METHODS FOR DIAGNOSING ETHNO-CONFESSIONAL TENSION IN THE REGIONS OF RUSSIA

Vadim Viktorovich Shiller [1]
Zlata Vladimirovna Borovikova [2]
Evgeniya Viktorovna Valiullina [3]
Evgeny Vasilievich Badaev [4]

[1] Kemerovo State Medical University, Russia, shiller.vadim@yandex.ru
[2] Kemerovo State Medical University, Russia, bzlata2008@rambler.ru
[3] Kemerovo State Medical University, Russia, valiullinajv@ya.ru
[4] Kemerovo State Medical University, Russia, badaev2000@mail.ru

Abstract: *Based on extensive field materials collected via sociological methods in several regions of Western Siberia and South Urals in 2018 within the framework of the authors' program of regional monitoring of extremist sentiments and manifestations among youth, the article examines the issues of national and confessional self-identification of student youth of Kuzbass, the Altai Republic, and the Chelyabinsk region. Regional specificity is discovered only in the Altai Mountains and is determined by the presence of several major ethnic groups in that region. The results obtained in Kuzbass and the Chelyabinsk region are practically identical. A series of questions representing the hierarchy of ethnic identity criteria allow diagnosing latent interfaith tensions maintaining a stable trend that has been recorded in the regions under study for several years. Moreover, the level of respondents' hostile attitude towards the major confessions traditional for Russia is measured by regions.*

Keywords: *Ethnicity, confession, self-identification, student youth, latent tension, Western Siberia, Southern Urals.*

INTRODUCTION

The issues of ethno-confessional tension and the ways of its diagnostics and prevention in the regional aspect present one of the most acute and relevant problems of modern Russia. The tension results in a set of socio-economic, political, and cultural-informational factors, as well as national and religious conflicts. At the current stage, a major role in these processes is played by the virtual space, primarily the destructive content presented in social media, messengers, and popular video hosting sites. Fake

information spread in the virtual space affects the formation of ethnic and confessional stereotypes causing damage to the image of a range of nationalities and confessions and, therefore, giving rise to extremist sentiments and manifestations which are actively opposed by the state through a wide range of methods and tools: from the legislation and law enforcement to the information and prevention methods implemented both by the state executive authorities and several civil society institutions. In the process of carrying out anti-destructive information and prevention measures, a major role is played by the diagnostics of the level, spectrum, and structure of extremist sentiments present in the mass consciousness of the society, especially the youth segment which is more susceptible to destructive ideas due to its age-related, psychophysiological, and social status characteristics.

METHODS

In this study, we used both general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction and specialized historical, sociological, and statistical research methods. In the process of conducting sociological surveys, we used *the sampling method* that has proven itself in statistics and applied sociology. The implemented method involves studying not the entirety of the general population — in our case, the student youth of the Kemerovo region, but a part of it — the sample population formed via random selection of the observed units. The correct organization of a sample study ensures reliable results that are *representative* of the entire population.

The survey respondents were selected through multistage sampling, *each stage* involving *random* and then *mechanical sampling. The first stage* involved the formation of 5% of the sample population including general and professional education institutions of the region. *The second stage* involved the formation of 5% of the sample population within each educational institution including a part of grades 9 to 11 of regional schools and student groups from secondary professional and higher education institutions. *The third stage* involved the formation of 40% of the sample population in each grade and student group included in the sample at the previous stage. Thus, general and professional education institutions of the Kemerovo region presented the object of the present study. The implemented sample study algorithm allowed us to form a representative sample reflecting the main tendencies of the general population. Real respondents were surveyed in all the indicated territories and the obtained data were representative of this social and age category.

