Internet without violating freedom of expression and the right of citizens to free access to information are discussed.

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**Keywords:** democratic society; Internet; social media; media space; terrorist organizations.

## Identificación de tendencias publicitarias en los medios de comunicación e Internet utilizadas por el terrorismo moderno

### Resumen

Los autores se han fijado el objetivo de analizar los medios de comunicación de masas y la cobertura de ataques terroristas en Internet, para evaluar su impacto en el creciente número de terroristas en el mundo basándose en este análisis. La base metodológica de esta investigación está representada por el enfoque integral, que permitió identificar y corroborar la necesidad de reestructurar los medios de comunicación e Internet para combatir el terrorismo moderno. El potencial gnoseológico de los métodos estadísticos y sociológicos utilizados dentro de la investigación cuantitativa y cualitativa posibilita interpretar adecuadamente los resultados de la investigación científica dedicada al tema de análisis. Los resultados sugieren que la actividad actual de los medios de comunicación y los usuarios de Internet alienta el crecimiento del número de actos terroristas en el mundo y mejora la eficiencia de reclutar a los recién llegados a las organizaciones terroristas. Por lo demás, se discuten formas óptimas de reestructurar los medios de comunicación social y ampliar el alcance del control del funcionamiento de Internet sin violar la libertad de expresión y el derecho de los ciudadanos al libre acceso a la información.

**Palabras clave:** sociedad democrática; Internet; medios de comunicación social; espacio de medios; organizaciones terroristas.

### Introduction

It is common knowledge that nowadays, the main indicators of success in the media business are ratings and advertising revenues. In this connection, the mass media report terrorist attacks instantly and publish the bloodiest photographs. In the 21st century, no one denies that the advanced technologies, communications networks, and the all-pervading spread of television have had a significant impact on the increase of the advertising potential of terrorism. Terrorism is inconceivable without the mass media playing a major role in informing the society of what is happening in the world, especially in the areas of activity where members of society do not

have free access to information. Just as government authorities, modern terrorists use all benefits provided by the mass media to present their goals to the public and gain support for their world, which is very often Islamic.

History shows that the mass media increase the impact of terrorist attacks and global communications systems provide their coverage in real-time mode. For example, according to expert evaluations, the hostage-taking and mass massacre of Israeli athletes by the terrorist group Black September during the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 were seen by a global audience of over 500 million people — and it was in the middle of the 20th century. At the beginning of the 21st century, on 11 September 2001, the mass media were already broadcasting live the terrorist attack in the USA all over the globe. Any terrorist attack is a scoop, which leads to a sharp rise in the size of its audience. R. Nixon, the 37th President of the USA, said, “It is much more profitable to invest a dollar in the mass media, in propaganda, than ten dollars in designing new weapons. The probability of using weapons in the modern world is small, whereas propaganda operates every day, every hour” (*Sistema moralno-psikhologicheskogo obespecheniya v Vooruzhennykh Silakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 2005). Therefore, what matters for terrorists is not the very fact of doing damage or the presence of a victim but their socio-psychological influence on the consciousness of mankind.

Experience suggests that terrorist organizations and terrorists choose their targets very thoroughly and the victims and destroyed infrastructure resulting from their activity get the leading ratings in media reports. We agree with T. Watkins from San José State University, who believes that there is an unspoken agreement between the terrorists and the mass media: Media: “If you commit some atrocity, we will publicize it and make it seem militarily significant”. Terrorists: “Well, if you will publicize it, we will commit it” (*Nature and Significance of Terrorism*, n.d.).

L. NBC News President said the following in this regard:

The job of the press is not to worry about the consequences of its coverage, but to tell the truth <...> As much as those of us as in the press would like to be popular and loved, it is more important that we are accurate and fair <...> and let the chips fall where they may (Cohen-Almagor, 2005: 26).

Meanwhile, at the Arab Information Ministers Council the following was pointed out in respect of the “chips”, “The time has come for the world to bear its responsibility in holding these means accountable” (*Adopting the Launch of the Arab Media Observatory of Terrorism*, 2006: 112). Psychologists have said many times that terrorists can cancel a terrorist attack if they know that the media will not cover its consequences.

In view of the foregoing, the following dilemma arises. On the one hand, society has the right to receive reliable information in all spheres of its

activity. On the other hand, the information circulating in free access should not have a destructive impact on public consciousness. The hypothesis of this research is the statement that freedom of speech and freedom of the media in terms of the content of their reports must be ensured in any society, but the activity of the media must be restricted as far as destructive impact on the worldview and psychological state of a democratic society is concerned.

