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# Specifics of Network Interaction Supporters of Radical Panturkism

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**Abstract-** The relevance of the article is due to the activation of radical nationalist trends under the influence of external actors in the streaming political space. Modern panturkism is a social trend that contributes to the strengthening of interethnic and international socio-cultural ties, but at the same time, panturkism is used by nationalist parties and organizations to exercise a destructive influence on society, attempts to interfere in the internal politics of sovereign states. Archaic symbols used by radical panturkists spread through modern communication channels of information exchange. The author presents the results of a comprehensive analysis of the network communities of radical panturkism of the social network Facebook. It is revealed that at present there is not only an increase in the spread of radical values, but also an increase in anti-Russian and anti-Chinese rhetoric.

**Keywords:** *panturkism, radical, russia, china, turkey, turan, iran, network community, social network.*

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# Specifics of Network Interaction Supporters of Radical Panturkism

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The stage of formation of the information society at the beginning of the XXI century is characterized by the processes of powerful development of IT technologies, the formation of a network form of communication between people and groups of people, and the transformation of social institutions. In the information society, the role of the axial, value factor, which is information expressed in symbols, an integral element of the communication code, becomes essential. This explains the revival of archaic ethnic, religious, and other concepts that do not have an original economic and political basis. Archaic symbols receive an increase in communication capital and become part of the communication codes used to create and delimit network communities, including ethno-religious ones. Symbolic information objects, or rather "epistemic things", actors of actor-network communication become the basis for constructing socio-cultural reality, on the basis of which new identities are formed. The relative simplicity and accessibility to the General population of creating an information product and the high speed of distribution allows us to construct a historical, cultural, religious space, the stay in which is determined by the values of the resident. Globalization processes, the transformation of the classical functions of States and their institutions as a reverse reaction lead to the strengthening of the processes of constructing people's identity and on the

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basis of their Association to social aggregation. This explains the significant strengthening of symbols associated with historical events, ethnic characteristics/constructed advantages of an ethnic group, and the proximity of socio-cultural elements to groups of people with larger economic and political resources.

A favorable information environment promotes networking of groups of people based on ethno-religious symbols. This can explain the intensive development of network communities created on the basis of the concept of panturkism, and in the form in which it is understood in modern society.

## II. BACKGROUND

Initially, the ideas of panturkism as a cultural and political trend were formulated by Izmail Bey Gasprinsky (Ismail Gasprinsky) in the late Nineteenth century as a set of measures to unite the peoples of the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Ural-Volga region, and Central Asia. The Association of Turks in the Russian Empire was seen as a Union between Slavs and Turks who can resist the emerging "European and Mongolian community": "the Muslim and Russian can still together, or next to plow, sow, raise cattle, hunt and trade: their ability is not too different, but with the European Muslim must become a laborer, as it is...".

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Republic of Turkey on the stage backdrop of the heyday of industrial society and influenced the spread of ideas of nationalism in Europe, especially in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s led to the creation of Syagailo, plan for the development of panturkism, which is the first phase was to contribute to the formation of the Turkish nation. In the future, the accession of the "Oguz countries" (the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani part of Iran) was predicted, and eventually the creation of a "Turan Federation" from all regions and countries inhabited by "Turks". We cannot fully agree with S. A. Vasilyeva, who claims that at present there is a purposeful activity to implement the next stages of the formation of the "Turan Federation". Turkish officials declare their rejection of panturkist views, but the nationalist movement party of Turkey, which openly promotes panturkism, not only received the support of more than 11% of voters in the elections of the Grand national Assembly of Turkey (Parliament) on June 24, 2018, is in a coalition with the ruling justice and development Party. As noted by the

