

THE PROPAGANDA OF THE RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM ON THE INTERNET

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Abstract: This paper will analyse the ways contemporary right-wing extremism uses the Internet for propaganda. The author will be using comparative analyses for making comparisons among different types of web addresses, with the aim to provide more objective, more valid and scientific insights into the so-called ‘black propaganda’ within the cyber space. The second type of methods used in this paper will be content analysis which implies analysis of program aims of prominent extremist organizations. Important part of the research will be focused on the web addresses which have substations in many countries and international domain, such as Blood and Honour, Combat 18, Stormfront, etc. The conclusion of this paper underlines that contemporary right-wing extremism is based on the elitist principle promotion and that it uses ideologies such as neo-Nazism, racism, fascism or extreme nationalism, additionally reinforced by violence.

Keywords: right-wing extremism, the Internet, violence, propaganda, social networks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary right-wing extremism uses numerous means and methods for propagating their violent ideas. One of the most attractive instruments used for the recruitment of new members and for promoting their ideology is – the Internet. That is why the research question of this paper is: How do the right-wing extremists use the Internet for their propaganda?

Modern means of communicating primarily based on virtual relating have given birth to ‘dark net’, misuse of social networks, blogs, video games, etc., which are being abused in order to achieve extreme right-wing political ideas. Within the right-wing extremist spectrum, security awareness – the realisation of the need to protect oneself, especially on the Internet – has increased (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2017, p. 5). Extremists use the Internet in most cases in order to conduct the following activities:

1. Creation of websites – to promote the work of certain groups, movements and organizations.

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2. Use of social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...) – to connect members of these groups with potential new members.
3. Promotion of certain events, such as the so-called summer schools, martial arts camps, or concerts. The influence of WPM (White Power Music) is especially dangerous, when speaking of forming a young individual's value system, who might, thanks to song lyrics, adopt negative messages of hatred.
4. Placement of video contents (most often via YouTube) that are often of a violent character and that depict the organization's activism.
5. Creation of new video games that encourage religious, national or racial hatred and bigotry.¹

2. CONTEMPORARY RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM – DETERMINATION

It is believed that extremism (and thus also right-wing extremism) is one of the most variable social phenomena that cannot be easily defined. There are several reasons for that: duality of political standards and morals, hiding extremists under the 'quasi-democratic' ideas, different perceptions of extremism in various socio-political environments, etc.

Right-wing extremism is "a behaviour and point of view that is borderline permissible, with a tendency to cross the border. As a political phenomenon, right-wing extremism is typical for movements, groups and organizations (and rarely for individuals) that use Nazi-fascist tools and methods in achieving 'grand' plans. Depending on the type of collectivity they belong to, right-wing extremists fight for supremacy of a certain group, nation, race or religion, diminishing everything that differs from their value system" (Djoric, 2014, p. 134-145).

Unlike the former Nazism and Fascism, contemporary right-wing extremists often conceal their behaviour by quasi-democratic actions, and thus, at first glance, they are not that easily distinguishable. Besides, modern right-wing extremism involves different ideas, starting from neo-Nazism, neofascism, violent clericalism and nationalism, anti-globalism, vigilantism, etc. Their resistance towards globalization is especially important, given the fact that they oppose denationalization and desovereignisation, on which 'the new world order' insists.

Right-wing extremists also differ depending on the part of the world they live in. While, for example, in America, right-wing extremists build their ideology on racism (i.e. Ku Klux Klan), in Europe, the right-wing extremism is the consequence of migration movements and xenophobia, caused by newcomers from Africa and the Middle East (of which, the majority are Muslims). On the other hand, right-wing extremism in the Balkans has emerged as a consequence of civil wars in the nineties of the 20th century, after the escalation of violent nationalism.

¹ For example, Hungarian fascists created a game called We will destroy Trianon which revives the memory of "The Great Hungary", a country that lost two thirds of its territory by signing the Treaty of Trianon. According to: Đorić, M. (2014). *Ekstremna desnica*, Nauka i društvo, Beograd.

3. RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND THE INTERNET

The topics of right-wing extremists on the Internet are usually linked to racial, ethnic and religious issues, antiglobalism, xenophobia, various types of ethical issues (such as abortion), etc. Extremists also use violence, manipulation, irrationality (they target emotions), but also humour as well, for the purpose of propagating their ideology.