One of the practically implemented methods of diagnosing extremist sentiments is the method of regional monitoring of extremist sentiments and manifestations in youth developed by a Candidate of Historical Sciences and an Associate Professor of Kemerovo State Medical University V.V. Shiller which has been used in the Kemerovo region since 2015 (Shiller, Volkhina, 2015; 2016). By now, eight monitoring waves have been conducted as a part of the practical implementation of this method and over 9,000 respondents among schoolchildren and students have been surveyed. Starting from 2017, the studies have been conducted in collaboration with the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in the Kemerovo region. Since October 2018, over 2,000 school and university students from four administrative districts of the Chelyabinsk region have been surveyed using this monitoring method. Monitorings were also conducted in the Altai Republic where the sample included 1,226 respondents from senior school students, as well as students of the system of secondary vocational

education and the Gorno-Altai State University. At present, the monitoring database comprises the answers provided by over 13,000 respondents.

Aside from extremist sentiments, criminalization of consciousness, and school shootings, the basic indicators measured within the framework of the monitoring program are respondents' ethnic and conventional self-identification, as well as the diagnostic of latent ethno-confessional tension and the measurement of the level of a hostile attitude towards a particular confession. To calculate the main indicators and conduct quantitative processing of the survey data, we used the basic parameters of *descriptive statistics* and *correlation analysis.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section of the article, we will demonstrate the results obtained in the autumn of 2018 in Kuzbass (the Kemerovo region), the Altai Republic, and the Chelyabinsk region. The sample population of the Kemerovo region is composed of 1,110 senior school students and students of secondary vocational and higher education institutions including 541 (49%) male and 526 (47%) female respondents, 4 (0.5%) respondents noted being non-binary, and 39 (4%) respondents did not specify their gender identity (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). The survey sample included student youth of age categories ranging from 13 to 26 years old. The age cohorts of 16, 17, and 18 years old were predominant in the female and male gender groups. 18 males and 20 females out of the entire sample did not indicate their age (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018).

In the Altai Republic, the survey sample included 1,226 school students and students of secondary vocational and higher education institutions with 525 (39%) respondents being male, 627 (53%) being female, 4 (0.5%) being non-binary, and 70 (7%) respondents not having reported their gender identity (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). The survey was completed by student youth of age categories from 11 to 27 years old. In the female and male gender groups, the leading age cohorts were the ones of 15, 16, and 17 years old. Out of the entire sample of respondents, 32 male and 38 female students did not provide information about their age (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). The Chelyabinsk region sample comprised 1,912 senior students of general education schools including 872 (46%) male students, 954 (50%) female students, 3 (0.1%) non-binary individuals, and 83 (4%) respondents who did not report their gender identity (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). The age of survey participants ranged from 12 to 19 years old. The age cohorts predominant in female and male gender groups were the ones of 14, 15, 16, and 17 years old. 38 males and 23 females out of this sample group did not indicate their age (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018).

In the sample population of Kuzbass, 914 respondents indicated their nationality in some form while 196 respondents did not provide this information (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). The list of nationalities indicated by the respondents includes *Russians* — 709 respondents, *Tatars* — 20 respondents, *Germans* — 13 respondents, *Poles* — 8 respondents, *Uzbeks* — 7 respondents, *Jews* — 6 respondents, *Shors* — 4 respondents, *Tajiks* — 4 respondents, and *Chuvash people* — 4 respondents (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). The group *"other nationalities"* combines *Armenians,*

Belarusians, Georgians, Kazakhs, Telengits, Teleuts, Udmurts, Altai people, and other nationalities each represented in the sample only by several individuals (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018).

The politonym *"Russian citizens"* characterizing an established civil and political identity was indicated by 26 study participants (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). The sample also included the representatives of specific nationalities including *Slavs* — 22 respondents, *Rus* — 4 respondents, *"Russian people"* — 2 respondents, *"Ruzge"* — 2 respondents, *"Rusichi"* — 2 respondents, *"the Great Russian people"* — 1 respondent, *"Aryan"* — 1 respondent, *"ruzky"* — 1 respondent, *"Viking"* — 1 respondent (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). For the first time, the sample demonstrated ethnonyms *"Siberian"* and *"Russian Siberian"* identified by 3 respondents(Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). 8 study participants stated their confessional identity instead of the ethnic one, 7 of them identified themselves as *"Christian"* and one identified as *Muslim*. The *"difficult to answer"* option was selected by 196 study participants (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018).

