

## IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH INFORMAL GROUPS (ASSOCIATIONS) OF CRIMINAL ORIENTATION

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The transformation processes of the twenty-first century more than ever require us to pay attention to the issue of an increasing number of youth informal groups (associations) of an antisocial type. Not perceiving well-established values, striving for pseudo-self-identification, young people take the path of preaching ideas, theories, beliefs, and in the end – a way of life that is unacceptable for the majority of society. Moreover, this so-called preaching involves commission of crimes to declare themselves and their views, in particular, crimes of extremist nature. It is appropriate here to recall E. Fromm, who wrote: “We are proud that we do not submit to any external authority, that we are free to express our thoughts and feelings, we are confident that such freedom almost automatically guarantees our individuality. The right to express our thoughts, however, bears some significance only if we are capable of having our own thoughts; freedom from external authority is a long-term achievement only if the internal psychological conditions are such that we are able to create our own individuality” [1, p. 232]. But it is unlikely that hatred, neo-Nazism, aggression, destructive cults can become the ground for the formation of individuality, on the contrary – this is the path to the spiritual destruction of the individual and society. Therefore, detection and prevention of crimes of youth informal groups (associations) is a top priority for law enforcement agencies. The quality of this work determines stability of the existence and development of various social institutions in the state.

Criminal activity of youth informal communities is a rather extensive information resource that requires attentive and hard work, including consultations with specialists, who study youth informal associations. Separately, it is necessary to dwell on the features of detection of criminal informal formations.

Thus, identification of youth informal groups of criminal orientation can be carried out with:

- 1) the emergence of suspicion on the part of parents, relatives that the young person has joined or has been involved in the creation of a certain association, advocating some forbidden ideology (for example, Nazism, radicalism, anarchism, extremism, etc.). The reason for such suspicions may lie in the change in lifestyle, appearance, support for certain ideas, theories, etc. Quite often, young people mask membership in an informal community by participation in music groups, sports, hiking, casual meetings with friends.

These concerns can be confirmed by private detectives or by a continuing observation of a young man;

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2) receiving messages from teachers, lecturers, colleagues, friends about person's affiliation with a youth informal group of a potentially criminal nature. Such messages should be carefully checked, since support for certain ideas, attitudes, pseudo-religions is not always associated with creation of an informal group and commission of crimes;

3) study of information contained in social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other. By studying such information, it is possible to determine where group members gather (for example, in which area or particular place), who is the leader(s), what ideas are being cultivated, whether unlawful actions are being prepared;

4) the maintenance by an informal association of its own channel on YouTube. In such case, one should pay attention to the date of its creation, the channel content, the number of subscribers, the number of views of individual videos as well as likes for and against them. An analysis of the abovementioned can confirm or disprove the assumption of the existence of a youth informal association of criminal orientation, as well as understand, if such group exists, its ideology, the number of possible adherents, including identification of its organizer, the ideological inspirer.

The identification of the mentioned youth informal groups (associations) is of great importance in order to prevent them from committing crimes, as well as to improve the quality of the investigation of the acts already committed.

### **References:**

1. Fromm E. (2018). Begstvo ot svobody [Escape from freedom]. Moscow: AST Publishers. (in Russian)