### **1. Methods**

Methodological foundation of this research is represented by the comprehensive approach, which allowed us to identify and substantiate the necessity for the restructuring of the mass media and the Internet to counter modern terrorism. Thegnoseological potential of the statistical and sociological methods used within quantitative and qualitative research made it possible to interpret the results of scientific research devoted to the subject matter of analysis adequately.

### **2. Results: The mass media as an accessory to terrorism**

The mass media have an innate inclination to create sensations. Live TV broadcasts create an illusion of involvement with the events on the screen in the audience watching such programs. The surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) suggest that about 90% of TV viewers believe what is broadcast. However, they frequently receive information about real events interpreted in a particular way, which can be called second-hand data (Zelenkov, 2016). The effect of perception of such information to a large degree depends on the content and tone of comments, propaganda skills of the program host, and explanation of facts. As a rule, they are highly correlated with the goals pursued by certain forces. By rerunning TV programs and chiefly appealing to emotions, one can impose virtually any viewpoint on the target object. Using military terminology, it can be argued that control of the mass media is equivalent to “air superiority in modern war”.

In their work devoted to studying the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, C. Happer and G. Philoa found that in a content study of 89 news bulletins, there were only 17 lines of text (from transcribed bulletins) relating to the history of the conflict. When journalists used the word “occupied”, there was no explanation that the Israelis are involved in a military occupation. This led some viewers to believe that the Palestinians were the “occupiers”

since they understood the word only to mean that people were on the land. Further, while there was extensive coverage of the violence, there was very little analysis of its nature and causes. The practical effect was to remove the rationale for Palestinian action. Much of the news implicitly assumed the status quo – as if trouble and violence started with the Palestinians launching an attack to which the Israelis responded. As a result, the Palestinian perspectives were effectively marginalized in the debate and the Israeli perspectives were promoted (Happer, Philo, 2013).

Public news networks are less driven by advertisement revenues but are equally dependent on ratings. Today the emergence of an array of new digital platforms has turned media competition into a fierce contest to capture people's attention. This has led to hyper-sensationalization in the way terrorist activity is reported, a tendency perhaps most apparent in television, still the general public's main source of information. TV has always had a love affair with drama and violence. "Being on television confers a kind of reality on people, much more so than being written about," said Daniel Schorr, a three-time Emmy-winning journalist who covered world news for more than 60 years. Drama is at its peak of effect on TV. Shana Gadarian, associate professor of political science at Syracuse University (USA), draws similar conclusions in a piece published two years earlier in *The Washington Post*, "Terrorism is newsworthy because it is inherently dramatic and threatening. Media competition means that journalists and editors have incentives to use emotionally powerful visuals and storylines to gain and maintain ever-shrinking news audiences" (Ogilvy, 2017: 225).

H. Rivera notes that the relationship between the media and terrorist organizations is "symbiotic" in nature. This is manifested in the following. On the one hand, mass communications and media (USA, Europe) have negative attitude to terrorist activities, support the fight against them, but on the other hand, terrorist acts, or rather coverage of their consequences, are very beneficial for the media in terms of attracting an audience. This information is one of the most rated in the news, causes a lot of discussion, which increases the cost of advertising in such media, television programs, websites, etc. In turn, terrorist organizations, committing various acts of terrorism (or even not committing them but imitating commitment), try to contact various media to broadcast video materials about these events, thereby increasing their fame and counting on the promotion of their own ideological convictions worldwide.

According to B. Nacos, terrorists that have entered into a mutually beneficial alliance with the media sphere, as a rule, pursue four main goals:

To convey the propaganda of the deed and to create extreme fear among their target group; To mobilize wider support for their cause among the general population, and international opinion by emphasizing such themes as righteousness of their cause and the inevitability of their victory; to frustrate

and disrupt the response of the government and security forces, for example by suggesting that all their practical anti-terrorist measures are inherently tyrannical and counterproductive; and to mobilize, incite and boost their constituency of actual and potential supporters and in so doing to increase recruitment, raise more funds and inspire further attacks” (Nacos, 2007: 59).

In the context of this research, it is noteworthy to take into consideration the results of the research conducted under the guidance of A. Grau devoted to the following topic: “Why do some terrorist attacks get more media attention than the others?”. Scientists have found that the mass media focused more deeply on terrorist attacks if they involved fatalities. If law enforcement agencies classified terrorist attacks as crimes (similar to murders) rather than terrorist attacks, the mass media were not interested in the corresponding facts.