Stormfront is one of the most influential Internet forums used by right-wing extremists for the purpose of interconnection and promotion of political goals. It emerged in America in the eighties of the 20th century under the patronage of Ku Klux Klan, and nowadays it operates world-wide. Apart from racism (based on the white race's supremacy), Stormfront also strongly supports the idea of Nazism, glorifying the work and life of Adolf Hitler. On the home page of this forum, the essence of their ideology is presented: "We are a community of racial realists and idealists. We are White Nationalists who support true diversity and a homeland for all peoples. Thousands of organizations promote the interests, values and heritage of non-White minorities. We promote ours" (Stormfront.org, n.d.).

According to the Stormfront official website, (Stormfront.org, n.d.), it is interesting that the majority of posts on this blog come from their British chapter (1 047 388), in comparison to Croatian (73 788). It is also worth mentioning that Stormfront chapters might be also found in countries such as Russia and Serbia, even though these countries' population suffered to a great extent by the hands of Nazis during World War Two. In Jasenovac concentration camp alone, over 700.000 people were killed, and, along with Roma and Jewish population, the Serbs suffered terrible casualties (Neubacher, 1957). Apart from classical Internet actions, Stormfront also has its own radio station which propagates WPM.

Stormfront financing is multidimensional, and includes the following donations (Don Black, 2012):

- "Each \$5 extends your Sustaining Membership by one month.
- Each \$50 one year.
- Each \$1000 one lifetime.
- Stormfront CORE Support Membership \$30/month".

On the international level, apart from Stormfront, there is another popular social group that supports extreme right-wing members. Blood & Honour is a neo-Nazi (predominantly anti-Semitic) political network founded in 1987 in Great Britain, and it still has a huge number of supporters world-wide. This neo-Nazi network is famous for generating WPM, which started with its famous concerts even in the seventies in Britain, under the name Rock Against Communism. Ian Stuart Donaldson, 'the icon' of the Blood & Honour, was the frontman of the rock band named Skrewdriver, and the network was later named after their song. In 1988, this network also founded a journal named Blood & Honour.

We can also notice a very powerful connection with the Ku Klux Klan chapters in America (Texas KKK, Imperial Klans of America...), but also with European extremists (Veneto Fronte Skinheads, Nationalist Romania, Rasna Zavest...). The entire Blood & Honour movement represents the apologia for the work of Ian Stuart, which is best seen on the home page of their website: "This is our dedication to Ian Stuart, Blood & Honour & National

Socialism. When all others become unfaithful, we remain true! HAIL IAN STUART, HAIL BLOOD & HONOUR, HAIL THE NEW DAWN". (B & H Worldwide, n.d.).

At the end of this research, we will analyse another organization that propagates right-wing extremism via the Internet. It is the Combat 18 - an organization founded in Great Britain, but later expanded to the United States. Combat 18 was formed under the umbrella of the British National Party in 1992. This organization has expressed special animosity towards migrants, left-wing oriented individuals, as well as ethnic minorities. Also, the link between the Combat 18 and hooligan groups is also very interesting. The main idea of these Neo-Nazis is the conception of the 'white revolution' that would be conducted with the help of recruitment of teachers and professors that would later form the value system of their students (Lockley, 2016).

Combat 18 publishes its propaganda on a mutual site with Blood and Honour (www.skrewdriver.net). Together, they co-act with the help of publishing houses such as ISD Records, Blood and Honour radio stations. Combat 18 is a leaderless resistance organization. This means that it bases its activities on individual actions without any overemphasized hierarchy, which is not the case with the rest of neo-Nazi organizations. Generally speaking, Combat 18 is very active on YouTube, given the fact that, when searched on this website, it provides us with 11 400 000 results.

3. CONCLUSION

It is evident that, in the contemporary society, right-wing extremism uses every possible tool for spreading its violent ideology, within which the Internet represents their most significant tool for spreading propaganda. This might be explained by the fact that the Internet provides fast interconnection for free, it enables concealing identity and also eases communication between extremists that are preparing for 'the new revolution'. The only 'problem' is that the competent national authorities also use the Internet to track down, follow and record extremists, which to a great extent eases their control and sanctioning.

Nowadays, the Internet and social media have enormous potential. One of them is the potential to spread information rapidly around the world. It can be a trap for modern man. Because of this, it means that "you should never instantly believe everything you read, and that the same rules of scepticism and analysis need to be applied to digital propaganda as to any other".

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