In the sample population of the Altai Republic, nationality was indicated by 117 respondents and 106 survey participants refrained from answering this question (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). The two most popular ethnic groups among the list of nationalities indicated by the respondents were *Russians* (249 respondents) and *Altai people* (143 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). The Kazakh nationality was indicated by 21 respondents and 24 people reported being *"mixed-race"* without specifying the nationalities they belong to (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). 5 respondents identified themselves as Russian citizens (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). Similar to Kuzbass, the labels *Slavs*, *"YaRusskii"*, and *"Aryan"* indicated by 3 respondents were observed in the sample. One person indicated their confessional identity instead of the national one and identified themselves as *Muslim* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). Many respondents *(109 people) did not indicate their nationality* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). Of particular interest are the respondents who identified with the ethnonyms *"Aryans"*, *"YaRusskii"*, and *"Slavs"* typical of the representatives of *nationalist and near-nationalist groups* of Russian youth. These individuals present a potential risk group.

In the Chelyabinsk region, national identity was identified by 1,598 respondents (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018) while 314 survey participants did not provide this information. The list of nationalities indicated by the respondents includes *Russians* — 1,147 respondents, *Tatars* — 76 respondents, *Kazakhs* — 41 respondents, *Ukrainians* — 21 respondents, *Azerbaijanis* — 17 respondents, *Germans* — 15 respondents, *Armenians* — 15 respondents, *Belarusians* — 14 respondents, *Bashkirs* — 13 respondents, and *Jews* — 8 respondents (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). The *"other nationalities"* group combines the *Ingush, Uzbeks, Gypsies, Tajiks, Kyrgyz people*, and other nationalities represented in the sample by only several individuals. The politonym *"Russian citizens"* was indicated by 110 respondents (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). The sample also included *"Slavs"* — 22 respondents, *"YaRusskii"* — 5 respondents, *"Rus"* — 2 respondents, and *"Aryan"* — 1 respondent (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). The

confessional identity was indicated instead of the national one by 21 respondents. Out of this group of respondents, 10 individuals identified as "Muslim", 7 identified as "Christian", and 4 identified as *"Eastern Orthodox"* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018).

In the data from all the surveyed regions, the respondents presenting special interest to our research are the ones who identified with the ethnonyms *"Aryan", "Rus", "YaRusskii"*, and *"Slavs"* characteristic of the representatives of *nationalist and near-nationalist groups* of Russian youth. These individuals present the members of a potential risk group. Another significant indicator is the indication of the respondents' confessional identity. In the Kemerovo region, 659 out of 1,110 respondents stated their relationship with religion (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). A part of the sample (450 respondents, 41%) did not answer this survey question (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). The provided answers to the question about religious affiliation include the following options: *Christian* — 235 respondents (21%), *atheist* — 159 respondents (14%), *Eastern Orthodox* — 154 respondents (14%), *Muslim* — 25 respondents (2%), *agnostic* — 20 respondents (2%), *Buddhist* — 9 respondents (1%), *pagan* — 8 respondents (1%), *Catholic* — 4 respondents (0,36%), *satanist* — 3 respondents (0.27%), *Slavs* — 3 respondents (0.27%), *Protestant (denomination unspecified)* — 3 respondents (0.27%), *"Anime people"* — 3 respondents (0.27%), *Pastafarian* — 2 respondents (0.18%), *Jewdaist* — 2 respondents (0.18%) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). One of the respondents identified themselves as an *Islamist* while also identifying with the *Aryan* nationality. *Mormons*, *Shintoists,* and *Hindus* are represented in the sample by one person each. 19 individuals (2%) reported being believers without specifying their confession, and 6 people (1%) provided joking answers (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018).