Analysis of news reports showed that in all kinds of the mass media, attacks by Muslim perpetrators received, on average, 357% more coverage than other attacks; for major media this indicator amounted to 758%. For instance, in the database the research relied on Muslims carried out 12.5% of the attacks in the USA but got 50% of the total news coverage. Media coverage was higher when: the terrorist was arrested (the arrest itself is an event to be reported); law enforcement agencies or the government were the target of the attack; when the terrorist attack led to fatalities among the population. One additional death provided an average increase of reach by 46% (Grau, 2015).

Therefore, as long as the mass media exist, terrorists will hunger for what the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called the “oxygen of publicity” (Wilkinson, 2006). For as long as terrorists commit acts of violence leading to innocent victims, the mass media will continue to scramble to cover them to satisfy the desire of their audiences for dramatic stories in which there is inevitably huge public curiosity about both the victimizers and their victims. The journalist R. Dwivedi points out that even those terrorist incidents where the perpetrators fail to claim responsibility and their identity is unknown or in serious doubt, as in the case of the bombing of the American base at Dhahran in June 1996, the international media coverage given will still be enormous (Dwivedi, 2019). This prompted David Broder, a Washington Post reporter, to demand that the terrorist be denied access to the media outlets because media coverage of terrorist operations is a reward for their criminal actions (Muhammad, 2016).

### **3. The Internet as a modern media platform in the hands of terrorists**

Apart from television, social networking sites have become widely popular all over the world in the 21st century. The fact that they are deeply ingrained in everyday life has provided easy access to information and high speed of its usage virtually in all spheres of human activity. However, it is important to remember that these advantages are also available to terrorists. The same technology that allows the globalized world to interact regardless of distances or physical location is used and adapted by terrorists to carry out terrorist attacks, recruit newcomers, and ensure organizational longevity.

For instance, the terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) uses social networking sites extremely effectively to recruit new members from all over the world. Terrorists borrow elements from famous comics, games, or movies for their propaganda. One of the examples is the logo of the American action film “Avengers: Infinity War”, which was converted for advertising of the Caliphate. Content is adapted for different target groups. Depending on the target audience of videos or photos, users are shown more young men or women and as far as children and teenagers are concerned, the content is compiled taking into account their living environment and watching habits.

Making use of online tools, terrorists appeal to young people’s sense of justice or utilize the experience of racism and discrimination to arouse hatred towards society. For instance, debates over racism in connection with the statement made by M. Özil (a German footballer of Turkish origin) and his retirement from the national team in 2018 triggered a series of related media stories. Their purpose was to reach young users that had had no contacts with terrorist groups before by multiple suggestions on social networking sites and gradually convert them to their ideology (REPORT Islamist content on Telegram. Children and young people lack protection, 2019).

In November 2017, one of the founders of Facebook admitted that this social networking site (and there is a high degree of probability that it is also true for other similar social platforms) “literally changes your relationship with society, with each other. It’s a social-validation feedback loop <...> exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology” (Why is youth extremism on the rise? (Fahmy, 2017: 39). Knowing this, recruiters of terrorist organizations usually make first contact with young people via social networking sites. According to experts, ISIS has registered from 30,000 to 40,000 Twitter accounts and guides to jihad and joining ISIS are available on the Internet.



It should be noted that Twitter is an especially useful tool for terrorist organizations. This is due to the fact that Twitter uses the method of “pushing” information to the user. It means that on the screens of their gadgets users often see the information they are not necessarily looking for. For example, a week before the resignation of the Egyptian President H. Mubarak, the total number of tweets about political changes in Egypt increased by a factor of ten. The top video with protests and political comments generated about 5.5 million hits. Over 75% of the people who clicked on the Twitter embedded links about the Arab spring were from the countries that do not belong to the Arab world. As a result, social media resources became a mouthpiece that spread information about the unrest and riots in Egypt. Meanwhile, usage of Twitter was observed already in 2008 during the conflict between Russia, South Ossetia, and Georgia.

Some experts share the opinion that social networking sites represent a new form of the mass media, where terrorists have posted their messages from the very moment when they appeared. However, it is impossible to hack into social networking sites and the databases where the data about each user are stored. On the other hand, dissemination of propaganda materials is only half the battle. It is most worrying that users of social networking sites might become radicalized indirectly through targeted advertising algorithms developed by Facebook and Twitter and owners of these media giants do not deny this fact. This targeted advertising can be even more focused than previously thought. Reports show that Facebook uses 29,000 different criteria for each user, which can be used to trace such things as their income, the number of credit cards, etc.