above-mentioned S. A. In the 1990s, the Turkish authorities used the geopolitical factor of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of independent States in Central Asia and a number of regions of Russia inhabited mainly by the Turkic population to penetrate the ideas of panturkism. It is impossible to assess this process unambiguously, since along with such negative phenomena as the spread of radical destructive ideas, there were also positive phenomena the strengthening of international relations in the field of culture, education, and science. Soyanmergenkystay-Oolovich in 2012 notes that "panturkism has no real prospects for full implementation, but cultural, the educational aspects of cooperation between the Turkic peoples have a right to exist, fears should not turn into phobias, closeness." By the time Russian-Turkish relations cooled in 2015, almost all Turkish educational and cultural institutions were closed in Russia. traditional festivals and conferences were not held until the beginning of normalization of relations in 2016. When assessing the factor of modern panturkism, it is necessary to take into account the dichotomous processes. Strengthening economic relations, a Declaration of friendship and cooperation on the part of the Turkish leadership with Russia, and panturkism, which is clearly anti-Russian. At the same time, panturkism opens up broad geopolitical prospects for Turkey. For about a quarter of a century, Turkey has been constantly increasing its "soft influence" in the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, with populations of predominantly Turkic origin, thereby ensuring a leading position of influence on the political space of these countries. Against the background of the difficulties that Turkey is experiencing when joining the European Union, the rational meaning of changing the vector of foreign policy activity is obvious. The Turkish leadership strives to become one of the leading countries in the global world. Turkey's leadership over the "Turkic world", taking into account the fact that the majority of it professes Islam, should lead to the fact that a significant part of the entire Muslim world is under Turkish influence. Kazakhstan is also striving for a leading role in the Central Asian region. A number of analysts, primarily associated with US government structures, note the desire of the leadership of Kazakhstan to conduct an independent policy within the framework of the Turkic space. This will not only create a separation from Turkey, but may also in the long term lead to Russia's opposition within the Customs Union, the Eurasian Economic community, and other international organizations: "...the rise of panturkism in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is unlikely to pose an immediate threat to Russia in the foreseeable future. But in any case, the spread of panturkism represents a serious long-term challenge to the Kremlin's vision of Eurasian unity." We can state that some facts, such as the transition of Kazakhstan to the Latin script (similar to the one used in Turkey), some statements of a number

of leaders of Kazakhstan about the historical role of the Turkic civilization can be regarded as bearing such risks. However, state governments and regional administrations are guided not so much by ethno-religious and historical factors as by economic and geopolitical expediency. Network communities of intellectuals who share the values of panturkism, which lie in the field of archaic, historical, ethnic and sub-ethnic construction, can bring a high probability of a threat to society, which in turn determines the communication activity of communities and the overall information product that affects society. The General trend of transformation of the discourse of radical panturkism is aimed at forming the image of the enemy from the Russian Federation and the PRC. It seems that the goal of radical panturkists is to destroy the existing historical, cultural, and social ties between Russia and Central Asia, the regions of Russia inhabited by ethnic groups of Turkic origin and the Russian Federation. This path carries the risk of raising the status of ethno-oriented elites due to the mobilization of ethnic groups based on archaism, which in turn leads to a General regression of society.

### III. METHODOLOGY

In this study, we applied, within the framework of the structural and functional method, an information and communication approach that provides for consideration of the structure of communication links of the network community, as well as the transformation of the information product itself under the influence of actors of actor-network interaction. In this case, through discourse analysis, we have identified the most active network communities that promote the ideas of radical panturkism. Materials published in December 2017 and November 2018 were selected for content analysis. The choice of periods is related to the author's desire to identify the difference in the content of materials at the stage of community formation and at the present time. In total, 200 materials were reviewed in each of the groups, 100 for each period. The purpose of the content analysis was to identify the main thematic groups of materials, as well as the values shared by the authors of materials and participants in discussions.

### IV. RESEARCH RESULT

Groups on the Facebook social network are formed communities of twenty to forty thousand participants with a frequency of posting materials about 25-35 daily. High activity in groups is explained by the ability to post materials to all members of the community, as well as the presence of a professional editorial team of 15-20 people on average.

The Facebook group "Kurultai of the Turkic Peoples" was created in October 2015 the number of participants is about 48,000. Administrators and

moderators make up a group of 20 people. The number of materials posted on average is about 25-35 per day.