In the Altai Republic, the relationship with religion was stated by 638 respondents out of 1,226. A portion of respondents including 588 individuals (48%) did not fill in this survey question (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). The provided answers to the question about religious affiliation include: *Christian* — 116 respondents (20%), *atheist* — 59 respondents (10%), *Eastern Orthodox* — 47 respondents (8%), *pagan* — 30 respondents (5%), *Muslim* — 30 respondents (5%), *Ak Jang* also referred to by the respondents as *"white faith"* and positioned by some of them as a set of *"traditional pagan ideas of the Altai people"* — 7 respondents (1%), *agnostic* — 4 respondents (1%). Less than 1% of the sample is constituted by *Slavs, Buddhists, Catholics, Satanists, and Pastafarians* with one person having identified their religious affiliation by the term Tulpa referring to an individual of collective hallucination manifesting in the form of an autonomous virtual personality emerging in a person's mind. A tulpa has its own character and can give advice and influence the actions and the pace of life of its creator. 4 people indicated being believers without specifying their confession (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018).

In the Chelyabinsk region, religious affiliation was stated by 1,091 out of 1,912 respondents (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). A part of the sample including 821 respondents (43%) did not provide an answer to this survey question. The answers provided to the question about religious affiliation include: *Christian* — 492 respondents (26%), *Eastern Orthodox* — 222 respondents (12%), *atheist* — 175 respondents (9%), *Muslim* — 96 respondents (5%), and *agnostic* — 25 respondents (1%) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region,

2018). 18 individuals (1%) stated their religious identity as "Russians, Russia", 11 respondents noted being *believers* without specifying their preferred confession, and joking answers including *belief in rap, in the power of thought*, and *a famous video-blogger Nikolai Sobolev* were provided by 11 respondents (1%) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). The categories *Buddhists, Jews, Catholics, Slavs, pagans, Pastafarians, Protestants, Taoists,* and *Satanists* were identified by 1 to 6 respondents each. One respondent indicated their religious affiliation as *anime* and two people identified with *the world religion* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). In the present study, we separated Christianity and Eastern Orthodox Church into two separate categories due to the fact that the term Christian is most often used either by Protestants or by people who do not belong to a particular confession but consider themselves Christians. The respondents who identified as Christian also sometimes added the term "Orthodox" to their answer. In these cases, they were referred to the "Eastern Orthodox" group.

Overall, the hierarchy of religious affiliation and preferences observed in the conducted survey is quite similar to other regions of Russia. The leading positions are taken by Christians followed by atheists and Eastern Orthodox individuals. The difference between the Altai Republic and the Kemerovo and Chelyabinsk regions is found in a higher proportion of pagans accounting for 5% of the respondents. In Kuzbass and the Chelyabinsk region, this proportion does not exceed 1% (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). A major contribution to the percentage of pagan people is made by the native population of Mountain Altai. Having analyzed the collected data on confessional stratification, we can conclude that confessional identity has not formed in more than 40% of the sample population *making the surveyed youth potentially susceptible to the propaganda of any destructive religious beliefs*.

The program of the monitoring involved the respondents being asked a question "What does it mean to be a person of your nationality?". The answers to this question allowed us to form a list of ideal criteria characterizing a particular nationality. Most respondents from Kuzbass noted their nationality being characterized by *honesty* (634 respondents — 57%), *kindness* (594 respondents — 54%), *love for the native land* (567 respondents — 51%), *tolerance towards other nationalities* (542 respondents — 49%), *love for their country* (462 respondents — 42%), *knowledge of the history of their country* (449 respondents — 40%), and *responsiveness* (443 respondents — 40%). More than a fourth of the respondents selected the option *healthy lifestyle* — 30% (330 respondents) and *knowledge of the history of their people* — 27% (302 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). For less than a fourth of the respondents, the significant characteristics of their nationalities included *being athletic* — 24% (270 respondents) and *being tolerant towards other religious confessions* — 20% (226 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). Minor proportions were gained by the criteria *"Possessing martial skills in a certain combat sport"* — 6% (67 respondents), *"Having great skills in using firearms"* — 5% (54 respondents), *"Having great skills in using cold weapons"* — 3% (36 respondents), *"Exclusively preferring national cuisine"* — 3% (32 respondents), *"Wearing national clothes"* — 3% (30 respondents), and *"Being a member of a particular religion"* — 2% (23 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018). In the option *"Having great skills in using cold weapons",* one respondent indicated "sabers" and "a knife" and another one mentioned "an ax". In the option *"Being a member*

of a particular religion", one person indicated Russian Orthodoxy as an *ethno-identifying characteristic* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018).