In the course of its investigation, ProPublica (An American nonprofit organization that produces investigative journalism in the public interest) was able to target its advertising at radical groups via the Facebook advertising service by paying \$30 to promote corresponding posts. Facebook suggested groups to be targeted, including 2,300 people interested in the topics “Jew hater”, “How to burn Jews”, and “History of why Jews ruin the world”. ProPublica selected the groups and within 15 minutes the ads were approved (“How to burn Jews” Facebook group suggested to advertisers by algorithm, 2017). As M. Pascoe notes, this targeting would show Facebook users content they had never seen before, sometimes based on continuous searches but sometimes only based on one click (Pascoe, 2019).

“Facebook is dangerous,” said Senator Sherrod Brown (Ohio, USA) at the hearing of the Senate Banking Committee in July 2018. “Facebook has said, ‘just trust us’. And every time Americans trust you, they seem to get burned”. Social media has plenty of detractors, but by and large, Americans agree with Brown’s sentiment. In 2018, 42% of those surveyed in a Pew Research Center survey said they had taken a break from checking the platform for several weeks or more, while 26% said they had deleted the

Facebook app from their cellphone. A year later, the iteration of the same Pew survey found social media use unchanged from 2018. According to the marketing professor Pinar Yildirim, Facebook has its critics and they are mainly concerned about two things: mishandling consumer data and poorly managing access to it by third-party providers; the level of disinformation spreading on Facebook (The Impact of Social Media: Is it Irreplaceable? 2019).

Worse, there is an addictive quality to social media since due to their adaptivity, they adjust based on the user's preferences and behaviors, which makes them both engaging and addictive (The Impact of Social Media: Is it Irreplaceable?, 2019). As it was noted by Jeffrey Feltman, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, in 2015, ISIS raised the exploitation of the Internet and social media to a new level, luring over 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from over 100 countries to join the conflicts in Syria and Iraq or inciting individuals to commit terrorist acts in their home countries (In special meeting, UN weighs measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting the Internet, social media, 2015).

The attempt to analyze the phenomenon of terrorism in an integral way is tarnished by the fact that terrorists recruit reasonable people. They form groups of people or "networks", i.e. subjects connected with each other via complex communications of direct or indirect exchange. The deadly business of terrorism is a living social undertaking organized by people who do not associate themselves with the societies of their social origin. The growing loss of contact with society has turned jihadism into a global movement based on virtual connections with abstract concepts. To increase the effective sense of belonging among the members of terrorist organizations, it is necessary to instill a few common basic beliefs into them. This is where ideology is combined with the abilities of social media. Together they serve as factors playing the role of catalysts for maintaining the power and stability of terrorist groups. For instance, during the Arab spring in 2010–2011 with the help of social networking sites young people were able to organize an unprecedented antigovernmental revolution, which started in Tunisia and then spread to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and other Middle Eastern countries.

Research has shown that wide usage of the Internet to spread propaganda and engage people in terrorist groups, including data transfer encryption, has changed the pattern of jihad. Nowadays, many terrorists either maintain publicly available profiles in social media reflecting the rhetoric and images of jihadists or communicate with each other via the Internet using encrypted messaging applications. The percentage of such online activity is constantly rising. For example, the development of social media and the Internet as a means of spreading jihadism in the USA was encouraged by

several key figures who prepared and disseminated messages promoting the activity of Islamic terrorists. Among them, there was Samir Khan from North Carolina, who came to promote al-Qaeda in a propagandist magazine *Inspire*, and Zachary Chesser, who was connected with *Revolution Muslim* — a terrorist organization, which spread its propaganda via websites and YouTube and created a special video threatening the creators of the South Park TV show (*Terrorism in America After 9/11*, n.d.).

Thus, modern terrorists become radicalized online since the Internet and social media do not impose any visa requirements and restrictions on their users. In 1990, the US National Academy of Sciences published a report saying that in the future, due to advanced information and communications technologies, terrorists will be able to do more damage “by using a keyboard than by installing an explosive device” (Veimann, 2011). The same conclusion is shared in the report published in February 2018 by the George Washington University saying, “Only one of the 12 returnees identified in this study returned with the intent to commit an attack on behalf of a jihadist group in Syria” (Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes, Clifford, 2018). Terrorists acknowledge that social media are a powerful tool not only for recruiting newcomers but also for intimidating their opponents (for this purpose they publish horrifying videos of killing), promoting their worldviews, and justifying their actions. For example, the average radicalization duration (i.e., the time from first exposure to extremist beliefs to participation in extremist acts) of US foreign fighters in 2005, when social media were first emerging as a factor in the radicalization of US extremists, was approximately 18 months. In 2016, when over 90% of US foreign fighters were active on social media, the duration of radicalization was down to 13 months on average (Jensen, James, LaFree, 2018).