The Facebook group "Free Turks", exists from October 2017 to the present. The number of subscribers is about 20,000. The number of materials posted on average is about 15-25 per day.

All groups position themselves as a private initiative of a group of individuals. Group administrators are not positioned as leaders or functionaries of political parties or formal organizations. The formation of groups is mainly organic, that is, based on the proximity of values, we can not exclude the instrumental type of community creation. Analysis of groups reveals active moderation of materials, selection of materials in accordance with the values of the community, in this case, panturkism in a radical version. The groups' program materials declare tolerance and political neutrality. For example, the description (program material – appeal of the group administrators to subscribers) of the "League of Turkic peoples" group includes the following items: "in the LTN group - Prohibited: 1. offend any religion and promote or impose a particular faith. 4. Offend another nation and national feelings. 5. To humiliate and ridicule the customs and traditions of other peoples." Similar materials are posted in other groups. This is not so much due to the ideological position of the group's management, but rather to the requirements of the administration of the Facebook site itself, violation of which is fraught with the forced removal of the community page. Management of these the community does not encourage, but does not prohibit, the placement of materials whose content directly contradicts the above rules.

The General discourse contains elements such as the idea of national superiority of the Turks and related criticism and ostracism of "enemies". Administrators strive to ensure that all major regions and countries predominantly populated by ethnic groups belonging to the Turkic group are represented in equal proportions. At the same time, a significant part of the materials is identified, up to 25% dedicated to the key country, from the point of view of the group's administrators. For the "Kurultai of the Turkic peoples" and "Kurultai of the Turkic peoples in Islam" groups, the main country is Azerbaijan. For the League of Turkic peoples group, Turkey is the key country, and in the Free Turks group, a significant part is assigned to the countries of Central Asia.

The content of the materials generally corresponds to the nationalist discourse and includes elements of mythologization of ancient, new and modern history, as well as ethnic and religious construction of the mythologized image. The materials were structured according to the classification of V. A. Shnirelman"...a) autochthonous; b) linguistic continuity; C) cultural continuity; d) military glory of ancient

ancestors; e) participation of remote ancestors in the creation of ancient States; f) cultural and civilizing mission of ancient ancestors, g) biological continuity".

- a) *Autochthonous*. Among radical panturkists, the autochthonous nature of the Turkic peoples is not in doubt. In their view, the Turks inhabited almost the entire space of Eurasia, non-Turkic peoples are perceived as newcomers. This idea is perceived a priori as not requiring proof. This proves the autochthonous nature of the Azerbaijanis in the Caucasus, and the Turks in Asia minor. "Turkish scientists have found evidence of the existence of a Turkish Kingdom in Anatolia 4,000 years ago." To prove the autochthonous nature of various aggregations of ethnic groups related to the Turkic, it is characteristic to update archaeological data, when historically existing tribes are given the status of direct predecessors of the ethnic groups currently living in this territory.
- b) *Language Continuity*. As it was shown above, the actual Turkic or modern Turkish language was created by the founders of panturkism and adopted by the young Turks in the late XIX-early XX century. But for radical panturkists, Turkic is the ancient language of the Altai tribes, the ancestors of the Turks. "Modern science does not classify the "Mogul" peoples of Russia – the Oirats, Kalmyks, and Buryats-as Turks, mainly because of differences in language. But if you follow Abul Gazi's "bloodline of the Tatars", you should. Moreover, some researchers believe that the so – called Mongols who were in the army of Chyngyzkhan are more likely to be Turks than Mongols."
- c) *Cultural Continuity*. The above – quoted judgment about the Turkic origin of Genghis Khan is another of the fundamental symbols of radical panturkism. The authors in these groups proclaim the founder of the largest Asian Empire and his direct descendants, the genghisids, as the direct ancestor of the modern Turks. The mention of Genghis Khan is typical, first of all, for the group "Free Turks", but also occurs in other groups. Approximately 18% of comments contain the definition of "mankurt" from CH. Aitmatov's novel "and a day lasts longer than a century", as the definition of a person who denies "ancestral Memory".
- d) Military prowess is shown in the mythologization of "steppe batyrs" who defeat all historically former enemies. Historical facts are shown through legends, myths, reconstructions, and music videos.
- e) The civilizing role of the sub-ethnic group is defined on the one hand as the formation of the Asian Empire of the Genghisids in the past, and the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey in the present. At the same time, the Turkic civilization is contrasted with modern Russia, China, Iran and Armenia. There

is a dichotomy between the values of the "great civilization" of the Turks and the historical injustice and oppression of the "Imperial colonizers". Radical panturkism carries out nationalist values through the image of the "great ancestor" in ancient history and the "oppressed people" in modern and modern history.