Most respondents in the Altai Republic noted their nationality being characterized by the *love for the native land* (296 respondents — 59%), *honesty* (286 respondents — 57%), *kindness* (270 respondents — 54%), *tolerance towards other nationalities* (246 respondents — 49%), *love for their country* (225 respondents — 45%), *responsiveness* (186 respondents — 37%), *knowledge of the history of their people* (187 respondents — 37%), and *knowledge of the history of their country* (178 respondents — 37%) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). More than a fourth of the respondents also selected maintaining a *healthy lifestyle* — 26% (130 respondents). Less than a fourth of the respondents considered *being athletic* (21%, 104 respondents) and *being tolerant towards other religious confessions* (21%, 108 respondents) to be significant features of their native nationality. An insignificant proportion of answers was constituted by the options *"Wearing national clothes"* — 7% (33 respondents), *"Possessing martial skills in a certain combat sport"* — 6% (32 respondents), *"Being a member of a particular religion"* — 4% (21 respondents), *"Having great skills in using cold weapons"* — 4% (18 respondents), *"Exclusively preferring national cuisine"* — 3% (14 respondents), and *"Having great skills in using firearms"* — 3% (17 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018). In the option *"Having great skills in using cold weapons",* two respondents indicated "a knife", one mentioned archery, and one person for some reason listed a Dragunov sniper rifle. In the answer option *"Being a member of a particular religion",* 5 respondents indicated Islam, 3 respondents indicated paganism, and one person mentioned "Holy Russia" as an *ethno-identifying characteristic* (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018).

Most respondents from the Chelyabinsk region noted their nationality being characterized by *honesty* (1,098 respondents — 58%), *kindness* (1,028 respondents — 55%), *love for the native land* (889 respondents — 47%), *tolerance towards other nationalities* (842 respondents — 45%), *responsiveness* (799 respondents — 42%), *love for their country* (781 respondents — 41%), and *knowledge of the history of their country* (584 respondents — 31%). More than a fourth of the respondents also selected a healthy *lifestyle* — 26% (483 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). For less than a fourth of the respondents, the significant characteristics of their nationalities included *knowledge of the history of their people* — 22% (419 respondents), *being athletic* — 22% (412 respondents), and *tolerance towards other religious confessions* — 17% (327 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). Positions related to sports and a healthy lifestyle are usually favored and implemented by the representatives of nationalist groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that *less than a fourth of the respondents can present the advocates of nationalist ideas*.

An insignificant share was gained by the criteria *"Possessing martial skills in a certain combat sport"* — 6% (122 respondents), *"Being a member of a particular religion"* — 5% (93 respondents), *"Wearing national clothes"* — 4% (69 respondents), *"Having great skills in using firearms"* — 4% (68 respondents), *"Having great skills in using cold weapons"* — 4% (67 respondents), and *"Exclusively preferring national cuisine"* — 3% (51 respondents) (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). In the answer option *"Having great skills in using cold weapons",* 4 respondents indicated "a knife", two respondents listed "machete, dagger, cleaver", one person indicated "ax, bow", one person mentioned "a butterfly knife", one person indicated "knife and katana",

one person mentioned "a katana", one respondent indicated a stick, one person listed "a meat knife", and one respondent indicated "a knife and a spear" and "an ax". In the answer option *"Having great skills in using firearms",* two respondents specified AK-47 and AK-74. In the answer option *"Being a member of a particular religion",* 12 respondents specified Christianity, 6 respondents indicated Islam, 2 respondents mentioned the Russian Orthodox Churchy, 2 individuals indicated Slavism, and the options of being Judaist, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani were indicated as an *ethno-identifying characteristic* by one person each (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018).