“Law enforcement officers, psychiatrists, and criminologists have known for decades that certain perpetrators like to publicize their acts,” says criminologist Scott Bonn of *SPIEGEL*, who explores the motivation of terrorists and criminals and public opinion. In general, they do this to nurture their vicious narcissism and magnificence. The terrorist, who attacked mosques in New Zealand in March 2019, had previously announced his attack online and was streaming the attack live. The assassin from the Berlin Christmas Market in 2016 had recorded his confessional video weeks earlier (*Wie Nutzer mit digitalem Terror umgehen sollten*, n.d.). As we see, terrorism has no motherland and neither does the Internet. Those who browse the virtual space without passports do not have a motherland either even if physically they are in their native countries.

#### **4. The mass media and the Internet as a means of restraining terrorists**

Free speech and media are the basic instruments (many would say values) of every democracy. However, they provide terrorists with the publicity they need to inform the public about their atrocities, operations, victims, and goals. Indeed, democracy is the best arena for those who wish to reach their ends by violent means. Raphael Cohen-Almagor from the University of Haifa notes that violent movements and individuals exploit democratic instruments to find “golden paths” (from their point of view) to further their ends without holding themselves to the rules of law and order. Those subjects of terrorism would be crushed immediately were they to employ similar tactics in autocratic systems (Cohen-Almagor, 2005).

However, it does not mean that reputable democratic mass media share the values of terrorists. At the same time, it shows that in an open society free media are especially vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by terrorist organizations. In view of this, a question arises as to what has to be done to transform the Internet out of an instrument of spreading terrorism into a means of its suppression. The conducted analysis allowed us to identify a few directions.

First, it is necessary to reconsider the approach to the presentation of information in the mass media, which is now based on emotions, convulsiveness, and superficiality rather than results of scientific research. We do not call for introducing censorship but advocate for putting the content of newsfeed on scientific grounds. Journalists should create reports about dramatic and emotionally charged violence avoiding propaganda of hateful statements proclaimed by terrorists or encouraging stereotypes leading to separation of society. In this context, Dan Berkowitz’s work is of interest, which applies a semiotic lens to examine the role images of terrorism play in mediating healing and solidarity in both the local and the global media arena. Using a qualitative examination of news reports and blogs related to the 2016 Brussels terrorist attacks, he found that a combination of photographs, editorial cartoons, and anchoring texts has the potential to build global solidarity against terrorism. One of the insights of his work emphasizes the importance of the anchoring function. Berkowitz explains that this function is essential for audience decoding (Fahmy, 2017).

Second, it is necessary to reduce the unintentional promotion of terrorist organizations by the mass media using mechanisms for controlling the terminology they use referring to terrorists and legislative elaboration of the regulations applying to the coverage of events connected with terrorism. Practice shows that in some cases the mass media should refrain from covering terrorist attacks. It is particularly true when attempts are

being made to free hostages. A live broadcast showing that specialized security forces are going to enter the building where hostages are kept can endanger the whole operation and hostages' lives (for example, as it happened in the course of the release of hostages in Nord-Ost (Moscow) and Beslan). Terrorists can follow the coverage of their actions and the activities carried out by law enforcement forces, listen to, and even watch anti-terrorist operations as they are being performed and their reaction can be fatal. Besides, hostages can hear some information about the plans of the authorities, understand the situation in the wrong way, and start acting, thereby compromising the release operation.

The American mass media can object by referring to the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees freedom of expression to journalists. We can respond to this argument in the following way. In 1991, during the Gulf War, journalist teams were organized in the warfare area and were accompanied by public affairs officers from the corresponding department of the US Central Command. Any material prepared in the region during the military operation could not be sent to the press without an endorsement given by these officers. Reporters and journalists were not allowed to work in the military bases and subdivisions deployed at the front line. Anything that hindered moral consolidation of the troops — criticism of George Bush administration; portraying difficulties faced by the army in the desert, preparation of burying teams, and cases of unsuccessful bomb-dropping; multiple discussions of the facts of imprisonment and deaths of representatives of multinational forces — was strictly forbidden. Strong censorship measures were also taken by the allies of the USA within the anti-Iraq coalition (Zelenkov, 2016). No one mentioned the First Amendment — everyone complied with the requirements of the Command of the multinational forces.