- f) The Cultural or civilizing mission of the ancient ancestors. For subscribers of groups, the idea of the advantage of the Turkic culture over all others is considered natural. Ancient epics are attributed exclusively to the Turkic peoples, and the culture of other peoples is considered a "new model". The news that the "epic "Dede Gorgud" is recognized as a Turkic origin is transmitted as a victory of Azerbaijani culture over the Armenian one.
- g) *Biological Succession*. In modern society, the development of ethno-genetics proves that modern ethnic groups are the result of mixing different aggregations. Therefore, some authors replace genetic affinity with cultural affinity. "A nation does not depend on haplogroups, as Nations are formed depending on the common fate, culture, language, state and territory," writes author Sakit Askerov. But the moderate position does not suit subscribers. In the comments to this material, the user under the name Erken Life Soul (saved spelling of the author): "Here we are the living descendants of the Saks, there are not many of us left, in all Soviet times and the Russian Empire we were destroyed. We were constantly fighting with the Urus. They always attacked and robbed. We were always just defending ourselves. And they did not accept their submission until the last day of the Russian Empire. We have always had our own independent state. But we have preserved our language and traditions, and we have lost some of our religion. But we will return to our places again. I am from the family of Adam, I am a SAK, among the Kazakhs I am from the Great Zhuz...".

It is typical that during the year there is a change in the proportion of materials devoted to various topics. If in 2017, during the formation of the community, materials devoted to mythologized history accounted for about 30%, then in November 2018, a significant part of the materials is current events, or an assessment of recent events. There are more materials about the success of athletes or musicians of the Turks, as well as an increased number of anti-Russian materials. Criticism, including in a very rough form, is directed exclusively at the leaders of Russia, as well as Armenia, Iran, and China. At the same time, the leaders of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, and especially Turkey, are shown in an exceptionally positive way.

The General nationalist position is accompanied by an active rejection of everything else, non-Turkic. A significant part of the materials and most of the comments contain offensive anti-Russian statements. Historical facts of interaction with other countries and peoples are presented either as the suppression of less developed neighbors by the Turkic civilization, or as the deliberate destruction of the culture of the Turks by "colonizers". The antithesis of Russian, Chinese, Iranian or Armenian influence is the archaic values of the "steppe people". World history – as a process of countering Iran – "cities", Turan – "steppes". In response to information about the capture of the area in Central Asia as a response to the looting of caravans on The great silk road: "I don't care what the dzhigits – my great ancestors-did. The Chinese (?) brutally destroyed and committed genocide against my people." The actualization of historical events of many centuries ago contributes to the archaization of social consciousness, in this we agree with the judgment of R. Vakhitova: "That is why the attempts to derusify Turkic cultures, which are made by Turkic nationalists and panturkists in the post-Soviet era, quite naturally lead to the archaization of these peoples...".

## V. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The identified negative phenomena do not have a significant impact on public opinion in the regions of Russia and Central Asia. For a person of modern society with its multiple identity, there is nothing unusual in recognizing himself as a part of the Turkic civilization, as well as a representative of his ethnic group and the Russian nation. However, we are concerned about the growing activation of radical panturkism propaganda in social networks, which can be considered a reflection of the activation of such processes in society. It is necessary to continue monitoring radical panturkism in order to detect and stop extremist actions in time and at the same time develop the cultural, economic, social and political sphere of international and inter-ethnic relations both at the level of States and governments, as well as at the level of public organizations and citizens.

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