A comparison of proportions gained by some criteria provides interesting results. Tolerance towards other religions was indicated as a characteristic feature of the respondents' nationality only by 20% of the sample, the proportion being more than two times less than the one of tolerance towards other nationalities selected by 49% of the survey respondents. This finding can be interpreted as a sign of lower tolerance towards the representatives of other religious confessions and evidence of *the confessional factor having a greater conflict potential than the ethnic factor*. This tendency has been observed by us in the span of two years and is characteristic not only of the Kemerovo region but also of other regions where studies following the presented program were conducted. In the Altai Republic, tolerance towards other nationalities was noted by 49% of the respondents while tolerance towards other religious confessions was selected by 21% of the survey participants. In the data from the Chelyabinsk region collected in autumn of 2018, this ratio is 47% and 19%, respectively (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018).

The same question was additionally examined in the most populous ethnic group represented in each regional sample — Russians. Overall, the data of the group of Russians from all regions included in the sample demonstrates the same gap between *tolerance towards other nationalities* and *tolerance towards other religious confessions* (Kuzbass — 53% against 22%, the Altai Republic — 60% against 25% in the group of Russians and 51% against 21% in the group of Altai people, the Chelyabinsk region — 48% against 20%) which *indicates the presence of **latent tension** specifically related to **the confessional criterion** in the student youth regardless of their nationality*.

To measure the level of negative attitudes towards the religious denominations most popular in Russia, including Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), the Russian Orthodox Church, and Islam, we formulated several statements the respondents had to rate by the 4-point scale with 1 corresponding to the option "unacceptable" and 4 corresponding to "acceptable". The resulting distribution of answers was as follows. ***Negative attitude towards Christianity***: Kuzbass — 21%, Altai Republic — 19%, the Chelyabinsk region — 19%. ***Negative attitude towards the Russian Orthodox Church***: Kuzbass — 23%, Altai Republic — 16%, the Chelyabinsk region — 19%. ***Negative attitude towards Islam***: Kuzbass — 19%, Altai Republic — 14%, the Chelyabinsk region — 19% (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018).

The observed negative attitude towards Christianity and Islam is most likely related to the strong positions of neo-paganism detected in all the studied regions. A part of modern youth understands "Slavic paganism" not as the *historical Slavic paganism* that

actually existed and left behind a minimal amount of archaeological artifacts and *remnants* — traces of the pagan past collected by ethnographers of the 19th and 20th centuries in the northern and southern territories of Russia but a *neo-pagan anti-historical doctrine based on the neo-Nazi ideology that perceives all Abrahamic religions extremely negatively, especially Christianity* which is considered an instrument of subordination and oppression used on the descendants of the pagan Slavs who make up the majority of ordinary citizens of the country by the ruling elite of modern Russia mostly represented by Jewish people*.* The anti-Semitism of neo-pagans has a direct connection to the ideology of National Socialism and the person of Adolf Hitler who is praised by the leaders and ideologists of neo-pagan organizations some of which are recognized as extremist and banned in Russia ("the Northern Brotherhood", "the Slavic Union"). Hitler is viewed as a politician who pursued a "highly effective" course of national policy in the Third Reich aimed at maintaining the high-status positions of the "indigenous people" of Germany and the maximum reduction in the status of the "inferior peoples". The connection between neo-paganism and national socialism is also established through creating a broad collection of pseudo-pagan symbols based on the swastika and introducing ideas about their authenticity and autochthonous nature into the mass consciousness. This sort of information is actively spread through social media, amulets, charms, clothes with "Slavic" symbols, and applications for popular operating systems — IOS and Android. Moreover, these groups spread the information about the Nazi welcoming gesture — the Sieg Heil salute being nothing more than the ancient Slavic salutation of the Sun made along the trajectory "from the heart to the Sun". The *nationalist* ideology is also closely connected with neo-paganism. There are two fundamental nationalist paradigms, the first one being *the state nationalism* focusing on actively constructing the nation including the citizens of Russia or Russians. This model based on *the constructivist conception* is realized by the country's political leadership. The second paradigm is *ethnic nationalism* which is based on *the primordialist approach* and focuses on the interests and needs of a single nationality while ignoring the interests of other peoples and often promoting the ideas of superiority over other flawed nationalities. De facto, Russian neo-paganism presents the core of all modern extremist trends accumulating all these types of extremism within itself and presenting the source of destructive ideas.