Third, the mass media should fight for reliability and objectivity of information, while law enforcement agencies should introduce wide control of materials promoting terrorism being published in the mass media and on the Internet. The mass media and civil society should realize their responsibility for fighting terrorism and understand that this responsibility is common and collective and should follow a comprehensive approach, encouraging moderation, dialog, and tolerance at the same time. In their essence, terrorists are serial mass murderers. All efforts of the government and society should be devoted to stopping them but they should not be considered politically any more significant than the other serial killers that exist in the world (Nature and Significance of Terrorism, n.d.). If all mass media adhere to this conclusion, the number of terrorist attacks covered globally will be substantially reduced. Hassan Ali Mohammed, professor in Mass Media at the University of Minya (Egypt), notes that an important criterion for evaluation of the success of a certain terrorist attack is a free publication about it in the mass media. Certain work is conducted in this direction in many countries, both democratic and autocratic.

For example, in 2018, the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications (ROSKOMNADZOR), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Prosecutor General's office of the Russian Federation stopped the activities aimed at dissemination of illegal information by over 64,000 Internet resources (in 2017 — 61,700, in 2016 — 36,700), 47,000 out of which contained materials connected with activities of international terrorist organizations (Vestnik Natsionalnogo antiterroristicheskogo komiteta, 2019). In the countries of the European Union, global Internet companies Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, and Google/YouTube, whose headquarters and servers are located in the USA, together with the European Commission developed a "Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online", where they commit to responding to the publication of prohibited materials on the Internet promptly and effectively.

Within the framework of cooperation with global providers, at the beginning of 2015, a department in Europol was established focusing on marking terrorist content on the Internet. Upon its requests, prohibited materials are highly likely to be blocked or deleted (in over 90% of cases in 2017). In the UK it is forbidden by the law to disseminate and publish materials promoting terrorism on local media platforms, including foreign ones. The Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks, which came into force on 1 January 2018, places an obligation on operators of social networking sites to provide a judicial assessment in response to each submitted complaint about unlawful content within 24 hours and restrict (remove) access to it. Otherwise, they are subject to severe fines. The control of information published on the Internet is very strict in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since all traffic goes through proxy servers belonging to the state. In many countries failure to meet the requirements prescribing removal or blocking of terrorist content can result in criminal or administrative penalties (in France — up to €375,000, in Germany — up to €5 million, and in the UK — criminal prosecution) (Zhikhar, Krivorotov, 2019).

Thus, after many years of praising the benefits of the mass media and the Internet, especially their role in the integration of cultures and activation of dialog between civilizations, we see that these means of communications can also be used to harm the above-mentioned aspects of life. Nowadays, the intellectual legacy of the mass media and the Internet has turned into a fragile legacy that should be subject to large-scale restructuring. The following intellectual question should be asked once more, "What is the difference between the need of society for freedom of access to information and various prevailing types of using it by the mass media and the Internet?" Posing this question allows us to argue that the hypothesis of this research has been proved. The mass media and the Internet should not serve as a factor in marginalization of society or a breeding ground for terrorists.



## Conclusion

Fighting terrorism is more than just military confrontation since it represents a fight between ideas and values. Nowadays, coverage of terrorism in the mass media and on the Internet should be viewed in the way that encourages the efforts of these networks in collaboration with civil society and authorities. Modern mass media and the Internet represent means that can both nourish and restrict terrorism. The strategy of their development in the context of fighting terrorism should focus on increasing the awareness of society of its various reasons and consequences, while the mass media and the Internet should play a leading role in this process due to using special forms and methods in the programs they provide and reasonable content that they introduce to public consciousness. It is necessary to create a database about the manifestations of terrorism and carry out analysis of this information in a way that would lay media siege to terrorism. Formalization of the terminology used by the mass media is necessary to provide a common point of view on the events and problems connected with terrorism. Counter-terrorism activity in the mass media and on the Internet cannot be carried out without a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach combining political, legal, technological, media, and sociological methods.

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\* Although the regulations for the authors of this journal require the full names of the authors to be added to this list of references, unfortunately in some cases the source of origin only places the initial of the name. For this reason, in some cases only the initial of the name is added.

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