

EXTREMISM AS A SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the study of the features of the religious studies analysis of the phenomenon of extremism as one of the main threats of the XXI century to the national and spiritual security of the Russian Federation. Today there is not a single person who has not heard about the phenomenon of extremism. Politicians, journalists, specialists from various scientific fields, ordinary people speak about the need to counter and develop effective measures to combat it. However, a few persons understand the essence of this phenomenon, the variety of its manifestations and the reasons for its origin. Currently, there is a tendency that R. Kosellek called the politicization of the meaning of the concept.

Keywords: religious extremism, religious identity, security, new religious movements, political cults.

1 Introduction

Religious extremism is one of the subjects of religious examination. This type of expertise is assigned in a situation where a religious text is recognized as extremist materials or when there is a religious component in the cases. For example, when there is a question about propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of a person on the basis of religious affiliation. And also, when there is a religious factor in the case - a category used to denote the influence exerted by religion on a particular object, which has a certain value for its functioning in specific socio-political conditions. Therefore, a religious scholar must have a whole range of knowledge (political science, legal, religious studies, psychological, etc.).

Conducting a religious examination has acquired particular importance in connection with the growth of materials on the Internet that contain signs of humiliation or insult to generally significant religious images. Cases related to religious extremism are always high-profile. Increasingly, human rights organizations see this as an instrument of pressure on society. All this imposes additional responsibility on the expert.

The situation is complicated by the fact that questions related to religious extremism and the religious component of extremism do not have clear meaningful answers in science. The very concept of extremism, especially such a form as religious extremism, remains controversial. Therefore, the problem of theoretical and methodological understanding of this phenomenon remains relevant and significant in terms of both science and law enforcement.

An analysis of the degree of elaboration shows a shortage of work on this issue. A special contribution to the development of this problem was made by M. Zelenkov (Zelenkov, 2018), who tried to systematize the studies of extremist activity carried out by domestic and foreign scientists. However, even this work cannot be regarded as complex due to its focus on the problem of the influence of extremism on the modern world order and the basics of countering this phenomenon in the Russian Federation. The author's work is historical and political.

Of particular interest was the work by V.A. Martinovich that analyzes the main problems of defining the concept of "religious extremism". In his article, the author also demonstrates the lack of an agreed opinion among scientists on this issue, the absence of its theoretical elaboration (Martinovich, 2018).

Among Western scientists, the works by C. Libman (1983), L. Iannacone (1999), R. Prus (2005), O'Tool (1976), L. Beres

(2006) were of interest. Curious is that religious extremism is better studied in Western scientific literature, which, however, like the domestic one, is fragmented. There are practically no major studies of this phenomenon in the West either.

2 Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the article is the phenomenological approach. The article shows that the concept of "extremism" is not just a word, but a complex semantic combination of words and ideas. Understanding this is important for fixing the meaning of this phenomenon and for moving away from direct subjective experiences, superimposed on the understanding of religious extremism and manifested on the basis of its everyday understanding. Historical, typological, comparative legal, method of legal analysis were used as auxiliary methods.

3 Results and Discussion

At present, specialists in various scientific fields argue about what is hidden behind the phenomenon of "religious extremism". There are polar points of view - from a complete denial of this very social phenomenon to considering it as one of the main, almost global problems of mankind. Scientific truth is somewhere in between. The lack of elaboration of the depth of this concept and its boundaries leads to a confusion of the concepts of extremism, terrorism, radicalism, fundamentalism not only in everyday consciousness, but also in the scientific one. The lack of a unified understanding of the phenomenon of religious extremism complicates the process of building a system of measures to counter its manifestations.

Religious extremism is understood as the ideology and practice aimed at resolving religious conflicts through violent and other anti-constitutional actions. That is, in this case it acts as a consequence of interreligious conflicts. At the same time, religious extremism is understood as a harsh rejection of the ideas of another religious faith, an aggressive attitude and behavior towards other religions, the desire to eradicate and eliminate representatives of another faith, up to physical extermination. That is, it also acts as a source of conflict attitudes and conflict behavior. And in this case it is difficult to say which of them is primary, since it will depend on the methodology that we will apply and the theory of the scientific area we will use.

In order to understand the ambiguity of approaches to the concept of "religious extremism" and to determine its content, we shall turn to the consideration of its various interpretations, which are often used in the works by world and domestic scientists. I would like to note here that few of the authors give a clear definition of the concept of religious extremism. Here are some examples of those that we managed to find.

E. Zabarchuk understands religious extremism as "activity in interreligious relations, which finds its expression in violent attempts to impose a certain system of religious beliefs on society, as well as justification or justification of such activity" (Zabarchuk, 2008).

According to V. Martinovich, "religious extremism is the adherence of religious organizations or believers to extreme actions aimed at homogenizing the entire society in accordance with a set of religious ideas, teachings or concepts. One can speak of religious extremism in cases where its potential, present in a religious group, finds its full manifestation in forms and methods that are unacceptable from the standpoint of the regulatory framework. At the same time, acts of violence and cruelty will not be an end in themselves, but part of some more or less well-thought-out plan for a radical change in the whole society" (Martinovich, 2018).