The survey data collected in autumn of 2018 demonstrates that the positive attitude towards "Slavic paganism" reached 68% in the Kemerovo region, 70% in the Altai Republic, and 67% the Chelyabinsk region (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). Correlation analysis demonstrated the presence of a strong connection between the indicators *"Negative attitude towards Christianity"* and *"Positive attitude towards Slavic paganism"* averaging 0.52 across all the studied regions (Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic, 2018; Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region, 2018). These results are interpreted as evidence of the following pattern — the better the respondents' attitude towards "Slavic paganism" is, the worse is their attitude towards Christianity.

The acquired study results indicate that **preventive work should be carried out primarily in the direction of forming confessional tolerance** and destroying the massive array of fake information circulating in the virtual space, as well as myths

regarding a range of confessions traditional for Russia. Moreover, *the information and preventive work should be focused on the historical analysis of modern "Slavic paganism", uncovering its pseudo-historical essence, debunking the myths about the "Slavic pagan symbolism" including the Kolovrat, "the Svarog square", ordinary Nazi swastikas, and other symbols similar to them to the point of confusion. In addition, it is necessary to demonstrate the side of paganism concealed by the propagandists (specifically, human sacrifices recorded by archaeologists during the excavation of burial mounds and reflected in historical documents — the Tale of Bygone Years and Ahmad ibn Fadlan's notes on the trip to the Volga) using historical sources.*

CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. A part of the study respondents found it difficult to identify their religious affiliation which allows us to conclude on the processes of formation of the respondents' confessional identity not being finished. In turn, this characteristic makes them susceptible to the influence of the recruiters of various destructive religious organizations since their mind presents a sort of "blank board" open for any ideas.

2. Latent interfaith tension with a fairly high level of tolerance towards people of other nationalities is diagnosed in the youth of all the studied regions.

3. A certain negative attitude is diagnosed in the studied regions with regard to Christian denominations and Islam. The discovered tendency is likely determined by solid positions of neo-paganism providing a favorable basis for the most part of extremist manifestations including nationalism, national and confessional intolerance, and a positive attitude towards Adolf Hitler and his associates, as well as Nazi symbols.

4. Considering the obtained results, preventive work should be conducted in the direction of forming confessional tolerance through destroying the prevailing myths and stereotypes regarding several Christian confessions and Islam, as well as revealing the pseudo-historical essence of "Slavic" neo-paganism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

1 Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Kemerovo region. (November, 2018).

2 Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Altai Republic. (October, 2018).

3 Materials of a survey of the student youth in the Chelyabinsk region. (October, 2018).

4 Shiller, V.V., Volkhina, V.A. (2015). Kontseptsiia regionalnogo monitoringa ekstremistskikh proiavlenii: perspektivy prakticheskoi realizatsii v Kemerovskoi oblasti [Conception of regional monitoring of extremist manifestations: prospects for practical implementation in the Kemerovo region]. Politicheskie instituty i protsessy, 2, 44-56.

5 Shiller, V.V., Volkhina, V.A. (2016). Dinamika ekstremistskikh nastroenii uchashcheisia molodezhi Kemerovskoi oblasti (po dannym regionalnogo monitoringa ekstremistskikh proiavlenii) [Dynamics of extremist sentiments among the student youth in the Kemerovo region (according to regional monitoring of extremist manifestations)]. Politicheskie instituty i protsessy, 2, 41-52.

GRUPO DE PESQUISAS
EM LAZER, TURISMO E TRABALHO
GEPLAT - UERN