According to M. Iavorskii, religious extremism is expressed in an extreme form of the implementation of a radical religious ideology aimed at committing, for religious reasons, acts prohibited by the current domestic legislation, as well as in public calls for the commission of these acts to individuals and social groups who adhere to a different worldview compared to with extremists (Iavorskii, 2008).

According to R. Abdulganeev, religious extremism is "one of the extreme forms of social consciousness associated with the implementation of a radical religious ideology, by recognizing a true, clearly defined religious idea, categorical rejection of religious, social, moral, political and other views that run counter to the proclaimed, the only true religious doctrine" (Abdulganeev, 2010).

As we can see, scientific definitions present religious extremism as a complex phenomenon that exists in three interconnected forms: 1) as a state of social or individual consciousness; 2) as an ideology (a religious doctrine characterized by an unambiguous explanation of the problems of the existing world for "good" and "evil", for "black" and "white", "good" and "bad"; and 3) as a set of actions to implement religious doctrines.

Moreover, practically all definitions of religious extremism are united by the denial of the system of moral and ethical values and dogmatic foundations traditional for society and the aggressive propaganda of worldview aspects that contradict traditional universal values. This is manifested in the desire of representatives of a certain religious group, organization, movement to extend their religious ideas and norms to the entire society, changing the religious identity of the groups within it.

An even more complicated situation with understanding the phenomenon of religious extremism has developed in the regulatory framework. It does not clearly define the phenomenon of religious extremism.

The definition of the essence of religious extremism can be superficially found only in the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, which defines religious extremism as the illegal activities of religious organizations and movements, structures aimed at violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian state.

The main Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Counteracting Extremist Activity" contains no mention of religious extremism but only of such manifestations of extremism as incitement to religious hatred; propaganda of the exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of a person on the basis of his religious affiliation or attitude to religion; violation of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person and a citizen, depending on his religious affiliation or attitude to religion; obstruction of the legitimate activities of religious associations or other organizations, combined with violence, or the threat of its use. Thus, we see that religious extremism, its content and essence, practically did not find their reflection in the Federal Law.

Due to the complexity and ambiguity of this phenomenon, religious scholars need to work out its content and pay attention to the fact that religious extremism is not an accidental phenomenon. It has its own causes, manifestations and patterns. It is necessary to develop a methodological base and methods for studying the essence of religious extremism. Because without thorough research and systematization of the accumulated data, it is impossible to carry out a comprehensive fight against this phenomenon and its prevention. Otherwise, it will be "shadow boxing".

4 Summary

Religious extremism is one of the areas of extremism, which operates religious ideas and religious feelings of believers to justify its goals. Its danger lies in the fact that it affects the emotions, feelings, faith of people, which are formed at the

ordinary level of the individual and mass consciousness of society. He forces people to make decisions and act not on the basis of knowledge, but on the basis of sensory perception of the surrounding reality.

Despite the active use of this term in socio-political discourse, it has not been elaborated in science. The term is insufficiently substantiated in regulatory legal acts. The current situation leads to expert wars. Their appearance is due to the fact that expert communities rely on different criteria and methods for identifying organizations and texts as extremist, and often give opposite conclusions.

Moreover, many authors considered in the article consider the topic of religious extremism politicized.

5 Conclusions

The awareness of the modern society that in the post-Soviet period extremism is becoming one of the main problems of humanity continues growing. This is due to the fact that during this period the number of new various extremist, nationalist, radical ethno-confessional, destructive groups has been established. They develop and propose their own program of political action, which they substantiate with the help of any religious or pseudo-religious doctrine. The emergence of such groups and the ideas promoted by them has become another threat to both national and spiritual security of individual states and the world as a whole (Silayeva, 2017). It was a challenge to the scientific community, which had to comprehend the processes taking place in society and offer its own answer to it. However, this issue turned out to be difficult for the scientific community. As we can see, science today has no universal approaches not only to the definition of "extremism", but also to understanding the essence of religious extremism. There is no unity in the formal legal understanding of these phenomena both at the level of individual states and at the international level. This state of affairs in theory and the legal field inevitably leads both to the emergence of contradictions and discontent among certain religious groups, new religious movements that use religion as a tool in achieving their socio-political and economic goals, and to problems raised by human rights organizations that protect innocent victims in extremist cases.

But if the multi-vector nature of science, its interdisciplinary approaches to the phenomenon of religious extremism are justified, then from the point of view of law enforcement and judicial activity, such a state of affairs with a categorical and regulatory apparatus is unacceptable and can lead to serious negative consequences. This complexity is also manifested at the level of the institution of religious studies expertise, when each expert uses his own methodology and his own approach to understanding extremism and determining the role and place of the religious factor in it without taking into account the historical context. All this once again proves the need for a scientific study of the categorical-conceptual apparatus and rethinking this phenomenon, taking into account modern specifics. For this, it is necessary to abandon political interpretations and value judgments in relation to this phenomenon.

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